Into the Black: The Complete Series

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**(Blanking the Slate is set in its own continuity, spinning off Into the Black)*

Initial Setting Pitch:

This is a mixed Human and anthro world.
Technology is "classic cyberpunk".
Style and appearance is *Blade Runner*-styled noir with touches of Detroit, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Camden, *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* and some *Batman Beyond* Gotham City.

Plot: The year is 2037, great leaps in computer science and biology have allowed the once impossible: the seamless fusion of flesh and machine. However, the utopia envisioned of such a world is not to be. Greed, crime, corruption and apathy have plagued the great urban landscapes that are the hallmark of this new world.

Despite this, many of the inhabitants try their best to live in this world. But there are some opposed to this new world.

They call themselves "The Purifiers". A shadowy anti-technology group that seeks to make *all* augments and implants completely illegal. While most of their actions have been legal, if hateful, protests, some have taken this message further to heart and have engaged in vandalism, sabotage or even outright murder.

The Gang of Five

Role Play => Role Play Discussion => Character Profiles => Topic started by: aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato) on July 30, 2018, 02:35:43 AM

Title: **Into the Black series full cast**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 30, 2018, 02:35:43 AM**

Into the Black is a classic cyberpunk world started by Serris. It has four RPs within its canon, *Into the Black (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341.0), Racing the Storm (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=13105.0), Blanking the Slate (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.0)* and *Around the Folf (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14553.0).* Since none of the authors added their characters to their dedicated threads in this section, I thought it might be useful to have a master sheet for the entire franchise.

Into the Black **introductions**

Name: Soren Almaya
Player: Serris
Age: 34
Species: Human
Augmentations: Homemade powered exoskeleton that grants him super strength as well as a degree of protection from gunfire and other hazards.
Appearance: Medium build. Brown eyes, black hair, tan skin, almost always dresses casually. Wears a set of glasses that have augmented reality capabilities as well as ability to zoom and see in infrared.
Biography: A cyberneticist by day, but an avid tinkerer by night. He makes his living repairing and modifying external augmentations like artificial limbs. Ironically, despite being so intimately familiar with augments, he refuses to get one himself as he is afraid of surgery. He had heard of "The Purifiers" before, but he dismissed them as obnoxious cranks. That all changed when his workshop was looted and everything in it destroyed. He immediately knew who was guilty thanks to the cracked gear emblem scrawled on the wall.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Emilena Echo (https://i.imgur.com/BI73nOm.png)
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Species: Anthro Fox
Age: 21, biologically 7 (see below)
Gender: Female
Faction: Purifiers
Occupation: Law Enforcement/Paralegal
Weapons: Basic police equipment (handcuffs, taser, nightstick, flashlight, pepper spray). Not allowed to carry a firearm due to being on probation.
Description: Orange fur, with black markings on her arms and tail. Long Red hair, tied in a loose ponytail with a black ribbon. Wears a standard-issue police uniform with woven titanium fibers for protection.
Personality: Extremely uptight, nicknamed "Analena" by her fellow officers, she has seemingly no sense of humor and a well-known repulsion for any form of social attachment.
Brief History: Emilena was an orphan, the fifth who volunteered for a controversial "growth acceleration" process, designed to cut down on homeless children by rapidly aging them to adulthood. Her personality is common for those who underwent the procedure, though her asexuality is not. She is currently on probation after inexplicably burning down the orphanage she once lived in, leaving her past records lost to time.

Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, After the Storm*

Name: Axel Whent
Player: bushwacked
Gender: Male
Age: 21
Species: Rat
Occupation: Computer technician
Appearance: White fur, tall and lanky. Augmented arms (that don't give extra strength) and eyes. Scarring near his eyes and nose.
Weapons: Whatever he can get his hands on, not exactly an expert.
Biography: A 21 year old rat, gifted with computers and other electricals. After sustaining injuries in a terrible car accident 4 years ago, Axel's arms and eyes were replaced by cybernetic technology, and his face remains horribly scarred. His implanted eyes give him a unique view into the workings of any electrical equipment, furthering his abilities and allowing him to hack with ease. Extremely shy, only opens up to close friends, and would sometimes help Soren with his work on augments.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate*

Name:Marita Jones
Player: nick22
Age ; 25
Species; Great Dane
Augments none
Bio: a stellar student in school, Marita gradates at the top of her class and majors in computers and technology.. got hooked on the extremely addictive drug biproxytol in her teens years and was forced to become a computer hacker to raise enough money to support her habit. through hard effort and willpower she manages to kick her addiction and live a quiet life in Lanthae
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, Around the Folf*

Name: Tony Stracci
Player: Pterano
Gender: Male
Age: 25
Species: Ferret
Occupation: Underboss in the Stracci Crime Family
Appearance: Typical ferret, slightly shorter than average, likes to dress in 1930s garb with a vest, slacks and flat cap.
Weapons: Guns
Biography: Heir to the mighty Stracci Crime Family empire, Tony spends his days conducting family business for his father, training to succeed his father someday, and maintaining the vast collection of his father's vintage automobiles. He has a passion for those cars, and drives them any chance he gets.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, After the Storm*

Name: Anne "Nitro" Phoe.
Player: Serris
Age: 43
Species: Shetland Pony
Augmentations (Cybernetic): Implant that allows her to recieve and transmit radio waves as an artificial form of telepathy. The antenna for the implant is disguised as a cosmetic "unicorn horn" implant (surprisingly popular with young Equines). This horn is both sharp enough and

firmly implanted enough that she can gore her opponents with it.
Augmentions (Genetic): She carries some artificial genes that allow her to produce much more red blood cells than average and without ill effect so she resists the effects of low oxygen environments and has higher endurance than normal.
Bio: She is an "oil farmer" (a vertical farm that grows genetically engineered algae that produce biosynthesized crude oil). She is very intelligent but few would know that because outside of work, she is almost always high on something. In addition, she has racked up numerous hospital bills due to her rampant drug abuse and subsequent injuries and/or overdoses.
Her drug dependency came about during her college and grad school years. Her perfectionist attitude meant that nothing less than the highest grade was acceptable. In addition, she often took numerous difficult classes (usually going over the permitted credits limit). As a result of this, to make perfect grades, she began using drugs of all sorts ó ranging from nootropics to classic stimulants. No one ever found out but she paid a heavy price ó she became a full blown drug addict. Since her job doesn't pay enough to fuel her drug habit, she has resorted to various legal and illegal ways to make enough creds to buy drugs ó everything from synthesizing and selling drugs, to assorted odd jobs. Currently, her alternative income now consists of stealing augments, parts and other electronic devices and hocking them to fuel her addiction.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Lily North
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Species: Human
Age : mid-twenties
Gender: Female
Faction: Fugitive
Occupation: Unknown
Equipment: Tattered gray dress, hiking boots, nothing else
Description: Dark-skinned, with straight black hair and brown eyes.
Personality: At the moment, she is incredibly paranoid and confused. Just trying to survive to the next day.
Backstory: Lily woke up in a field, having no memory of who she is or how she got there. Several close encounters quickly taught her that the police are currently undergoing a massive manhunt for her, and her only goal at the moment is to escape the country. But she doesn't even know where she is or why they want her.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Vergil Speicher
Player: Pterano
Gender: Male
Age: Unknown
Species: Mutant gecko
Occupation: None/Ivitz Federation Spec Ops Agent
Appearance: Pure white skin with large, round, orange eyes and two lines of white feathers that stick out of the back of his head with the tips pointing slightly up. He's short, only about four feet in height.
Weapons: Powerful psionic abilities, energy blade.
Biography: Vergil woke up in a test tube deep inside the Purifier base with only vague memories of who he was. He assisted the group in opposing Agent Lupis and the Purifiers, but is desperately seeking to unlock his past. He's found out he used to be former Special Forces in the Federation government, and served in the former war-hero-turned-traitor Rex Sardolemuel's army. He's fascinated by Rex's life, and wants to find out Rex's motivations for turning traitor, as well as who he himself is and why he's mutated. Currently searching for Torment's Cataract.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm*

Name: Rose
Player: nick22
Age: 24
Species; Canine (great Dane)
Augments none
Appearance: Tan fur, brown eyes
Bio: has worked as a stripper for 5 years at the Electric Sheep where she acquired an addiction to bipropxytol. is currently undergoing detox which is a long slow drawnout process, but has worked enough to allow her to start work in theater.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, Around the Folf*

Name: Marie
Player: nick22
Age 24
Species: canine Golden Retiever
Augments none
Appearace. Gold fur, Green eyes
bio: Co-worker of Rose at the strip club, she joined her and marita during the past few months. has become a clerk at a local grocery store, called the fresh apple.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, Around the Folf*

Name: Aaron Geasbrecht
Player: Serris
Age: 41
Species: German Shepherd
Augmentations: None
Appearance: A tall and very solidly built German Shepherd. He has brown eyes and tan fur. Almost always dresses in flannel and blue jeans.
Biography: A former construction worker who had his job replaced by an augmented person. Despite protests, he was let go. It was this moment that he felt resentment towards the augmented, feeling that they were taking jobs from honest, hardworking unaugmented beings. What finally drove him over the edge was that his own son had announced that he was going for augmentation surgery. Fuming, he severed all ties with him. Later that night, he read an article about a anti-augmentation protest by "The Purifiers". This eventually leads him into the ranks of this organization.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Marcus Hayton
Player: bushwacked
Species: Doberman
Age: 38
Faction: Purifiers
Appearance: 7 feet tall
Bio: Marcus is a member of 'The Purifiers' who hates implant-augmented beings, and thinks they are a disease who should be eliminated. Fast, powerful and deadly with guns.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Adrian “Nairda” Kibagami
Player: StarfallRaptor
Age: 22
Species: Red Fox
Augmentations: Biomechanical Left Arm, Right eye covered by Optical Augment, Neural

Augmentations
Appearance: Dark Red (almost black) fur over most of his body. White accents over his hands and chest, as well as the tip of his tail. Slim build, with a shock of vibrant red hair that covers his right eye.
Biography: Adrian worked as a detective for a time, until he lost an arm and part of his eye in an incident that also cost innocent people their lives. For a time, he fell into despair and regret, but now has begun to act as a vigilante, starting to act to defuse situations, many of which involve the Purifiers...
Notes: Eye augment is capable of seeing across multiple spectrums, including IR and Electromagnetic.
Neural Augmentations are able to enhance his reflexes, enabling him to easily dodge or counter nearly anything, though it strains him.
Carries a Hyper-Vibrational sword in a case that resembles an instrument case. Sword design is akin to a massive rapier.
Skilled Free-Runner.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm*

Name: Yoshihiro Kojuuro. ((Note: Name follows Japanese order, so Kojuuro is his first name))
Player: StarfallRaptor
Age: 40
Species: Hokkaido Wolf
Gender: Male
Augmentations: Biological alterations, enhancing speed and strength to higher levels than average beings. Armor suit further increases his strength and defensive capability.
Appearance: Grey fur, with significant fading from age, with bright blue eyes. Favors a military-style outfit with significant armor plating, including a large number of straps and extra equipment pockets. Wears a black Kevlar coat over the armor. Black tactical mask on his face, covering it in it's entirety, save for his eyes.
Biography: Kojuuro made a living as a mercenary, taking any contract that would pay until he was assigned to a mercenary firm that was working abroad, in an "anti-terrorist" operation. Assigned to shepherd a unit of conscripted child soldiers, his entire squad save for one boy were wiped out by a set of Strain. After returning home, he abandoned the mercenary lifestyle, drifting aimlessly until joining the Purifiers for a brief time. However, when he was asked to participate in a terror attack on an augment facility, he left the group, and began staunchly opposing them.
Notes: Carries an SL-8 Sniper rifle, a High-Frequency broadsword, and dual pistols.
Appearances: *Into the Black, Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, Around the Folf*

Name: Patrick Anderson
Player: Rocky
Age: 25
Species: Liger
Augmentations: None yet
Appearance: Patrick is a young Anthro Liger with white fur, black stripes, and a gold a mane on his head and a golden tuft on his tail. He has green eyes and wears a white suit and golden tie.
Personality: Patrick is up beat and outgoing. A Optimistic Anthro who perfers to see the glass half full rather than half empty. An easy guy to get along with, Patrick is also a flirt who is real good with the ladies. A technology Genius ho seeks to improve the world.
Biography: Patrick was adopted by a wealthy, but childless couple after they found him as a baby on their home. Growing up raised by humans in a kind environment made Patrick fairly tolerant, Which is why he openly Opposes and criticizes the Purifiers as anything but pure. Patrick grew up and took over his adopted family's company, Anderson Augmentations, who are one, if not the largest and well respected Makers of Augmentations.
Appearances: *Into the Black*

Name: Doctor Tsing "Thomas" Jiang
Player: Serris
Age: 44
Species: Human
Augmentations (cybernetic): total ocular replacements that grant him zoom-in capability and ability to see outside normal Human visual range (UV and infrared). Both hands are class 1 augments with fingers capable of changing size and becoming magnetized at will. Processors in the hands eliminate hand tremors.
Augmentations (genetic): More efficient detoxification pathways in liver and kidneys, resulting in heightened resistance to drugs and poisons.
Bio: Born to a wealthy Chinese immigrant family who had a stake in Tsun Wan Industrial Electronics ó a Chinese electronics megacorporation, he had the best education available. He graduated high school and college with the highest honors possible. He eventually earned his Ph.D in neuroscience with his thesis on brain-machine interface for remotely controlling vehicles. He then went to medical school where he earned his Cy.d (Doctor of Cybernetics, licensing him to implant, remove and repair cybernetics).
However, he operated in Palladia and was not authorized to implant class 3 augments. One day, his greed and curiosity overtook him and he agreed to implant a class 3 arm for three million creds. As was the law, he told the augmentee to come back after twenty-four hours and then schedule an appointment.
The next day, he was shocked to find several cops waiting for him at his office. It turns out he had gotten caught by a sting operation to find and shut down illegal implanters of augments. Facing several years in jail, he forfeits his entire operation and license to the Palladia PD in exchange for a jail sentence.
He then flees to Lanthae where he opens a back alley augmentation clinic. Despite it being called a "back alley clinic", it is just as clean and professional as a legit augmentation clinic. However, unlike a legit clinic, he doesn't care if the augmentee is licensed to possess an augment before he implants it ó or for that matter, if the augmentee legitimately obtained the augment.
Appearances: *Into the Black*

Name: Emile Kibagami
Player: StarfallRaptor
Species: Anthro Fox
Gender: Male
Faction: Mercenaries- Vulture group
Occupation: Salvager
Weapons/Equipment: Kriss Super V/Vector SMG, Folding Shovel, Combat knife, Swords (Japanese), Colt M1911
Transport: Vulture- 18-wheeler truck with multiple M60 Machine Guns mounted on the cab and trailer.
Description: Emile has Light Red-Brown fur with a white underbelly and tail tip, with black shins and forearms. Long Red hair, tied in a loose ponytail with a black ribbon, hanging to about his tail base. Wears a tattered black trench coat over scavenged body armor.
Personality: Opporunistic, with a strong sense of justice and adventure. Able to outhink many people by virtue of his 180 IQ. Bisexual.
Brief History: Emile was born in Japan, to parents from the US and Japan. His family moved back to the US shortly befor the collapse, and both died in the ensuing chaos. He was taken in by the "captain" of the Vulture scavenger group, and has traveled with them since.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth, Into the Black, Racing the Storm*

Name: Lena Kibagami- Alias: Lena Kobayashi, Junko Misami
Player: StarfallRaptor
Species: Anthro Fox
Gender: Female
Faction: Mercenaries- Vulture group
Occupation: Salvager/Espionage

Weapons: Kodachi Knives, H&K USP, Folding Shovel, Heirloom Katana
Transport: Vulture-Same as Emile
Description: Lena has snow-White fur, with black markings on her arms and tail. Ankle-length pale blue hair, kept in a tight, ornate braid. Wears a low-cut top, tight hotpants, and a Blue trenchcoat.
Presonality: Flirty, seemingly a bit of an airhead, she's every bit as intelligent as Emile. In an open, incestuous relationship with her Brother. Bisexual.
Brief History: Lena was born a few years before Emile, and had a similar life to him, until they were separated by the Fall. The two were separated, and she had to make her living on her own, until the Vultures found her.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth, Into the Black, Racing the Storm*

Name: Warren Joseph
Player: Alien Ant Farm
Age: 40
Species: Human
Occupation: Law Enforcement; Chief of Police
Background: Overworked, overstressed, short-tempered Chief of the Palladia Police Department, and currently a candidate for Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service that oversees all urban regions of the greater city area. The rise in Purifier hostility and increasing tensions between them and the enhanced have caused the Chief to orient police focus to handling issues concerning the aforementioned.
Appearances: none

Name: Doctor Dorothea "Dolly" Wilmut
Player: Serris
Species: Sheep
Bio: Dolly was one of the pioneers for gene therapy. Her work with liposomes, retroviruses and gene targeting at the Watson-Crick Institute paved the way for safe and effective gene therapy. Going to the next step of her research, she moved into gene enhancements and cosmetics ó ranging from simple things like unnatural eye, hair or skin color to things such as enhanced strength and stamina.
Unfortunately, her latest work attracted numerous opponents. Some of whom sent her death threats and vandalized her lab. Despite this, she never backed down ó indeed, she became even more outspoken, sometimesbordering on polemic. Unfortunately, her "rock star" attitude earned her even more detractors, some of whom were themselves scientists, claiming that she was acting in an unprofessional and inappropriate manner.
On the plus side, she also had many supporters.
Sadly, her outspoken and aggressive nature and "rock star" attitude cost her life one dreary morning. During a rally advocating enhancement, an anti-enhancement zealot shot her. The shooter was quickly apprehended but the crowd was so enraged they killed the shooter before the police could arrive. By the time the police arrived, both Dolly and her assassin had died from their injuries.
The aftermath was quite brutal. After a week of mourning, bursts of violence broke out all across the nation as Dolly's supporters attacked anti-enhancement activists, even killing a few.
In the present time, gene enhancements have given way mostly to cybernetics due to their higher liklihood of side effects ó and the fact that cybernetics allows for enhancements not possible by nature, such as radio wave based telepathy. Most gene enhancements now are cosmetic in nature but there are a few who favor the genetic modifications.
Appearances: none

***Racing the Storm* introductions**

Name: Triste Acyle
Player: bushwacked

Gender: Female
Species: Spider Gecko
Occupation: Agent for the Ivitz Federation
Appearance: Slender. Light green skin, with a red, diagonal stripe across her face. Long, slightly spindly limbs.
Abilities: Extremely proficient in combat. Has very mild kinetic abilities, but using them for even a short amount of time exhausts her.
Bio: Trained as a soldier in the Ivitz Federation from a young age, Triste was brought up to believe that the Federation came first, always. Now one of the top agents, she's been sent to out into Corona to track down a potential asset. With the threat of Kalis looming, she knows she can't fail.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Flora (https://i.imgur.com/wyZW67y.png)
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Gender: Intersex
Age: 19
Species: Folf
Occupation: Emilena's gang
Bio: Flora has a female body with a male reproductive system, genetics that are part-wolf and part-fox, and nobody is sure whether she dyes her fur fuchsia or if it's somehow an artifically-induced phenotype. All anyone does know is that she's a bit off-kilter, and an incredibly good driver, her primary role on the team. She also has a transparent crush on Emilena, who puts up with it only because Flora is, actually, the best driver Emilena has ever met.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate, Around the Folf*

Name: Muyee "Marion" Wu
Player: Serris
Age: 38
Species: Human
Augmentations (Cybernetic): cermet lacing on bones rendering them nearly unbreakable, class 3 augments for both arms (left arm: modular weapons hardpoint; right arm: plasma cutter hidden inside forearm; both limbs are superhumanly strong), class 2 augments for both legs (superhumanly strong, can reconfigure into a "hoof" for fast running, retractable grappling claws/cutting spurs on the feet)
Augmentions (Genetic): None
Bio: Her parents (both of them former military) immigrated from Shanghai when she was child. She was an average student through high school and college. She eventually earned a Master's degree in mechanical engineering and she briefly worked at Shockley Electronic Works, a small augment repair shop in the edges of Corona. One day, while she was on her lunch break, some unknown suspects bombed the store, killing all six employees inside. The damage was so severe that the owner could not afford to replace all the losses. Desperate, she worked several menial labor jobs ranging from janitor to stevedore at the docks.
One night, while unloading cargo at the Corona Port, one of her co-workers (who was slightly tipsy at the time) begins flirting with her. Refusing to take "no" for an answer ó and fueled by a few too many beers ó the worker eventually gets quite aggressive. In desperation, she takes a swipe at him. Unfortunately for the man, she is wearing a powered exoskeleton intended for moving very heavy loads. The blow connects with his head, crushing his skull and instantly killing him. Horrifed, she calls the police.
Even though it is ruled a justified act of self-defense and she is cleared of all charges, she loses her job at dockyards (no one wants to work with someone who just killed their coworker). She eventually finds a job teaching a vocational training program at a local college.
After a few years as an instructor, she is approached by some recruiters from Zaloga Cybernetics and offered a job as a quality control technician at one of their factories. Attracted by the job, she agrees to an interview.
She gets the job and is quite happy with it. A year into her job, a tragedy occurs. Unbeknownst to her, she attracted the attention of Serami Heavy Industries ó in a bad way. A small strike

team is dispatched to take her out and they plant a bomb in her car.
When she starts up the motor, the bomb detonates. She manages to survive but loses all her limbs, the majority of her bones are broken and she is severely disfigured by the burns. She opts for cybernetic limbs instead of vat grown limbs from her own cells.
At the hospital, surgeons and cyberneticists quickly work to repair the damage sustained from the bomb. Her bones are repaired and strengthened via an injection of nanomachines. Her limbs are replaced with basic class 1 augments. Cosmetic surgery manages to repair the most severe burns but it is not perfect; despite being in her early 30s, she looks like someone in their mid 50s.
After several months of physical rehabilitation, she returns to work as a show of defiance.
Later, her boss tells her about a lucrative promotion in the company ó corporate security trooper. The pay is nearly quadruple that of her current job. Enticed, she accepts.
The next year involves licensing for class 3 and class 2 augments, classroom time, training and live fire exercises. At the end of it, she becomes a member of Zaloga Cybernetics's Company Security Squad.
As of now, she has served with the squad for three years.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm, Blanking the Slate*

Name: Rio Chato
Player: bushwacked
Gender: Male
Age: 13
Species: Human
Occupation: Drug runner
Appearance: Thin, a little on the short side for his age. Black hair, tanned skin.
Bio: After running away from his abusive parents, Rio spent his time growing up on the streets of the slums. With his natural agility and skill in free running, at the age of 10 Rio was noticed and offered work by a local drug lord who called himself Slate. In exchange for food and shelter, he would transport Slate's product across the slums, using his outward appearance as a natural disguise to evade detection.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Foley Hudson
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Gender: Male
Age: 34
Species: Human
Occupation: Emilena's gang
Appearance: Overweight, usually unshaven, but decently dressed. Has a number of augments such as a headset port on his temple and a memory chip embedded behind one ear.
Bio: Foley is well aware that most other hackers his age have moved on to professional white collar jobs or qualified for major criminal rings, and he doesn't take kindly to people pointing this out. He just suffers from crippling laziness and can't focus on much more than the sort of low-brow drug-running that Emilena's gang specializes in.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Kaien
Player: yeswonderful
Species: human female
Appearance: In her mid to late 30s. Tall and slender with skin the color of roasted coffee beans. Quick, dark eyes and close-cropped black hair. Strong build. Augmented left hand, arm, shoulder, and left side of pectoral girdle. Class of augmentation currently unknown--will be revealed as the RP progresses.
Background: Unknown at the present time. Will be revealed as the RP progresses.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Ruozheng "Rory" Zhao
Player: Serris
Age: 31
Species: Human
Augmentations (Cybernetic): Class 3 augments for both arms. Right arm contains built-in 5.56 mm automatic rifle, left arm contains short vibroblade capable of shearing through steel and concrete. Both arms possess strength and flexibility in excess of Human baseline. Skeleton is not reinforced so arms cannot be used to full capacity in lifting or striking.
Augmentions (Genetic): None
Bio: His parents were "Mountain Masters" (Dragon Head, i.e. crime boss) of the Bak Long (White Dragon) Triadsóa powerful Chinese criminal syndicate in the city of Lanthae. His parents wanted him to have a normal life ó and get a college education he could further use to help the White Dragon Triads. He never had much of a taste for school and spent his youth cutting class, fighting, commmitting petty crimes and doing ó or dealing ó drugs. He is eventually expelled from school after attacking another student. Drifting between menial labor jobs, he is eventually sentenced to prison for fatally shooting someone in a street fight. Even though he is guilty, his parents bribe the judge to rule it a justified self-defense shooting.
He is released and his parents eventually decided to formally induct him into the White Dragon Triads as a 49er (rank-and-file member). He got augmented after a group of Augment street thugs beat him into a coma in the process of robbing him as he felt it would be necessary to ensure his safety.
He rises through the ranks and eventually becomes a "Red Pole" (enforcer) where he specializes in black marketeering ó specifically in drugs and counterfeit electronics.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Hal Bitparte
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Gender: Male
Age: 25
Species: Duck
Occupation: Emilena's gang
Appearance: Thin, a little on the short side for his age. Black hair, tanned skin.
Bio: Who cares, I'm killing him first chance I get. He's the contacts guy, not good at anything himself but he knows a guy who knows a guy.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Hania Enapay
Player: Belmont2500
Species: Jaguar
Gender: Male
Age: 19
Eye Color: Brown
Orientation: Bisexual
Religion: Pagan
Normal Outfit: Cloth tunic, pants and cape(which bears the emblem of his tribe.)
Personality: He is often very forlorn and defiant but occasionally can be friendly and easygoing at times. He is very reverent of Nature and a formidable hunter and warrior. He shows a good amount of respect to friend and foe alike.
Appearances: *Racing the Storm*

Name: Sergeant Karl Nairda
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato

Gender: Male
Age: 34
Species: Clydesdale
Faction: Scorched Earth
Occupation: Gunner
Appearance: Brown fur with white spots, on the short side with larger hooves than average
Weapons: Shotgun, Nailgun, Combat Knife, Assault Rifle, Revolver
Biography: Karl Nairda traveled with the Royal Expeditionary Force during the Scorched Earth war of the 2030s. He never was particularly notable and most posts didn't notice when he was restationed elsewhere. He often went awol to freelance with Emile and Lena Kibagami, two mercenaries, until he was dishonorably discharged and joined the Vulture Scavenger Corps full-time. Sadly during a raid on a Red Merchant supply ship he was shot by anti-aircraft turrets which shredded his body instantly. He is hardly remembered by anyone at all, with no family.
Appearances: none

***Blanking the Slate* introductions**

Name: B. Rhaegson
Player: bushwacked
Age: Late 30s – Mid 40s
Species: Human
Augmentations: None
Appearance: Short, slightly stocky build. Dark blonde hair and dark eyes. Surrounded by the smell of cigarette smoke and the aroma of a strong alcohol of indistinct origin.
Bio: After the success of his operations in Lanthae, Rhaegson began to enjoy a greater position of power than he'd ever experienced before. With the Purifiers now one of the larger powerhouses in Lanthae, Rhaegson began planning to expand the Purifiers' – and his – influence.
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Herschel 'Awe' Hammacher
Player: f-22 "raptor" ace
Age: 38
Species: Human
Augmentations(cybernetic): Air Tank, Digestive Expansion, Gecko Hands, Grip Feet, Hardened Bones, Hydraulic Limbs, Leg Enhancement, Nanobots, Reflex Enhancers, Control Rig, Datajack, Dermal Armor,cyberneticaly enhanced eyes capable of infrared and night vision, Tracheal Filter
Augmentations(bio): Poisionous, Sensory Enhancement, Tail, Shocking, Sleep Regulator, Flexible Joints
Appearance: medium build 5'9, Blue eyes, brown hair, tan skin, dresses in a trench coat with tail folded up when not on mission. when on mission heavily modified corporate assassin attire.
Bio, extra details: Raised by the head of Werner Industries Günter Stellwagen as an assassin and heavily augmented for the role. Was taught by a fellow WI assassin named 'Mr. Trigger' made his first kill at the age 15. He defended the company and it's head against many rival corporations gained the nickname 'Awe' after
destroying a rival corprations oil rig that was the base for their assassins. After the several dozen more missions he was let go to his own devices and went freelance at 34. On first hearing of the "The Purifiers" he thought little of them.
After the destruction of Lanthae however he eagerly awaited the calls to take them down reciving several. While normally having a minimum twenty thousand credit fee this work he'll do for free
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Uziel Bautista

Player: Serris
Age: 24
Species: Human
Augmentations (Cybernetic): Left arm is a class 2 augment that contains an attachment point for various tools. It also contains shock absorbers and vibration dampeners to lessen the discomfort felt when striking with the arm or using the attached tools. The fingers can be magnetized at will to pick up and hold magnetic objects. Computers inside the arm also compensate for involuntary hand and arm movements for maximum precision when using tools.
Augmentions (Genetic): None
Appearance: An unremarkable looking Mexican man about 5′4″ with brown eyes, black hair and tanned skin. His left arm is a sturdy but rather beat-up prosthesis with numerous scuffs and dings. He usually wears a tan jumpsuit with numerous pockets and a tool belt.
Bio: Born to a family of Mexican immigrants, Uziel was an exceptional student in high school and college. He graduated with a degree in agriculture and soon found a job as a farmhand at Sky Farms, one of the many hydroponic farms in Seryet City. He proved himself to be a hard worker and coupled with his degree in agriculture, he soon became the foreman of the farm. Unfortunately, he attracted the ire of one of the workers, who happened to be an ex-convict Bison. Angry that Uziel had been promoted over him, he plotted to kill him and make it look like an accident.
One day while Uziel was repairing the algae press, the machine suddenly turned itself on, crushing his left arm. When they finally freed him and took him to the hospital, his arm was so badly damaged they had no choice but to amputate. Later, he learns that someone had intentionally turned the machine on, despite the switch being locked in the “off” position.
At first, he was fitted with an industrial-duty class 1 prosthetic arm but he decided to exploit the potential uses of his artificial limb and applied for a class 2 prosthesis license.
Despite the wages he earns, he is barely above the poverty line due to the legal fees he sustained suing the equipment’s manufacturer.
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Sakata Kintoki
Player: StarfallRaptor
Age: 21 (looks young for his age)
Species: Fox
Augmentations: none
Appearance: Wears a heavy exoframe with pneumatic shock dampeners and helmet with LED visor. Underneath it, he’s a scrawny gray-furred and yellow-eyed fox with unruly hair and a bushy tail.
Bio, extra details: Sakata was always fascinated with augmentations, but grew up in a household with staunchly anti-Augment sentiments. Knowing his parents would never allow him to work in cybernetics, and that he wasn’t smart or rich enough for school, Kintoki works under the table for Coxon as contracted muscle. Most of his spare funds go into upgrading his exoframe, though he’s always wished he could work up the nerve to openly defy his family and purchase some real augments for himself.
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Doctor Andrew “Andy” Schatten
Player: Serris
Age: 34
Species: Rhesus Macaque
Augmentations (Cybernetic): None
Augmentations (Genetic): Expresses GFP; as a result, his fur will fluoresce light green if exposed to UV light. Modified sodium pumps in neurons render him immune to sodium agonists or antagonists such as tetrodotoxin. Saliva is toxic, causing significant irritation if it gets into a wound, temporary or even permanent blindness if it gets into the eyes (from a Spitting Cobra).
Appearance: A Rhesus Macaque of average build (5′4″) with tan fur. His face has a few scars

on it, including a rather long curved scar that stretches from his right ear to his neck. A freeze brand on his left bicep depicts the DNA double helix.
Bio: Born to genetic engineers of some fame, he expressed an interest in molecular biology since he was a boy. His parents encouraged this, hoping to continue their legacy. In high school, he proved to be an excellent, albeit troubled, ill-tempered and rather vain student. In contrast to his high grades and academic honors, he had significant disciplinary problems. Mostly fighting and shoplifting. He did grow out of this and later earned a Bachelor's degree followed by a Masters and a Ph.D.
He was soon hired by the Seryetian biotechnology company Drosha Genetics as a gene mods scientist ó at the relatively young age of 24. Most of the gene mods that he researched were supposedly for medical purposes only as Seryet City bans non-medical gene mods. One night, while overhears some young Seryetians lamenting that the largest biotech company in Seryet City doesn't do cosmetic gene mods.
Realizing that this could a very profitable side business, he opens up a black market in his lab specializing in various non-medical gene mods. Unfortunately, it did not last. He had found a way to target a viral vector containing the GFP protein to specific cell type and make it temporary. Seeing as he could not go through the company's ethics committee, he decides to test it on himself. As it is a success, he rather foolishly decides to publish his paper in the journal Genetic Modification, claiming that the experimental "subjects" were "Rhesus Macaque Lab Body Model III ". Since there is no such model of lab body, Doctor Schatten was very quickly found to have grossly violated the internal code of ethics of Drosha Genetics, several laws in Seryet City and the code of professional conduct for the Society of Genetic Engineers (SGE).
As a result, he is stripped of his SGE membership, fired from Drosha Genetics, permanently banned from ever working in the field of biological sciences, fined several million creds and sentenced to seven years in prison
Since he now has a rather extensive (albeit nonviolent criminal record), it is very difficult for him to get employment. He drifted between several jobs ranging from janitor to longshoreman to oil farmer. He even did a stint in a black market cosmetic gene mod company before they were busted.
Currently, he lives with Soren Almaya and Uziel Bautista. He works at a scrapyard at the edge of Seryet City as a "junkyard dog".
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Nigel Bailey
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Age: 30
Species: Monitor Lizard
Augmentations: Enhanced memory capacity, several cosmetic surgeries to increase attractiveness
Appearance: A solid dark gold Australian Monitor Lizard with amber colored eyes. Usually wearing silver-rimmed glasses and metrosexual suits.
Bio, extra details: Nigel's father was a distinguished scientist who fully expected his son to follow in his footsteps. However, Nigel couldn't find himself interested enough to dedicate his youth to studying, and so he dropped out of high school and used his triple-digit IQ to successfully sweet-talk his way into salesmanship. Now he works as DJ Xyler's manager and sees to it that his current moneymaker is bringing in enough commission that he can feel like he made the right career choice.
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Name: Ashley Kinc
Player: LettuceBacon&Tomato
Age: 35
Species: Andalusian Horse
Augmentations: None.
Appearance: White-furred with black eyes. Muscular but short for his species.
Bio, extra details: Ashley was the oldest and smartest of three children, and for that reason he

was the first to go to college with the well-wishes of his parents and their ranch hands. Two years later, a drought drove the family farm out of business and prevented his siblings from joining him, but Ashley was making enough capital as a day trader to complete his education and even afford a virtual reality treadmill for exercise and pleasure. His acquaintances don't know him very well, but most people agree he's a nice enough guy. Ashley's nothing if not self-sufficient.
Appearances: *Blanking the Slate*

Title: **Re: Into the Black series full cast**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 14, 2019, 03:52:59 AM**

I'll soon be introducing this secondary antagonist into Pterano's new RP, *After the Storm (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=16315.0)*.

Name: Storch
Age: 50 (equivalent to 70 in human age)
Species: Anthro Bat
Appearance: A slim, grey-haired, black furred and silver-eyed bat. He stands at 5'9'' and has quite a wing span, allowing him to fly very fast and silently. His wings can fold against his arms and sides in combat. He wears black combat jeans, a sideless assault vest and knee pads.
Specializations: Long range weapons. He has a Bushmaster ACR with the 18.5 inch sniper barrel attachment. For close-quarters combat he carries an M6A2 PSD. Both of his rifles use the same 6.8 MM round giving them good range and firepower. He also carries EMP grenades to equalize the playing field when fighting Augmented targets.
Augments: N/A
Personality: Storch is a cool and calm bat. He always reacts calmly to everything going around him and has a sniper's patience. He was in the military most of his life, and turned to bounty-hunting when he grew too old to serve. For Storch, urban combat is just a way of life, and he feels most at home crouched in a dark corner with his eye pressed against a scope.

Also, figured I'd grab the character sheets from *Scorched Earth* too, just because it was basically grandfathered in as a prequel RP to the series:

Name: Conrad Verner
Player: StarfallRaptor
Species: Anthro Wolf
Gender: Male
Faction: Terrorists- Sword of Damocles
Occupation: Terrorist Group Leader
Weapons: Glock 18, Colt M1911, Saber
Appearance: Grey fur, Massive burn scar over the right side of his face. Black outfit with red trim, matching trenchcoat.
Personality: Ruthless, cold, calculating, and obsessed with causing a global war.
Brief History: Dishonorable Discharge, US miltary.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Ronald Emmerson
Player: Myrkin
Species: Human
Gender: Male
Faction: Soldiers - Boston Guardians
Occupation: Group leader
Weapons/Equipment: M4 carbine, Combat knife, Beretta 92
Transport: Hummvee
Description: Tall, bearded, black hair. He wears tattered uniform of member of the National Guard.

Personality: Calm, cool-headed - these are the best words to describe him. He doesn't break under pressure.
Brief History: Ronald was born and raised by his parents in Boston. At the age of 18 he joined the National Guard and thanks to his calm demeanour and good thinking he had been promoted to the rank of captain. After the Fall, unit commanded by him and several others attempted to establish order in Boston, but they were eventually either destroyed or forced to withdraw by armed warlords. Emmerson led his unit out of the hot zone, escorting some civilians and collecting whatever resources they could find.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Cole Winters
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Human
Gender: Male
Faction: Mercenaries - Gun Hawks
Occupation: Tank commander
Weapons/Equipment: H&K USP handgun, modernized Siminov SKS rifle, flak jacket
Transport: M60A3 Patton main battle tank w/ 105mm gun, two M60 machine guns, M9 bulldozer kit & explosive reactive armor, some of which was spent in combat
Description: Caucasian, dark hair, dark eyes, 5'10", light build, desert camouflage clothing
Personality: No-nonsense, practical, cunning
Brief History: Cole was a trainer for tank crews in Fort Hood when it was attacked. No modern tanks survived in the first half of the invasion, but a surplus of working Pattons helped the soldiers repel the threat. As the highest and most experienced officer of the group, he becomes the commander of the group and they set out to help out the American citizens in their fight for survival.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Sky
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Human
Gender: Male
Faction: Mercenaries
Occupation: Traveler
Weapons/Equipment: Remington 870 shotgun, Uzi sub-machine gun, wakizashi sword
Transport: Modified 1969 Pontiac GTO w/ turbo kit, armor plating, off-road suspension, & twin M60 machine guns mounted on the front
Description: Caucasian, blond highlighted hair, dark green eyes, 5'9", light build
Personality: Calm, common-sense, does not talk about his past
Brief History: Sky once had a another name, until his entire family and home have been destroyed by a volcanic eruption in northern California. Since then, he travels with a new name and his only companion, Runt.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Runt
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Feral Wolf-mix
Gender: Male
Faction: Mercenaries
Occupation: Traveler
Weapons/Equipment: None
Transport: Same as Skye
Description: Gray fur w/ lighter underside, gold eyes
Personality: Cocky, wry-sense of humor, loves to stick his head out the window
Brief History: Runt was the runt of his litter when he was found a home with Skye and his

family. Now he is all that is left of Skye's past, and his humanity.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Ken Winchester
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Scottish Deerhound
Gender: Male
Faction: Soldiers - Royal Expeditionary Force
Occupation: Tank commander; colonel
Weapons/Equipment: Browning L9A1 handgun, L85A2 bullpup rifle, Osprey body armor
Transport: Challenger 2 main battle tank w/ 120mm gun & 2x 7.62mm machine guns
Description: Dull silver fur, light brown eyes, 6', medium build, Royal Marines green uniform, beret
Personality: Practical, sarcastic
Brief History: Sent to command the Royal Marines in the United States, he was the only one of his command staff to survive the storm. Now he sits in the commander's seat as he leads his forces to their original mission.
Appearances: *Scorched Earth*

Name: Ogden "Oggie" Ward
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Anthro Belgian Shepherd
Gender: Male
Faction: Refugees - Well Town
Occupation: Tank commander and mechanic
Weapons/Equipment: Colt New Army revolver
Transport: M4A1 Sherman medium tank w/ 75mm gun & M1919 machine gun
Description: Dark brown brindle fur, brown eyes, 5'7", light build
Personality: Not the brightest, except with anything mechanical, likes Kat
Brief History: Oggie was a farm boy in the Midwest United States, when everything went to hell. His home town had to seize some aging tanks from a history museum and bring them to working order. Although they never had to fight in the initial war, the home they knew was destroyed. Being the most talented when it came to tanks, he was dubbed the unofficial team leader of the new Well Town Village Guard.
Appearances: none

Name: Avery
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Badger
Gender: Male
Faction: Refugees - Well Town
Occupation: Reverend
Weapons/Equipment: Bible
Transport: School bus
Description: Brown fur w/ white head & black stripes, brown eyes, 5'8", stout build
Personality: Optimistic, hopeful
Brief History: Avery had been the pastor of the town before the chaos. He keeps the spirits of Well Town alive as they struggle to survive.
Appearances: none

Name: Kat Koney
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Coonhound-mix

Gender: Female
Faction: Refugees - Well Town
Occupation: Bartender
Description: Survivor of a formerly rich family. Maxwell Ciedrick (a male Whippet) and Oggie compete for her affections.
Appearances: *After the Storm*

Name: The Black Prophet
Player: Mirumoto_Kenjiro
Species: Human
Gender: Male
Faction: Terrorists - Black Moon Army
Occupation: Recruiter, tactician
Weapons/Equipment: AK47 combat rifle
Transport: Jeep
Description: Middle Eastern, dark eyes, gray hair & beard, 6', thin build, robes
Personality: Lunatic, ruthless, self-righteous
Brief History: It unsure if the Black Prophet was placed in the US as a recruiter before the chaos began, but he gained the initiative to take control of a makeshift army and lead a conquest of the war-torn land.
Appearances: none

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The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Topic started by: Mirumoto_Kenjiro on January 31, 2011, 12:14:15 AM

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **January 31, 2011, 12:14:15 AM**

August, 2030 A.D.

The world, attempting to settle from the chaos of global war and disaster, bears vicious scars to make the land unrecognizable from the time only 10 years back. Now the survivors must endure and carve out their future in the new world...

(New York/Canada Border)

Heading south from the fallen country of Canada, seven tanks cruised across the landscape. Their mission was a disaster from the very beginning. They started out as an armored regiment of Royal Army & Marines, and set out across the sea to assist the United States in their war against Mexico. But what met them first were hurricane storms that destroyed all but one ship carrying a mere handful of tanks...

When they landed on the shores of Massachusetts, they drove immediately to the territory of Quebec for help. Instead, they were greeted by hostile separatist warlords, and barely escaped in one piece. They never faced armor, save for one Leopard 2 tank that they had to combine their shots to destroy. Otherwise, they attempted to save their 120mm shells and resort to their machine guns to fight off the opposition...

With no help in the war-torn land, the Royal Expeditionary Force retreated back into the United States for their original mission...to find the President in hiding...

(Central New Mexico)

Across the barren flat lands of the desert, a dark blue Pontiac GTO races west. A few minutes behind it, a dozen vehicles, cars, motorcycles, & sand rails, speed to catch up with the lead car...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 31, 2011, 09:31:18 AM**

((Colorado Area))
Inside a large, crudely-armored 18-wheeler truck, a pair of young foxes sat, listening to a J-rock song on a scavenged stereo, bobbing their heads to the music. The younger, Emile, looked up at his older sister, Lena,
"Hey, Lena. Where're we going again? Hard to keep track anymore."
He joked, running a hand through his long red headfur. Lena looked up at her brother, grinning a little.
"We're heading up north, Emile. Rumor's been going around that some pretty heavy stuff's going on up there. Probably going to be quite a few people needing help, and even more tasty salvage."
She murred, licking her lips seductively and looking at her brother.
"Again, sis? We've done it four times since we got into the state! You really need to get your libido under control."
He said, looking at the floor, a blush coloring his already-red fur. Lena smiled, leaning in closer, flaunting her ample bust at him.
"C'mon, bro. I have urges, just like you do..."
She said, placing her hand on his lap. Emile blushed more, looking around to make sure that that none of the other members of the crew were looking before nodding at his sister. In moments, they were all over each other as the truck rolled on towards it's destination...

((Undisclosed location, northern Canada))
A black-coated wolf paced the empty halls of the underground base.
"Heh...Soon, the world will be eclipsed in the glory of total warfare. And then, we, the Sword of Damocles will make our final move."
He laughed to himself...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 31, 2011, 09:32:03 AM**

((Stupid double-posting phone))

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **February 01, 2011, 11:04:11 PM**

(Oklahoma)

Heading east towards Colorado, a group of tanks & military vehicles rolled calmly across the landscape. With most of refugees in Texas heading north away from the fierce fighting between warlords, the Gun Hawks decided to seek out confirmation to rumors of a terrorist army, not cell, hiding in the States. The only information from a young man that escaped from the murderous group that took his family & friends as slaves...

(New Mexico)

Those riding in the pursuing vehicles hanged themselves out to fire upon the GTO, most were misses, but a few would ricochet off the armored plating.

In the passenger's seat, a wolf curled up in a ball. "Explain to me again WHY you just instigated them to chase us?!"

The human driver remained calm as he answered. "I was just making sure if they were the ones..."

"Yeah, but kicking dirt on them while they were taking a leak?! What ever happened to asking politely!?"

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Myrkin** on **February 06, 2011, 10:25:21 AM**

(Somewhere west of Boston, Massachussets)

A column of military vehicles was traveling through deserted and ruined areas outside of Boston. This group was one of the few units that had managed to get out from Boston, which was taken over by several warlords from arourd the state who decided to introduce their own order in the city. Due to being vastly outnumbered and outgunned, units of National Guard were forced to retreat from Boston and try to regroup their forces... somewhere.

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **February 06, 2011, 10:49:00 PM**

(New York, just west of Massachusetts)

It did not take the Royal Expeditionary Force long to cross the border into Massachusetts. Since then, the lead tank, belonging to Colonel Ken Winchester, had mounted two flags on the turret. One was the only British flag that survived the fateful trip across the sea, the other an American flag, the only one they found intact in New York City.

Ken looked from his cupola and grabbed his radio. "Sergeant. Any response from Morris code yet?"

"Negative yet, sir," a reply came from one of the other tanks.

"Keep on it, then. Any American government or military by now would be using this code. They can't all be dead!"

"Aye, Colonel!"

(New Mexico)

The lone car weaved around the pursuers across the desert, using bursts from his front-mounted machine guns to blast away his attackers, especially those he caught wielding heavier firepower...

(Southeast Colorado)

A chorus of loud gunfire echoed from the 105mm guns of a small group of M60 Pattons, their targets being an ambush party of raiders manning a pair of older age Patton tanks among their other vehicles. Without care and added armor that was on the newer versions, the M46 tanks were no match, being ripped apart by the heavier guns, and other vehicles joining their fate in the counter-attack. This alone sent the survivors running for cover, and then away from their failed ambush.

Cole Winters, team commander, stepped out of his tank when a Humvee pulled up, and a Rattlesnake officer slithered out.

"Sir!" the Snake said. "We're getting a message in Morris code!"

Cole headed for the radio to listen, then shook his head in disappointment. "No good for us here," he replied. "Whoever it is, they're calling all the way from the east coast."

"Is it still any of our people, sir?"

"It's a British group. They must have come over when we were attacked."

"To help or conquer?"

"They said they're helping. We won't know for sure with them being thousands of miles away. Now, let's regroup and head north. We need to seek out a terrorist army that may be hiding somewhere up there."

"Yes sir!"

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Myrkin** on **February 09, 2011, 03:51:32 PM**

(Somewhere west of Boston, Massachussets)

The military column of vehicles stopped at deserted gas station. Soldiers needed a break, while officers had to discuss about such pressing matters as: where were other units who survived a disaster that was battle for Boston and how to get them all to one place?

Ronald together with his officers and team leaders looked at the map of state of Massachussets and it's neighborhood.

"Assuming that no joker replaced road signs, we should be here," captain pointed at some place on the map "Right between Newton and Framingham."

"Wasn't Wilson's tank group supposed to come through Framingham and join us?" one of sergeants asked. Emmerson just shook his head.

"It seems, from what we heard from Wilson on the radio, that this town and nearby parts of I-90 are an absolute warzone now. Wilson will try to go round Framingham, but that will take some time. Now, we haven't have any signs from other units that got out of Boston since a few hours ago, so..." he was interrupted by sergeant Miller, who was operating long range radio.

"Sir! We've just got a message from Royal Expeditionary Force!"

"Royal Expeditionary Force? What British military does in USA?" Ronald asked.

"Maybe they decided it's a payback time for that little tea party we threw for them a few hundres year ago?" one of officers joked.

"Let's hope not," Emmerson said, before heading to the radio himself. He listened for a minute, then ordered Miller to respond to that call.

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **February 10, 2011, 10:19:40 PM**

(New York/Massachusetts border)

"Sir!" radioed one of the tank commanders. "We're getting a response!"

"All stop!" Winchester ordered. "Take defensive positions!"

The tanks made a circle of themselves, their guns pointing every which way. They don't want surprises while they take their phone call."

"Tell them to have their radio to this frequency so we can talk."

"Aye, sir!"

The Morris code message was sent...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Myrkin** on **February 11, 2011, 02:55:15 AM**

(Massachussets)

"Sir, they want to talk with you. I've already changed frequency," sergeant Miller said, giving captain radio microphone. Ronald nodded and spoke to the mike.

"This is captain Ronald Emmerson of Boston Guardians, US military. Who am I speaking to?"

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **February 11, 2011, 11:45:51 PM**

(New York/Massachusetts border)

"This is colonel Kenneth Winchester of the Royal Expeditionary Force, Royal Marines. We've been sent by request of Good King William to assist the United States in repelling the invasion. But the majority of our force was lost at sea, and all we have left is a small unit. We hope to merge with US forces and continue to help bring peace to the States, as in our primary mission."

(OOC: In the scenario in the UK, Prince Charles was crowned king in 2020, but he was immediately assassinated by a foreign agent, so his son William now takes the throne.)

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 14, 2011, 07:33:58 AM**

A burst of static crackled over the comm channel.
"Hello there. Can both of your units hear this?"
A male, synthesized voice asked...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Myrkin** on **February 14, 2011, 03:35:01 PM**

Emmerson was about to talk with colonel Winchester, but at that moment a new voice cut in.

"Yes, I can hear you. Who are you?" he asked.

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 14, 2011, 11:30:50 PM**

The voice chuckled.
"My name is unimportant. All you need to know is that I am the Captain of the Vulture scavenger corps. We are a freelance group of salvagers and civilians, and we are offering our assistance to your forces."
It said...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **February 15, 2011, 12:20:22 AM**

(New York/Massachusetts)

After a pause, one of the tank commanders looked at his commander. "What do you think, sir? Should we trust them?"

"I'd take a chance with the Guards," Winchester replied, "but certainly not this Vulture bloke. Let's go to Boston and see if we can meet up with the Guards. Let's keep the line open but keep silent for now." He changes to the tank radio. "All hands make ready! We move east!"

The Challengers got moving together back into a column and soon started to cross the border into Massachusetts...

(New Mexico)

The lone driver made short work of the raiders, bring their numbers down to two vehicles, which shot off away from the battle, leaving their dead behind.

Stopping near the wreckage, Sky stepped out of the car with his shotgun and checked to see if his pursuers were dead, then proceeded to removing gas cans from the other vehicles.

Runt stuck his head out of the window. "You know we could've made it to Flagstaff if you hadn't have done that!"

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 15, 2011, 07:32:14 AM**

A soft laugh over the radio.
"We heard that. You gotta forgive the captain. I think he likes being all *ah* dramatic like that. I'm Emile. My *girlish giggle* sister and I will join you, if nobody objects. We have our own equipment, and our talents could come in very handy. You'll need all the help you can get, I think."
Emile said, panting a little as he spoke...

Title: **Scorched Earth**
Post by: **Mirumoto_Kenjiro** on **March 08, 2011, 12:48:50 AM**

(Massachusetts)

Soon after, Winchester's sergeant called in. "Sir! We got chatter on the local police banner!"

"Let's hear it!" Winchester radioed back.

"Sounds like a war party leaving Boston, and they sound like they got tanks!"

"Where to?"

"Worcester by the sound of it, sir!"

"Alrighty then! We're up for a fight with tanks now! Let's make our way to Springfield as fast as we can and try to meet up with the Americans before this war party finds them out!" Winchester flipped the switch to long range radio. "Boston Guardians, this is the Royal Expeditionary Force! We just got word someone in Boston just sent out a party with tanks, perhaps to Worcester! If you're there, stay on your toes! We're on our way to Springfield in about 1 hour! Copy?"

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The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Finished RP's => Topic started by: Serris on August 17, 2013, 07:35:46 PM

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 07:35:46 PM**

Soren Almaya awoke to the bleating of his home security system. Quickly throwing on his glasses, he hastily punched in a combination to enter his environmentally sealed and fireproof control center. Taking a seat in the main console, he gasped.

The bright red letters on the screen told him all he needed to know.

Quote

> Threat: Fire
> Location: Home workshop

Swearing profusely, he immediately ordered the CO2 fire suppression system to activate. The next words caused his heart to sink:

Quote

> CO2 FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM IS OFFLINE

To make matters worse, another warning came up:

Quote

> WARNING! POSSIBLE INTRUDERS APPROACHING HOUSEHOLD!

"Oh no," Soren muttered. Thinking quickly, he unlocked his gun safe and grabbed his Remington 870 shotgun. Despite the fact that compact laser weapons and magnetic accelerators existed and were commonplace, standard firearms were still very popular -- despite modern armor rendering them mostly obsolete. This was mainly due to their relatively low cost, low maintenance and sheer reliability.

He switched on the external cameras and saw a group of figures running away from his house. He also saw red and blue lights in the distance heading to his house.

He'd wait until they arrived before he got out of the safe room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 08:03:18 PM**

"Captain, this is Officer Echo," Emilena reported from the lead squad car, without a trace of emotion in her voice. "Approaching the suspected augment's living quarters."

"I know; I'm watching online news," the Captain snapped back over his walkie-talkie, from his sealed penthouse in another country. "Why the hell can't you ever keep stings quiet?"

"Augments don't deserve anonymity," she said matter-of-factly, "the world deserves to know of their treachery. Will be using lethal force."

"At least make reasonably sure it's an Augment!" He sighed. "With legally verifiable evidence!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 08:08:09 PM**

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out in the street, m a great dane named marita jones was walking diown the stret, taping away at her laptop, as a police car raced by, lights flashing ' wonder what perp they're going after ' Marita said to herself probably an augment of some kind. ' marita had little love augments, she prefered creatures to be natural, not something that looked like it came out of some old movie about a mad scientist.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 08:12:48 PM**

The police cars as well as several firetrucks pulled into his driveway. The firefighters got out and began dousing the blaze, fueled by the chemicals he used in his work.

Soren saw them approaching via the cameras. Making sure he *appeared* to be unarmed, he exited his safe room and made his way to the entrance of his house where he waited for the first available officer.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 08:22:04 PM**

Officer Echo marched up to the front door. Suspect appeared to be cooperating. Wonderful. Normally, she'd just shoot him (exposed inner cybernetic parts are her favorite legally verifiable evidence), but since she's on probation she cannot carry a firearm.

"Name, occupation, identification," she demanded. "Anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 08:26:06 PM**

Soren handed over his ID card. "Soren Almaya. Certified external augmentation service technician."

Inwardly, he didn't like the look this Fox was giving him. It was the look of a bitter law enforcement officer looking to pin someone with a crime.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 17, 2013, 08:27:39 PM**

From a rooftop nearby, a fox crouched, a hooded jacket covering his entire body, save for the faint shimmer of his augmented eyepiece.
"Hmph. Damnit, I was too late. They already got here."
He muttered to himself, casting his gaze between the officer and the man from the building...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 08:48:06 PM**

"Mr. Almaya, did you know that if I punch you and you fight back any more than a sack of rice would, that legally counts as 'resisting arrest' and gives me authorization to haul you in for questioning?" She asked bluntly.

After giving a moment to let this sink in she swung her first in a low undercut, aiming for his stomach.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 09:00:30 PM**

Soren staggered back from the punch. Luckily, the clothing he wore was inpregenated with shear-thickening fluid to soften the blow. It was a necessity when working around things that could deliver blunt force trauma on par with a car crash. "By the way, choose your next actions carefully, all video and sound is recorded," he said. He looked around, hoping another officer would help him. If worse came to worse, he'd fight back.

But obviously, Soren did not want "assault on a police officer" on his currently clean criminal record. But if this rogue cop was intent on killing him, what choice did he have?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:03:47 PM**

"Everything everywhere is recorded, Mr. Almaya..." She narrowed her eyes. She didn't like it when she punched people and they didn't go down. "Mr. Almaya, have you ever constructed, used, or in any way interacted with biomechanical augments?"

Her fellow officers looked slightly uncomfortable but their professionalism stopped them from interrupting an interrogation.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 09:08:57 PM**

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marita had passed by the open door, long enough to overhear echos threat to soren. ' with all due respect officer' she said coming up to her ' rule 17-B of the police handbook, sections 1-4 forbids use of force without probable cause. a mere 5 second search online can give me, an average jane, that information. surely you know the rules governing your conduct?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:11:53 PM**

"Miss Jane, turn around and walk away from these premises immediately or I will indict you for aiding and abetting a possible criminal. Which will give me probable cause to punch your pretty face!" Echo snarled, eyes flashing.

Of course, the dane was right, but if Almaya turned out to be an Augment (which she was sure of), he would void his rights on principal and it wouldn't matter.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 09:12:00 PM**

"I do not have any augments. However, as I said, I am licensed by the City of Lanthae to perform maintanence and repairs as well as modifications -- within the bounds of the law -- on class 1 and class 2 external augmentations. In addition, I have a restricted license to possess class 3 external augmentations, which as you may know, allows me to possess and work on them but I may not under any circumstances sell them."

(OOC - class 1 external augments are ones that are "normal specification" artificial limbs (no super strength or built in tools). Class 2 external augments are ones with super strength an/or built in tools. Class 3 external augments are limbs with weaponry built into them.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:16:27 PM**

"Have you ever operated on augmentations which do not fall under your legal liscensing, or sold augments to parties without proper government-issued permission?" She demanded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 09:18:57 PM**

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with all due respect officer, i know not what this gentlemen is doing nor do i care. but if you strike me, not only will you be in serious trouble with your superiors, i will not hesitate to defend myself. and of course, if is not assault if the officer initiates the fight. you have absolutely no right to threaten me, a regular citizen, when i have not committed any crime.marita replied curtly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 09:19:55 PM**

Soren's eye twitched. "No. Am I free to go now?"

He looked out of the corner of his eye and noticed that the firefighters were still trying to put out the blaze.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:23:52 PM**

Emilena ignored the chattering dane and answered Almaya's question. "No, now you must consent to a full searching of your residence, with the stated purpose of locating any evidence indicating illegal augment construction or vending."

(OOC: If you ask for the warrant, it will have a typo.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 09:28:43 PM**

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thank you mam ' an oc wearing an Sergeant tag said coming up to marita ' we've got everything under control here.. please be on your way..' he said loudly.. 'dont get mixed up with Emilena, for your own safety. now go
' he added softly.
Mariota nodded at the ox, and continued down the street...
A word emilena after you have served him the warrant."'the ox whose name was Brownstreet said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:34:32 PM**

"Stay out of my business, Brownstreet," she muttered, struggling to keep her voice level.

"Officer Echo, the sargeant outranks you!" exclaimed one of the other officers.

"Not in this investigation!" She snapped back. As the arrest of Mr. Almaya was designated her chance to get taken off probation, she liked to interpret the orders as she was given power above her position on matters regarding the arrest of Almaya. Nevertheless, realizing the Captain may not see things that way, she acquiescently turned to look at the ox. "...yes?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 09:35:35 PM**

"I don't have to consent to anything unless you show me a warrant." Soren crossed his arms.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:39:41 PM**

A feline officer stepper forward and handed him a court-signed slip of paper authorizing a full search of his address for evidence of unlawful augment activity. However, the address failed to reflect that the workshop, as a former hotel building, was legally considered a very large Room 1A. The warrant specified no room number.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 09:42:05 PM**

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what the hell were you doing threatening that Great Dane with arrest? officer these days a 3 second search of the police database can reveal any and all disciplines, and a cursory search would reveal that you are on probation, one more violation away from termination. i pulled in a lot of favors to keep your last punishment to just probation, many of the other sergeants felt your conduct warranted termination. Broadstreet said coldly. ' your attitude has needed a major adjustment for a long time Echo, a MAJOR adjustment. if you EVER threaten a bystander with arrest or assault in my hearing again , you will be arrested, and facing a long time counting up the bricks in your cell! now go search the premises!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 09:50:28 PM**

Soren looked over the warrant. "I'm afraid you have the wrong address. My workshop is legally classed as a commercial building -- a hotel if I recall correctly -- due to the fact is was built on the remains of an old hotel. As a result, I do not consent to the search."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 09:58:27 PM**

"What?" She snapped. "Semantics! Get out of my way!" She made to push Almaya aside.

"Echo, it's not semantics," interrupted the feline, stepping forward. "If this is a house warrant, we can't--"

"He'll run if we don't arrest him now!" She snapped, finally losing her cool.

When the feline attempted to step in her way, her face flushed and she drew her katana, pointing it at him for a split second.

"What the hell?" He breathed, but she had already sheathed it, realizing that she had just badly overreacted and the consequences were not going to be good.

(OOC: I dont want her to lose her license in front of Almaya. Can Brownstreet commandeer the investigation and force her to relocate somewhere private?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 10:03:54 PM**

(sure)
echo come with me! broadstreet said fiercely. ' the rest of you , make sure this pklace is picked up.. poste haste..
- he took echo by the arm and led her outside he went out to a squad car ' get in ameliya.. now' he said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 10:08:04 PM**

Emilena flushed but got in the squad car. "It was a moment of weakness!" She protested once the others couldn't hear. "I wasn't actually going to do anything to him!"

Back at the house, the feline addressed Soren. "Umm, Mr. Almaya, you're right, we don't have authority to search your building. But we're just going to fix this and come back tomorrow, and if you save us the trouble and give permission now, it'll look really good when affirming your innocense..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 10:13:32 PM**

Soren crossed his arms. "Fine," he growled. "Be my guest if you want to go rooting through still hot debris. Just remember, I'm not at fault if you burn yourselves."

The firefighters had finally extinguished the blaze, leaving behind a charred ruin.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 10:14:27 PM**

save it echo. You drew a sword on a fellow officer' broadstreet said starting the car, and drove down the street. ' this is not the first time you'll 'lost it' either..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 10:28:42 PM**

"I know I'm not supposed to have lethal weaponry, but it's just a sword! It'd be useless against firearms!" She defended herself, ignoring all the times she'd killed gun-wielding assailants with it. "What are you gonna do to me back at the station? I demand to be read my rights!"

After a few fruitless minutes, the officers gave up quickly.

"We're sorry to bother you, and our condolences for the loss of property," the feline said sincerely. "One final question I'm legally obligated to ask; did you deliberately start the fire to destroy incriminating evidence?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 17, 2013, 10:30:07 PM**

The cloaked figure had moved to a closer vantage point, glancing around at the scene. "Hmm...something about this seems...odd. A fire, and immediately the police have a warrant to search the area? This doesn't seem right..."
He muttered...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 10:41:38 PM**

"I was asleep when the fire broke out!" Soren snapped. He rubbed his temples. "Look, I just want to go back to sleep!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 10:42:03 PM**

we're not going to the station, except for you to clean out your desk, and get your belongings' Broadstreet replied, as he turned into a back alley. ' he stopped the car. he went over to a innocent looking stairwell
and press down on a step. and the wall split open ' go on ' he said to Emilena' he said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 10:48:03 PM**

The officer jotted down Soren's exact words in his little pad. "Thank you Mr. Soren," he said. "Hope you find some place to sleep for the night."

And with that the officers began leaving.

Emilena marched into her office and packed what few personal belongings she had. There were extremely few; other than her files, she had never felt a connection to material objects except her sword.

"You're making a mistake," she said simply. "I've brought in more Augments than any other officer. And the orphanage was an accident. Any other officer would be given more than one strike!"

(OOC: She evacuated the orphanage of people when she burnt it down, clearly not an accident.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 10:50:36 PM**

Soren muttered something under his breath as he shut and locked the door. He washed his face, changed back into his pajamas and flopped down on his bed. Tomorrow, he'd go see if there was anything salvagable in the ruined workshop.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 11:04:31 PM**

This is not your first Strike Emilena. There was the Orphanage, then that officer you hacked badly with that sword ' Remember Officer Fuge? I sure do.. and there was the trashing of the census office in a raid six months ago.. this really your 4th or 5th strike.. your temperament is not becoming to an officer. we are supposed to protect and serve the public, to give them security and show them some warmth and compassion every so often. we're not suppose to berate, abuse or threaten them, as you did today. this is ultimately a position of trust and responsibility, of duty. and frankly, this is not the first time you've failed in your duty in a big way. as i said, i pulled in some favor to keep you from being terminated when you were put on probation last time' Brownstreet said.' that probation was supposed to last a year, instead you didn't last 3 months.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 17, 2013, 11:14:56 PM**

From a building opposite, a white rat peered anxiously from behind his curtains, his tail flicking nervously. He knew all too well the attitude some law enforcers took to augmented civilians, having being on the receiving end of several 'searches',often for the crime of looking at a police officer.

As the police drove away, he drew his head back in alarm, scared they'd notice him. Light spilled across his face, revealing a heavy criss cross of scars around two glowing red, cybernetic eyes. He wanted to walk across and see if Soren was okay. But what he was stopped by more cops? Better to wait until morning.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2013, 11:17:23 PM**

Aaron Geasbrecht scowled as he watched some crappy late nite shows on his TV.

He crushed his empty beer can and tossed it into the recycle bin.

"F---ing Gleamers," he growled. "Always causing trouble."

Most of the Augments in his job tended to show off by doing things like benchpressing girders or other feats of strength only possible with the augmented limbs and reinforced skeletons. Even though they were harmless, Aaron felt that they were a subtle message to him: you are an inferior being.

(OOC - Gleamer - derogatory term for an Augment.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 11:30:36 PM**

"None of that is important!" She snapped. "The destruction of every Augment possible is the final goal! Fuge wanted to give his wife a second chance...he should have thought about that before he married an Augment!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2013, 11:41:05 PM**

that was a personal matter between him and his wife' broadstreet. ' you are, to be truthful echo, an anti- augment fanatic. do you know what percentage of this worlds population you'd have to kill to get rid of all of them? 35%, over 3.5 billion people.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2013, 11:44:40 PM**

"Just let me get Mr. Amalay" she pleaded. "I know he's an augment, these legal hoops we have to jump through are idiotic. If I arrest Amalay, they drop my probation. Then you can give me a new one for this sword thing, but you don't have to discharge me!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 17, 2013, 11:49:21 PM**

In another part of the city, a tall figure stood at the mouth of an alleyway, cloaked in shadow. A chill wind blew through the night, and he shivered slightly, pulling the lapels of his trench coat tighter against his neck. Marcus' gaze never left the car parked on the opposite side of the road.

A figure approached. Marcus checked his watch. 2 AM. Right on time. He watched as Dr. Tarver unlocked his door, got in... And was vaporised as the explosion tore the car apart, lifting it several meters in the air and bringing the burning wreckage crashing to the floor. Marcus turned away, a rare smile playing across the Doberman's mouth. *Another disease spreader eliminated*. He vanished into the darkness, and it was as if he was never there.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2013, 12:02:19 AM**

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you have 72 hours to prove a air-solid case; Brownstreet finally said. ' you must do this legally, no extra stuff. by the book. if you can finger him, he'll be arrested and your first probation will be dropped and your job will be saved. if he is not in custody by midnight Friday, then you will be terminated with loss of pay and benefits. I'm giving you one final chance Echo, don't blow it. you can put your stuff back if you wish..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 18, 2013, 12:05:56 AM**

One of the officers present at Soren's house looked at Echo. "Officer Echo, with all due respect, there is *zero* proof that Mr. Almaya is an Augment. In addition, ó despite your adamant belief otherwise ó being an Augment isn't illegal."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2013, 12:20:28 AM**

(Ooc: Echo and Broadstreet are back at Echo's office.)

She grinned. "I don't need police help. I can get this done alone."

She dropped her suitcase on the ground. "I'll get Mr. Amalay in 72 hours, Broadstreet. Thank you."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 18, 2013, 12:24:46 AM**

As Axel drew back from the curtains, he heard a series of thumps above him. He jumped in shock, his eyes making a slight *whirring* sound as they darted up. He lived on the top floor of the apartment building. Who could be on the roof?

His metallic hands grasped the baseball bat that he always kept in his room. He slowly opened his window and scrambled out onto the fire escape. His trainers rattled the stairs leading up - he willed his legs to stop trembling. Reaching the top of the passage, he gathered his courage and peeked over. In front of him, a hooded figure was staring down in the direction of Soren's house. He squeaked in shock and ducked down, hoping whoever it was didn't notice him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2013, 12:24:55 AM**

---

clocks ticking echo. get on it..' broadstreet said he turned and went over to his office which was in a side room. he went to his desk and brought out a large clock ' he pressed a couple buttons and 72:00 appeared on the screen then started ticking down. he set the clock on his deskmm and the n sared pulling out some files and examining them..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 18, 2013, 12:28:37 AM**

The hooded figure glanced back at the source of the noise, eye glinting, then shook its head and vaulted off the roof, landing with a soft thud and glancing at the building that had been on fire...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2013, 12:31:47 AM**

Echo quickly left her office and marched back into the brisk evening air. She knew exactly what to do.

"Captain, this is Echo. I need a 24-hour surveillance team to assist me in watching Soren Am--"

"You've got some nerve calling me after that failed sting!" Snapped the captain. "That was disastrous! You remember the arrangement, Emilena! You failed to bring in Soren!"

"Blame the intern who can't fill out a basic warrant correctly!" She snapped back. "And you can't do anything to me, Sargeant Broadstreet has given me a 72-hour extension."

"Why does he give you so many damn chances?" grumbled the captain. "Dammit, all right, but you're on your own. I will allocate no men to assist you and authorize no police equipment. And in 72 hours I'll take your badge from you myself."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2013, 12:43:18 AM**

Marita meanwhile had stopped at a coffee shop and do some work on her computer. she ordered a hot cocoa and began searching the megaNet for information.. ' bombing other side of city are Augments to blame?
Typical anti-Augment slant' marita shrugged as she drank her cocoa..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 18, 2013, 12:46:17 AM**

When he next looked up, the figure was gone. Sighing with relief, Axel hurried back down, staircase rattling, and threw himself through his window, locking it behind him. Returning to his sofa, he continued tinkering with the new augment modification he'd started on. Maybe Soren would find some use for it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2013, 06:38:21 PM**

Emilena tried recontacting the Captain, but he wouldn't pick up. Muttering under her breath, she reconsidered her options. She could personally scope out Mr. Alamay's apartment, but the police investigation would not take kindly to her presence. She decided to go to her tiny apartment and get a few hours of sleep.

She began walking down the lonely moonlit sidewalk, eyes constantly darting from side-to-side and her hand never moving from the can of pepper spray attached to her belt.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 18, 2013, 06:43:32 PM**

From nearby, the cloaked figure stepped towards her, nodding to her...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 18, 2013, 07:08:26 PM**

Aaron sighed as he shut off the TV. "Screw this. I'm going for a walk."

He then dressed and got his keys, cell phone and gun. Technically, it wasn't legal to carry *any* gun without a permit in Lanthae but in truth, there was only one law about firearms in Lanthae: it's legal if you don't get caught.

Failing that: Have some cash or other valuables to bribe a dirty cop...of which there are many.

He exited his apartment and passed by a homeless Dhole begging for money. He looked over the Dhole for any signs of augmentation before he grabbed his wallet. Seeing as there were no visible augmentations, he placed some credits in the Dhole's collection plate.

The German Shepherd then took the elevator to midlevel, where he stepped out onto one of the many elevated walkways that crisscrossed Lanthae's buildings. Hoverbikers, frame-flyers and a few augmented flyers flitted through the smoggy air.

Aaron took a deep breath. The smoggy, biting air smelt like home to him. He then merged into one of the busier thoroughfares and continued his trek to his favorite late night snack joint: Electric Sheep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2013, 07:41:16 PM**

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broadstreet continued to work though his files, involveing 5 sets of augmentation, 3 illegal dealers of augments and 17 corrupt officers..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2013, 10:33:18 PM**

Emilena stifled a sigh when she saw the cloaked figure approach. "Oh, god, you...you always seem to know when I have no other options...I wouldn't be surprised if your mechanical filth lets you read my mind..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 18, 2013, 11:24:38 PM**

Adrian chuckled a little, letting his hood down and smiling bitterly.
"It's nothing so useful as that. Hell, if I had my choice, I'd never have had these...damn things in the first place."
He said, looking down at the cold metal of his left hand, then shaking his head.
"Anyways, it's not that I'm here because of that. I'm here because something seems off about this."
He added, recovering his calm demeanor quickly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 19, 2013, 12:10:01 AM**

Echo raised an eyebrow. "Not out here, follow me..."

She began walking briskly to her small apartment.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 19, 2013, 12:17:59 AM**

marita by this time had finished her work and her cocoa and decided to head home. hers was , in truth a lonely existence.. she had very few friends, due to being moved constantly during high school and laterr during college.. marita turned down a couple alleyways then headed across the street to an apartment building..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 19, 2013, 01:49:07 AM**

Marcus leaned against a wall, watching people walk by. It seemed to him that everyday, the number of augments was growing. His ears twitched. *I have to step up my work. They're infesting this damn city, like maggots on a rotting corpse*. He rubbed his eyes, a headache beginning to drill into his brain. It was late, and he'd been up for almost four days straight. Maybe it was time to call it a night.

He turned and began making his way back to the apartment he'd been staying for the last week. He passed a window, an orange pole stenciled in front, with a blinking, pink neon sign above the doorway. It said '**All Nude Augments, All Yours!**' An augment strip club. Marcus shivered with revulsion, and moved his hand to the back of his trench coat where he'd hidden his .44 Magnum. He was about to break in the door and put a bullet in every one of them... then his hand relaxed and moved back to his side. It wouldn't do to be caught now. *Always be careful*. He carried on home.

On the way, he came across a Great Dane heading in the same direction. He barely gave her a passing thought as his long strides carried him past her rapidly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 19, 2013, 04:12:04 PM**

Adrian followed behind Echo, sure to keep his augments hidden under his cloak as he did so, eyes glancing around frequently...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 19, 2013, 05:32:37 PM**

After a few minutes of brisk walking, Echo opened the lock to her third floor "coffin room;" a digout of wall about the size of a large horizontal locker, fitting a cot, set of two drawers, sanitary spray dispenser (cheap, portable, and practical alternative to showers) and a laptop on the drawers.

"Make yourself comfortable," she offered hollowly; he literally had one place he could sit, the corner of her cot.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 19, 2013, 09:06:43 PM**

Adrian chuckled, taking a seat on the edge of the cot and glancing around the room, his gaze repeatedly drawn to Echo...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 20, 2013, 10:14:54 PM**

Echo removed her outer clothes and ran them through a slit in the wall; they would be sent to a steamer, air-cleaned, and returned in minutes. "I plan to either sleep for the next 4 hours, or if anything you've noticed requires immediate attention, investigate whatever requires it. Though I warn you I won't be able to grant the police-immunity I usually can if we hit hot water; my sting on Mr. Alamay was unsuccessful and I'm even closer to losing my job..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 20, 2013, 11:42:03 PM**

Marita reached her apartnent on the fourth floor, opened the door, shut it behind her ad tossed the keys on the counter. inside where all the necessities, a small bed, a futon, a tv, and a small nook for where she ate her meals..' this place wasnt the Ritz, but it was better than living on the street.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 21, 2013, 12:16:17 AM**

Aaron entered Electric Sheep and was immediately treated to a pounding techno track emanting from a beat up boombox on the greasy counter.

He took a seat at an empty table and cracked open a menu. Fish ball udon sounded good right now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 21, 2013, 03:36:11 AM**

Marcus walked down the corridor to his apartment, old wooden floorboards creaking, and stopped at his door. He took out a small, square device aimed it at the door, and pressed a button. A UV beam quickly scanned up and down the door. It showed no hand prints, aside from his own. Marcus nodded with satisfaction and let himself in.

He flicked the light on and crossed to the desk in the corner of the room, on which sat a closed laptop. From the distance, pounding club music drummed through the walls. The *Electric Sheep* club. Not his favorite place, but it was usually a good place to find fresh recruits.

Sitting at the chair in front of the laptop, he reached up to the shelf above and took down a half eaten can of baked beans. As he began spooning the contents into his mouth, he flicked on the laptop. A holographic symbol of a red, cracked gear flickered into existence in front of him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 21, 2013, 05:07:39 PM**

Adrian looked away, averting his gaze from Echo as he nodded.
"It's nothing pressing, nothing we can act on right now, but there've been reports that indicate...trouble. Like something's been pulling the strings to incite these incidents. All the incidents have been happening the same way as what went down today. If you'd be willing to, it'd be something worth pursuing. If we find out it leads back to Alamay, then we can go after him. If we find anything else... well, then we'll have to figure out what to do."
He said quietly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 21, 2013, 11:02:12 PM**

Aaron paid for his meal of fish ball udon. He lifted the cracked plastic spoon to his lips and slurped the rich, salty broth.

He paid for a bottle of beer to accompany his meal.

A 24 hour news channel was talking about an anti-Augment protest in the Silica district. The German Shepherd let out a small smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 21, 2013, 11:33:39 PM**

"We should investigate," she nodded. "Your intuition has been extremely good in the past at picking up what's important," she nodded. "But I need to bring down Alamay regardless of whether he's involved or not in 71 hours."

She had just finished using the antibacterial spray when her clothes rolled back out of the slit with a ding remnicient of a toaster. She slipped them on with as much dignity as a person with no elbow room could muster. "Shall we set out tonight or in the morning?" She asked. She honestly wasn't that tired but she knew meditations she could undergo to control her state of being, and could make herself tired if beed be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 22, 2013, 06:07:07 AM**

The cracked gear symbol disappeared after a second, and was replaced with white lettering. A message.

One of our sources has reported Adrian Kibagami is operating at a location near you. May be investigating our recent actions against Soren Almaya. His elimination should be considered one of your top priorities.

Marcus' ear twitched as he read the holographic writing. Kibagami had been an irritation to their cause for too long. He still remembered their last encounter, still bore the scars. It would be a pleasure to cut him down once and for all. *He's investigating Soren Almaya...*

It would seem he had some watching to do of his own...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 22, 2013, 07:32:38 AM**

Adrian grinned, rolling his shoulders a little.
"Well, if we have a deadline like that, then I suppose we should probably get to work. Though...do you really think Alamay had anything to do with this? The way that things played out, it seems like you may have been set up."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 22, 2013, 09:05:59 PM**

"Regardless of whether he's innocent or not, I need to take him down or I lose my job..." Echo stated softly. "But we can focus on him after some reconnaisance. Did you have a place in mind to inspect?"

In the forest near the city, a lone woman was sprinting through the trees. She heard the beeping of tracking bots somewhere behind her, but they were heading the wrong way.

She tripped and tumbled off the road, stifling a panicked cry. This proved to be quite fortunate when a police car drove down the road past her. She heard a fragment of the driver reporting into a radio.

"All clear, suspect may be heading for Chancellorsville instead..."

She staggered to her feet, mud now staining her soaked gray dress. She saw the edge of the trees up ahead. The lights of a city.

As she staggered through the trees, she noted a set of guards stationed by the road. As she crawled through the grass past them, one checked a feed outputter.

"Apparently the tracers just gave up on the trail from the river. She could be anywhere from the lake down to Chancellorsville."

The other groaned. "Aww, hell, she isn't gonna make it this far down! I want to go home to my wife!"

"If you weren't out here, you'd be busting that inventor with Analena," his companion reminded him, as their quarry dragged herself through the grass past them, hoping to reach the city.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 22, 2013, 09:46:16 PM**

(OOC - um, maybe I should clarify the anthros in this world. Birds of prey, corvids, struthiformes (ostrichs and related birds), galliformes (chickens), mammals and reptiles are all anthropomorphic.)

Aaron finished his meal and paid for it. He then exited into a bustling elevated walkway as he headed back home.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 22, 2013, 09:52:42 PM**

(sorry, sorry.....I'm not really a furry, I constantly forget things like that. Turned the dogs into robots or something.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 22, 2013, 10:26:45 PM**

Adrian nodded.
"Right, then. I've heard some rumors about a club downtown, actually. Called "The Electric Sheep." Heard it's a major source of...unsavory customers."
He chuckled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 23, 2013, 01:56:57 AM**

Axel eyes glowed as he bent over the arm modification. He could see the current's flow, where it should flow, like a living organism. He replaced one section with another and then sighed, leaning back and rubbing his eyes with his black, robotic arms. *These eyes are great, but they sure do hurt after a while*... He switched them to their normal vision.

Axel stood up and bent down to pick up a pack of cigarettes. Crossing the room (softly, he didn't want to make any noise which might annoy his neighbors), he opened the window and slowly climbed up the stairs. The weird guy with the hood was still gone. *Thank god*.

He took a seat on one of the dusty ventilation units that looked out onto the edge of the woods and lit up. Swirling spotlights from further in the city would occasionally fall across the tree line, penetrating the darkness behind them. Axel stared idly into the trees, taking a deep drag, trying to clear his head.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2013, 03:52:41 PM**

Echo thought. "Isn't that the revolting strip club down the road? What could they possibly have to do with anything?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 23, 2013, 04:29:57 PM**

Adrian shrugged.
"Well, it probably's the last place anyone would think to look. I mean, who'd look for an anti-Augment group in an augment strip club."
He chuckled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2013, 07:08:53 PM**

Echo paused. This was the first time Adrian had mentioned this was an Anti-Augment. "Why should we try to shut down an Anti-Augment group? I hope they engage in as many terrorist acts as they like if it means fewer Augments on the streets."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 23, 2013, 07:49:08 PM**

Adrian looked at her for a moment.
"Well, to be honest...there is a reason. As far as these extremists are concerned, you're an augment, too. Between the accelerated growth, and the fact that there are neural implants in you..."
He said coolly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2013, 09:11:40 PM**

She stiffened up. Within milliseconds, her katana was in her hand and pressed against his neck. She had moved faster than humanly possible.

"How...*how* do you know that...?" she whispered extremely quietly, suddenly deadly serious. "Who told you about those...? And how many other people know...?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2013, 09:25:10 PM**

marita watched tv for a bit after throwing together a quick dinner of chicken. ' nothing much on.. she muttered to herself ' another fine day in this place.. why did i get stuck here.. i had a job lined up in chancellorville..'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 23, 2013, 10:11:18 PM**

Adrian calmly brought his hand up to the blade, easing it away from his neck.
"Well, for one...I could sense the EM frequency of the implants. And two, that just confirmed it. Besides, I went back to your old orphanage, and they'd left your file out on a desk. Don't worry, I don't think anyone short of a few of those terrorists would know."
He said reassuringly, hand still on the blade...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2013, 10:47:46 PM**

"I burned my old orphanage down to keep that information from getting out...and if you ever tell *anyone*..." she threatened, trailing off. She wasn't actually sure if she could kill him, if the time came. He was the only ally she had left.

After a few seconds, she sheathed her sword. "But you're right. We need to infiltrate this group. If any of them know about me, they need to be killed."

She glanced at her pillow. "I'm not going to sleep tonight. Let's get this investigation started now."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 23, 2013, 10:59:47 PM**

Soren Almaya got up to go to the bathroom.

As he relieved himself, his mind swirled with questions. Why would a police officer suddenly attack him? More importantly, why were the police so disinterested in what seemed like a patently criminal act?

He washed his hands and went back to sleep. He'd go salvage what he could tomorrow morning.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 23, 2013, 11:00:15 PM**

Adrian chuckled.
"So you're the one who burned that place down, huh? Glad someone did."
He said lightly, then looked at the ceiling.
"We're gonna need to get in, but I have a feeling they'll be on the lookout for me. And you're a cop and aug, so...We'll need to figure another way in."
He said seriously...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2013, 11:33:46 PM**

"We could kidnap a stripper when she gets off her shift and force her to let us in from the back," suggested Echo. "Augments will do anything if you threaten to break their cybernetic parts."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 24, 2013, 10:01:08 AM**

Adrian chuckled.
"Yeah, but if I had to guess, any of the strippers we'd have a chance with are probably gonna have emergency alert systems installed. We try to threaten them, they'll probably alert the guards. Our best bet to get in is to get in undercover."
He said with a calm grin...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 24, 2013, 01:05:09 PM**

"Hmmm..." thought Echo. "You're right. We're going to need disguises."

She climbed over him and opened the door to her closet. "We're going to need a stripper costume and a bouncer costume. I have someone who can help me in that regard. Or at least, is *about to* start helping me..."

Lily reached the city limits and stumbled into the city. She looked around, unsure of what to do. She didn't know who she could trust.

Finally, she decided to crawl into an alleyway and try to sleep there. Unfortunately, the alley was occupied.

"Who the hell are you?" growled a thuggish-looking bum, opening his coat to reveal a shotgun.

She stumbled backwards. "Sorry, I didn't see you--"

"Don't move," he growled. "I ain't seen you on these streets. You an undercover cop?"

"No, I'm not, I was just leaving--" she stammered, but then the guy grabbed her arm.

"You know what? If you're not a cop, or hell, even if you are, I'd rather keep you right here," he grinned wickedly. "You ain't much of a fight at all."

"Let go of--!" Her protests were cut off by a large ham-sized palm pressed against her mouth.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 24, 2013, 01:18:34 PM**

Adrian nodded.
"Right. An outfit won't be enough, though. You're gonna need some fake augments where they're gonna be looking. And I just so happen to have something that can help with that." He said cleverly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 24, 2013, 02:08:34 PM**

As Axel stubbed out the end of his cigarette, he heard a woman's cry from down below. Standing up, he cautiously peered over the edge of the rooftop. In the alley adjacent to his apartment block, he caught a glimpse of a figure in a dress struggling with a larger man. Then they moved out of sight, and the only sound was the faint scuffing of shoes.

He felt a coil of fear in his stomach. He knew it wasn't just a couple fooling around. *But what if he has a knife, or a gun?* Then his resolve strengthened. What kind of rat would he be if he did nothing?

Axel jumped over the railing and ran down the fire escape as fast as he could. He could still hear a muffled screaming. *I'm not too late...* he thought, as he reached the tarmac and sprinted for the alley.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 12:19:06 AM**

Echo frowned. "This will be the last time you discuss or gain access to my body my body in such a way," she cautioned. "Can you make the changes here, or do you need us to return elsewhere? Also before we go, I'll need to do some online searches...this individual is going to need *motivation* to assist us..."

The bum dragged Lily into the alleyway and roughly groped her. "If you don't scream, I'll kill you *afterward* rather than before..." he growled.

Lily didn't have the body structure or the strength to fight back. She screamed as loud as she could, but it was almost completely muffled by his hand. Still, several window lights clicked on, but as soon as each inhabitant noted the nature of the crime, clicked the light back off and sealed the glass to keep the sound out.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 12:28:18 AM**

Adrian nodded.
"Of course. And we can get the things set up here. They'll fool any cybernetic searches. I just have to get them set up. But...listen, if anything goes wrong, then...Just promise me you won't do anything too reckless, alright?
He said, eye softening...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 25, 2013, 01:00:47 AM**

Axel slowed as he reached the alley and poked his scarred face around the corner. The guy attacking the woman was facing the opposite direction to him, and they were making enough noise to muffle the sound of his footsteps. *Now's my chance...*

He started running up behind the man, eyes searching for any kind of a weapon. No luck - aside from a few odd bits of trash, it looked like the garbage collectors had been especially thorough tonight.

Without missing a step he charged up and leaped on the man's back, who started bucking, trying to shake him off. Yelling, Axel drew a fist back and thumped him on the side of the head. His arms were only a class 1 augmentation, but metal was still stronger than normal flesh, and each punch made a solid *THUMP*!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 01:10:10 AM**

"I shall promise you nothing of the sort," Echo affirmed, eyes glinting.

Acquiescently she removed her clothes (she was well aware of the body parts Adrian needed to "enhance," and aside from those there was little modesty remaining clothes would leave) and laid on the bed. "Were I in any better straits, there is no chance I would be trusting you with something of this nature," she felt like pointing out.

The man tried to swing his shotgun and hit his assailant, but Axel was too small. This threw the man off-balance and he tumbled off his feet, squashing Axel with a cry.

"Son of a bitch!" he yelled, hitting his head badly on the pavement. He glanced at Axel through blurred vision. "Who the--?"

He was cut off by a shotgun blast to his abdomen. Lily had retrieved the shotgun and clumsily reduced his lower body to red meat.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 25, 2013, 01:26:41 AM**

Axel gaped, his ears ringing and his face and T-shirt specked with red. The blast had thrown the bum across the alley, revealing the girl holding the smoking shotgun.

"Uh... y... you killed him. Oh, he's dead..." He pointed out, his mouth still stretched in an O of surprise.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 01:50:12 AM**

Adrian barely glanced up from the set of bags he had produced from inside his cloak.
"I'm well aware of that. If either of us were in better straits, then we wouldn't be here at all. Now, these are going to tingle quite a bit when they go on, just going to warn you."
He said calmly, picking up a few pieces of elaborate-looking metal plate...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 02:22:56 AM**

Echo glanced at them, her face betraying the slightest traces of equal parts disgust and apprehension...

Lily kept the shotgun out, and pointed at Axel. "Who the hell are you?" she asked, voice quavering. "What do you want?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 25, 2013, 02:58:04 AM**

"Whoa! Don't shoot, don't shoot!" Axel scooted backwards on his rear until his back bumped against the brick wall. He threw his arms up in the air.

"I saw that guy attacking you, so I came down to help, I'm not trying to hurt you, my name's Axel, please put the gun down!" He spluttered as he looked endearingly from her face to the shotgun leveled at his head.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 05:04:33 AM**

Adrian gave Echo a small, reassuring smile as he placed the first piece onto her shin.
"Oh, relax. Not like I'm actually doing an augmentation."
He said, as the metal piece sent a tingling all through Echo's lower body...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 12:45:27 PM**

Echo stifled a gasp. Of course, physical sensation was to be expected considering the bodily area, but she still had an extremely negative perception on sexuality of any kind, so the feeling of stimulation, no matter how moderate, was...unpleasant to her. At least, that was the only way she felt comfortable with it.

She felt like saying something dismissive to express her disdain for this feeling, but for once her wit failed her and she remained silent.

Lily swayed, then raised her gun to a non-threatening position and dropped it. Exhausted, she dropped to her knees.

"I'm sorry, I...just can't trust anybody. Ever since I woke up people have trying to kill me...I haven't slept in days...and I can't even remember what my name is..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 25, 2013, 01:36:56 PM**

When he saw her sink to her knees, Axel lowered his arms and stood up slowly. "Hey, it's ok... we, ah..." As he walked cautiously over to her, his foot caught on the toe of the dead man, and he almost fell flat on his face.

"Oh christ... Look, we need to get out of here!" Curtains in the windows around them were twitching. Gingerly, Axel approached the girl and tapped her shoulder. "It's not safe to stay here.We can figure out the rest later, ok?"

She looks like hell... he thought as he looked down at her. *And what was she saying about people trying to kill her?* Axel reached out his hand.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 02:47:06 PM**

Adrian looked up, glancing up at Echo with a small grin.
"Sorry. I forgot to warn you that that response might happen. I...hope it won't get worse, but we're gonna have to get this done."
He said softly, gently patting her arm...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 04:16:33 PM**

"Stop talking!" She snapped, embarrassed both at feeling the sensation and knowing he knew.

An emotional outburst unbecoming of her, she knew, but she wasn't exactly in her comfort zone at the moment. *Besides, he's an Augment,* she told herself, *it doesn't really matter what he thinks.*

Lily hesitated, but the rustling of a window shade somewhere above them convinced her to take his hand. "Thanks. And I'm so sorry...."

She willed herself to her feet; both felt like lead weights at the moment. "I don't--I want to get off the streets...not that I'm homeless but...I mean I might be homeless, I don't really know..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 04:32:32 PM**

Adrian smirked to himself, reaching down and affixing the plates to Echo's other shin.
"Sorry. Just trying to make you more comfortable."

He said gently, slowly moving his hand higher towards her thigh...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 25, 2013, 04:45:46 PM**

"I have an apartment on the other side of the street. I know getting far away from... this guy would be better, but I don't have anywhere else we can go and at least we'd be off the streets. And what's another dead homeless guy to the cops?" Axel added bitterly.

He noticed the girl seemed wobbly on her feet, and he tightened his grip slightly to steady her. Normally this kind of interaction would make him extremely nervous, but with his adrenaline pumping he didn't even think about it.

"Are you okay to move?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2013, 05:14:04 PM**

"Well...that...isn't necessary," she forced out, finding it tough to think. She almost asked if this was nearing being over, but she held her tongue rather than appear weak. She wanted to close her eyes but bad images kept popping up when she did that, so she had no choice but to watch her colleague at his work instead.

"Don't get too comfortable," she snapped, as he seemed to be enjoying himself a bit. "This is a one-time event. You augments are your sick fetish for metal parts..."

Lily nodded. "I'm not wounded...I don't think. I've just been on the run for, I think three days now..."

With Axel's help she began staggering to the apartment. "I used to have a fanny pack, with some things like food and a thermos, but I think I lost it sometime during the second day. A bullet broke the strap while I was running..."

She was far too exhausted to limit her words or use any sort of tact; she was ready to tell this person everything just because he was the first person in three days who hadn't tried to kill her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 25, 2013, 06:10:05 PM**

Adrian glanced up momentarily, hand slipping and lightly grazing her crotch.
"Wh-what? I don't have anything of the sort. I find normal, non-metallic bodies infinitely more attractive, thank you very much."
He said, eyebrow cocked...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 25, 2013, 11:13:10 PM**

Aaron passed by a drunken bum on his way home. "Poor guy," he muttered. It was when he saw the gleam of metal that his pity morphed to disgust. "Ugh, get a decent job," he muttered.

He spat his wad of gum into a potted plant on his way home.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 26, 2013, 02:00:27 AM**

Axel glanced around uneasily. There wasn't anyone else around. "Well, it looks like you're safe for now. If you're hungry I have, uh, hot pockets." He led her around to the building's front door. Luckily, the superintendent wasn't skulking around in the entrance like he usually was.

"So... you can't remember your name, huh?" Axel asked as he started to help her up the old wooden stairs.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 26, 2013, 02:26:59 AM**

There was a sharp intake of breath. "Then...why did you become an Augment?" Echo groaned, panting slightly. "And how much *longer* will this procedure last?" She gritted her teeth. Her entire body was pale and covered in sweat.

Lily shook her head as Axel helped her up the stairs. "I don't remember anything..." she admitted. "Before I woke up in a field, in the woods, at night...I haven't even changed clothes since then...haven't stopped moving..."

Once they reached his room, she wasted no time in darting to the fridge and tearing into three frozen Hot Pockets. She hardly noticed the muddy footprints her hiking boots made on the floor, or the handprints she left anywhere. Exhausted, she collapsed on the floor in front of his refrigerator.

The chance to lay down, the thought that she was finally safe for a time, and the sudden stomach cramp that came roaring up, all hit her at once and she just began crying. In despair, in confusion, in fright, in relief....probably all of the above. And she couldn't stop.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 26, 2013, 03:33:51 AM**

"Sorry about the mess," Axel said as he bolted the door and turned around. Then he froze as he saw the girl had collapsed, sobbing, surrounded by muddy footprints and discarded Hot Pocket wrappers. He made his way cautiously over to her.

"Hey, you," he said. Comforting crying women wasn't one of Axel's strong points. When she didn't stop, he took out a cup of instant coffee and gently led her over to the couch. "It's okay, you're safe here," he said, as he pressed a button on the side of the cup, instantly heating up the coffee, and handed it to her.

"You can change if you want. My clothes should fit you. I, uh, I don't have any woman's clothes, though," he told her, as he fiddled with his ear awkwardly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 26, 2013, 06:05:28 AM**

Adrian chuckled bitterly, as he attached the other thigh panel.
"I lost my arm and part of my face...Oh, a good few years ago. There was a bomb in someone's apartment, and I saved them. These were to save my life."
He sighed.
"Two more pieces. Roll over please."
He added...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 26, 2013, 06:33:36 PM**

Echo rolled over acquiescently, the initial embarrassment having subsided somewhat, and she was starting to get nettled by the fact that he must be enjoying this far more than he should.

"I suspect you're going to have to take these *off* for me as well?" she asked pointedly.

After roughly ten minutes, Lily had cried most of it out of her system and was laying quietly on Axel's couch.

"I'd prefer a shower...if that's okay," she finally answered, wiping one of her puffy red eyes. "If you could wash these, I want to keep wearing them...they're the only clues I have to who I am."

She sat up to sit her coffee, and noticed the couch was now badly soiled with mud. "Oh, I'm so, so sorry about all of this," she sniffed. "I'm sorry about everything..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 26, 2013, 06:40:21 PM**

Adrian shrugged.
"Unless you want them to stay on, then yeah."
He said calmly as he placed the next one onto her rear, a much more intense tingle surging due to the proximity to other body parts...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2013, 02:54:36 AM**

"That's okay," Axel said, the newspaper crinkling under him where he'd placed it over the mud to sit next to her. "I guess this place needed a clean anyway."

He got up and crossed the room to a door next to the refrigerator. Opening it revealed a tiny bathroom, with a rusty shower attachment and a light that could barely perform its purpose. "Sorry, I know it isn't exactly glamorous. And... watch out for the water, sometimes it can turn ice cold for no reason."

Axel indicated an Auto-Wash machine in the kitchen. "Before you have a shower, you could pass your dress through the door. I made a few adjustments to the Auto-Wash so it'll only take 5 minutes, then I can just pass it back once you're finished. Oh! I, uh, I won't look!" He said, turning red.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 27, 2013, 04:00:10 AM**

Echo clenched up instinctively and let out a strangled grunt. A moment of realization later and she instantly reverted to her previous state. "That didn't...just happen," she glared over her shoulder. "Just finish already..."

Lily nodded and walked into the bathroom. "Thank you..." After a few seconds the door cracked open and a single hand dropped her stained clothes and hiking boots onto the floor. The door shut and soon the sound came of the water turning on.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2013, 04:38:13 AM**

Axel picked up the stained dress and slotted it into the machine. It automatically put in the soap, and after a few seconds started spinning. He splashed some water on his face to wash off the specks of red from his fur, suddenly more acutely aware of the large gash marks across it. As he bent down to pick up her boots and put them on another sheet of newspaper, he noticed the corner of a white sticker poking out from the sole. He peeled it off. *Hmn. Boots must be new.*

When that was done, he picked up the TV remote from the table and flicked it on for the late night news. *Won't hurt us if the police have some big case on right now to take their attention off the guy in the alley*, he thought hopefully.

"...This woman is extremely dangerous, and should be treated as such. If you see her, do not, we repeat *do not* approach her. Call your local police, and allow them to take action." The news reporter was speaking into the camera solemnly. Next to him was a picture of the girl who was showering in the next room.

"Oh, this isn't good," Axel said out loud.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 27, 2013, 05:44:00 AM**

Suddenly there was a shriek from the bathroom, and then a crash.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2013, 06:00:13 AM**

Axel jumped up, startled. "I warned you about the cold water!" he called out. There was a thumping on the floor from below. "Sorry about the noise, Mrs Leibetz!" he called down.

When there wasn't a response from the bathroom, Axel started to get worried. He stepped closer to the door. "Hey, what happened? Are you alright?" He said, anxious, tapping on the door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 27, 2013, 07:35:38 AM**

Adrian chuckled softly.
"You know, it's okay to admit that you enjoy things every now and again."
He said earnestly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 27, 2013, 09:07:57 AM**

"I don't enjoy this!" Echo gritted her teeth. "Of course my body is going to interpret this as a pleasurable act, but that doesn't change that sexuality is vile and painful, a thing that common folk use as a recreation to distract themselves from their worthless existences!"

She winced as something mettalic connected electrically to her nervous system. "Let's just continue considering this the necessary evil that it is. Giving into the feelings is the first step to losing your soul to the Augments."

There was no response from Axel's bathroom.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2013, 09:24:33 AM**

After knocking several times, there was still no reply. "Alright, look, if you can hear me, I'm coming in!" He twisted the knob and pushed the door open. The shower was still running, and steam from the hot water had filled the room, making it hard to see for a second.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 27, 2013, 11:19:03 AM**

Adrian smiled.
"Heh. It's not all that bad, from what I've heard. And besides, Augments rarely even have sexual feelings at all. At least, most don't..."
He said with a blush...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 27, 2013, 11:34:28 AM**

"Considering the nature of the establishment we're about to visit, I have a hard time believing you." Echo flexed her gluteus. The false Augments merged comfortably, allowing complete movement from her hip joints. Good. "Is that all?"

Lily had fallen over in the shower. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry..." she hastily scrambled to her feet, noting that in her shock she had torn the shower curtain down. "I just got startled by..."

Above her left breast was what appeared to be a small tattoo. A crude glyph of an eye, black with a white iris.

(http://img827.imageshack.us/img827/9162/0oou.png)

"What is that?" she asked nervously. "I don't even know my own name, but I know I shouldn't have that! I don't like it!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 27, 2013, 12:23:42 PM**

Adrian chuckled a little.
"You know that there aren't many augments in there, right? Mostly non-augmenteds with that fetish, actually."
He joked...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2013, 04:05:37 PM**

Axel turned back from twisting the water off. "Woah... that's creepy as hell." He stepped further in, his shoes squelching on the floor, and bent in to get a closer look. "Looks pretty new, too. The skin around it's still kinda raw."

He frowned. "An eye. It's got to mean something... Like, a gang, or a company? I've never seen anything like it before." Axel suddenly blushed as he realized where he was staring. He held out a towel to her from the shelf.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 27, 2013, 10:26:49 PM**

"I choose not to spend time researching sex establishments," Echo answered matter-of-factly. "And you have not answered my question. How soon until we can actually go and begin the infiltration?"

In an attempt to distract herself from the proceedings, she grabbed her laptop and began researching a woman who had foolishly volunteered her name immediately after inconveniencing Echo...

"I don't like it...." Lily repeated.

Lily realized she was flashing her rescuer at about the same time Axel did, and quickly grabbed the towel. "Sorry!" she stammered for the umpteenth time that night.

She shut the shower off. "I think it'd be best if I just went to sleep...I know my clothes aren't done yet, I can just have them in the morning."

She trundled sleepily toward his couch.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 27, 2013, 10:55:54 PM**

marita continued flipping through the channels, all 100 of them.. almost nothing was on.. ' why isnt there anything good on..?' She muttered..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 28, 2013, 01:39:35 AM**

Axel caught her wrist. "Hey, you might as well crash on the bed. Don't worry, it's new, I changed it this morning. I'll take the couch. That way, if anyone busts through looking for you, they'd have to get past me, right?" He puffed out his chest, trying to look tough and not really succeeding.

He lowered his voice. "Look, don't worry. I know something weird is going on, and I'm going to help you figure it out." He thought it was probably for the best not to mention the police had a manhunt on for her just before she slept.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 28, 2013, 06:51:17 AM**

Adrian shrugged and chuckled.
"Neither do I. I just happen to know about that particular one since there've been quite a few problems around that area. That's all. I don't do strip clubs."
He said calmly, then leaned back, eyes drawn to Echo's butt.
"And just as soon as you're ready, we can start going that way. Just gotta get some decoy parts on."
He said, blushing faintly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 29, 2013, 01:47:16 AM**

"Well, don't be too slow," Echo said, eyes not leaving the computer screen. She was already trawling the police archives on a certain Marita Jones. "I'm fairly certain I've found what we'll need to grab our last team member...that was a shockingly simple search."

Lily nodded, wiping strands of wet hair out of her eyes. "I really appreciate what you've done for me." She hugged him, both out of gratitude and because she was about to fall over from exhaustion. "I wish I could repay you somehow..."

Silence fell as she couldn't figure out what else to say. She was already half-asleep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 29, 2013, 02:47:40 AM**

Axel froze up, shocked by the hug. Then he slowly hugged her back. "It's no problem." When he looked down, he saw she could barely keep her eyes open.

"Come on, you're about to keel over." He half carried her into the bedroom and helped her in, pulling the bed covers over her. "See you in the morning," he said, smiling shyly, as he moved quietly over to the light switch and flicked it off. He stood for a moment, watching over her, then pulled the door shut lightly.

Axel walked into the main room and thoughtfully picked up the bar code he'd pulled from her boot. After a moment, he absentmindedly put it in his jeans pocket and sat down on the couch, suddenly feeling exhausted, keeping a weary eye on on the front door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 29, 2013, 06:02:36 AM**

Adrian smirked, getting up and quickly stripping down as he pulled out several plates of another metal. He glanced back over his shoulder at Emilena, then busied himself with the plates. First came the thigh guards, which he slipped onto his legs, feeling the familiar tingle as they integrated into his nervous system. The next part was always his least favorite. He slung the belt with the manipulator system on, clasping it around his waist as the spineplate swung up, latching to his back before extending the needles that connected it to his spinal column directly.
"You know...ah, that stings... you're really quite pretty Emilena. You should try smiling more. I don't think there'd be anyone in the world who could resist your charms."
He said lightly, as he tugged on the mechanical arm sheath, as well as stepping into the boot-type leg armor. The last pieces to go on were a mechanical lower jaw cover and a mounted visor system, which he kept open for the time being...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 29, 2013, 08:06:51 PM**

Electric Sheep was quite crowded at this time of night. Pounding techno issued from the speakers as fog roiled around the dancing crowd lit up by strobes and lasers.

Among one of the dancers was an Indian Cobra named Sanjay Bhat. Despite his outward appearance, he was an Augment. In addition to his natural venom glands, he had two tanks that allowed him to inject his opponents with synthetic poisons or drugs. In addition, he also had an "infrared eye" implanted between his own eyes, granting him infrared vision like that enjoyed by Pit Vipers. He was originally from Palladis ó a city that totally banned weaponized augmentations for civilians. He had gotten special permission to have his venom tank implants as a security guard, but when he was fired, he fled the city to avoid having the mandatory surgery to remove his implants.

He gulped down a shot of vodka as he reared up and swayed to the music.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 30, 2013, 03:03:44 AM**

Marcus pressed the 'Off' button on the side of the laptop and folded his hands thoughtfully under his chin. Soren Almaya lived about 15 minutes away by car. If Adrian was going to be looking into him, then he'd be staying somewhere close too. *Probably helping the augmented scum out there as well.*

Knowing Soren's address was useful, but it probably wouldn't be much help. He knew that Adrian wouldn't just walk up to the front door. But... people loved to talk, especially about augmented freaks that thought they were the new Batman. And where else would they be more likely to talk than the most well known nightclub in the city?

It seemed the Electric Sheep was his next destination. As he rose from his chair, he muttered darkly to himself, his voice low and rasping. "I'm coming for you, Kibagami."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 31, 2013, 01:25:05 PM**

Echo got to her feet. "Excellent, let's move."

She got to her feet and quickly dressed. Then she marched smartly out of her room.

The police were scouring the city when they came across the bum's body.

"Check that shotgun for fingerprints. This doesn't look self-inflicted," the chief ordered.

(OOC: We should have a tie skip right here.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 31, 2013, 04:49:25 PM**

BOOM BOOM BOOM

Axel groaned and stretched out. His tail was curled around in his hands and he'd been nibbling it in his sleep, laid out on the couch. "Hmn... No, no more apples..." He muttered, starting to drift back to sleep. There was a click, as his neighbor's door opened. *"Hello sir, sorry to disturb you this morning. We're investigating a murder that occurred nearby..."* The commanding voice penetrated through the thin walls.

Axel's eyes opened drearily. Low, early morning sunlight had begun to leak through the windows, falling on his face and making him blink.

"Yes, unfortunately we have reason to believe that she's the perpetrator of the crime, and that she's taking refuge in the area. We're conducting a search of the building, so if you'll permit us..."

Axel shot upright on the couch. "Oh, crap..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 31, 2013, 04:59:57 PM**

Adrian stood outside the performer's door to the Electric Sheep, visor now shut, staring at the bouncer.
"Hold it. State your name and reason for presence here."
It droned, scanning Adrian with it's mechanical eyes. Adrian chuckled idly, glancing up at the towering hulk of metal and flesh that was guarding the door.
"Designation: Raiden. Desperado Enforcement, LLC. I'm here to guard the female."
He said calmly, eyes fixed on the machine before him...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 31, 2013, 06:22:52 PM**

The bouncer cyborg looked over the duo. It stood still as it racked its mind for the record.
"State name of female performer."

The cyborg then blocked the entrance with its considerable bulk. Underneath the dull armor plate of its massive three fingered hands, the emitters of a directed energy weapon could be see in its palm.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 02, 2013, 01:55:43 PM**

Lily continued sleeping, blissfully unaware there were cops marching up to Axel's door.

Echo glanced unflinchingly back at the guard. "StarPuppy Cimarron," she answered, somehow saying such a ridiculous name without breaking character. A heavy trenchcoat covered her inner outfit, which she was not eager to show off, but I guess she has no choice.

(OOC: Serris, perhaps their hacking was insufficient and they can't get in because they screwed something up? This would force them to go to Marita and grab her for her hacking skills.)

(Also, I apologize to all of you for my tardiness, I'm currently in Ohio after losing my SanFran apartment and am trying to find a new place to live. So a bit of a tough time for me.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 02, 2013, 02:01:04 PM**

Adrian stared fixedly at the guard, eye glinting.
"Will you let us in now? If she is late, then there will be trouble."
He said coolly...

((Oh dear. If there's anything I can do to help, shoot me a PM, k?))

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 02, 2013, 02:26:42 PM**

Axel slid off the couch and pulled his sneakers on, hopping from foot to foot. He could hear furniture rumbling, doors opening and closing as the police searched the next door apartment. They were making a thorough job of it. Axel's heart pounded as he realized there was no way he'd be able to hide Lily from them.

Footsteps creaked in the hallway outside, heading straight for his door. "Oooohhh...." Axel's breath whistled as, wide eyed, he scurried silently to Lily's door.

"Hey! Hey, wake up!" He whispered desperately as he eased the door open.

(No need to apologize LBT, I'm sorry you're in such a difficult position - I hope things sort out for you soon. I know we don't know each other that well, but you can send me a PM too if I can help with anything.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 02, 2013, 03:39:39 PM**

(No problems LB&T, life always has a way of catching us off guard. Hope you get everything straightened out.)

(OOC: Yeah, I'll go with that. Then we can get Nick back into the game.)

The cyborg whirred as it stood in front of the door and crossed its bulky arms. "Error. There is no 'StarPuppy Cimerron' performing here. You are in an unauthorized area, please exit and have a nice day."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 03, 2013, 06:18:25 PM**

Sorry too hear that LBT. hope things get better for you soon.
OOC how should marita gets grabbed? shes out for a walk, and then gets grabbed?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 03, 2013, 10:03:08 PM**

(OOC: No, Echo's gonna come to her house. She has her ways.)

Echo glared at him. "Fine. It's not like a girl needs to eat or anything," she spat. "Come, Raiden."

But she didn't stop walking once they were out of earshot of the guard.

"We need a hacker. And I've got the dirt to convince one that lives nearby..." she muttered, grinning wickedly.

Lily took some serious convincing; she was plum tuckered out.

"Whu--? What's going...?" she asked sleepily, only a quarter awake.

Both were interrupted by a knocking on the door. *BOOM BOOM BOOM*

Her eyes flew completely open. *"Who is that?"* she whispered, horrified.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 04, 2013, 03:30:01 AM**

"It's either the police, or a huge cub scout..." Axel hurried across to the window and looked down. Aside from a few cops walking over to the adjacent buildings, the streets seemed deserted.

He gulped and turned back to the girl. "They must have found the guy who attacked you. Damn, I didn't think they'd be so quick!" Outside, the pounding on the door continued relentlessly. "There's no way I could hide you here...Okay, hurry and get dressed, we need to get out of here. I know a guy who'd take us in, I think."

"Mr Whent, it's the police! We know you're there, open up!" A deep voice thundered through into the apartment.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 04, 2013, 06:40:52 AM**

"Raiden" chuckled a little, nodding his head.
"I was going to suggest that we just cut our way in, but your idea works better. We'll go with it."
He said jokingly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 06, 2013, 12:38:27 AM**

Lily staggered to her feet and stumbled into the kitchen to the washer. Her clothes hadn't been dried, but since it composed of a dress, hiking boots and socks she was able to put it on pretty easily anyway.

She returned to the bedroom on the second floor. She assumed Axel would rather stay with his house than come with her. "I'm not staying here when you open that door," she said. "They'll find me. I'll take my chances on the roofs." She hesitated, wondering if this was the last time they'd see each other. She could never really say thank you for what he'd done for her...

The pounding stopped, though that was more frightening than reassuring. What were the police about to do next?

Lily marched up to Marita Jones' door and knocked loudly. "Police!" She announced. "Open up in the name of the law!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 06, 2013, 02:04:50 AM**

"Alright, go up to the roof but be careful!" Axel spoke into the silence. "There could be cops up there too. The guy I know lives..." A mechanical whirring from the corridor made him stop. Every second or so there was a thump and the ground trembled beneath their feet. He turned back to the girl. "What the hell is..."

CRASH! The door smashed inwards, showering the room with wooden splinters. On the other side, a huge Police-Bot stood hunched in the doorway, lowering it's ham sized fist. Two cops stood behind, cradling their automatic rifles. It scanned the room with it's glowing orange eyes, stopping when it reached Axel and Lily. "**Fugitive sighted**", the Bot intoned with a mechanical voice.

"Well, I'll be screwed..." One of the cops said. The other turned his head and shouted down the corridor. "We've found her! Apartment 426!"

The huge robot began to push his way through the doorway, an energy weapon building itself up in it's palm.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 06, 2013, 08:50:13 PM**

marita opened the door . ' what can i do for you officer?' she asked in as kind and inoffensive a tone as she could muster. she wasnt sure, why Lily was here, but perhaps someone had reported something missing on the floor and was having them search door to door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 07, 2013, 01:58:04 PM**

Lily wasted no time. In a second she had grabbed the bedside lamp and sent it hurtling through the window. She then leapt through the shattered window herself and went running along the roof, not even knowing what direction to go.

Emilena marched into Marita's room without another word and stripped off her outer clothes, revealing a metallic bra and panties with golden tassles.

"What's the matter, Marita Jones?" she asked, smiling sensuously but unable to completely hide her malice. "Like what you see? Want to take it to the bedroom? From what I heard, you make a good submissive..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 07, 2013, 02:35:21 PM**

marita recoiled at Emilena. ' what in blazes are you doing? you barge into my apartment, only to pull a striptease?' she staid. she was not turned on by Emilena, while the fox had a nice form, the circumstances were not romantic in the slightest, and the great dane caught the underlying coldness in the look on her face. "what do you want? and who told you i was a submissive?" she demanded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 07, 2013, 03:19:57 PM**

Axel heard glass smash and turned to see Lily disappearing through the window. "Hey, wait..." he began, then felt a rush of heat as the Police-Bot fired the energy weapon. The beam missed him and punched through the door frame, but was close enough to lift Axel off his feet and send him crashing against the wall.

He lay dazed for a moment. There was a loud hum as the weapon in the robot's arm charged up for a second shot. It lumbered closer; at this range it wouldn't miss. Groaning, Axel reached up and grabbed the window sill, pulling himself through and out. As he stumbled up the fire escape to the roof, he could hear the cops in his apartment. "They've escaped to the roofs! Follow them, and get a chopper out here now!"

When Axel reached the top, he started sprinting, looking desperately around him. There was no sign of the girl. "Hey! Where'd you go?!" he shouted. *The only safe place I can think of is Soren's... how's she gonna get there if I don't show her?!*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 07, 2013, 06:57:22 PM**

Adrian stepped into the room behind Emilena, hand on his sword's hilt as he stepped up beside her.
"Should I simply tell you, or should I call up the video file?"
He said calmly.
"I apologize for the intrusion, however, my associate said we had need of you, and your skills seem useful."
He added...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 07, 2013, 07:19:21 PM**

"A former lover of yours lost her assets when arrested by the police," Emilena chimed in. Pushing a button on her wrist, a projector hidden in her fishnet arm sleeves displayed a silent homemade video of Marita intimately involved with another female Great Dame.

"She didn't even pick this back up once she'd served her time," Emilena taunted. Of course, this was because the police never bother to tell prisoners that this was a possibility, but Marita didn't need to know the details. "She probably went right back to abusing...*this*."

Emilena held out a tiny bag of powdery yellow crystals. "Biproxytol. One of the most dangerous, scarce, and illegal drugs on the planet. Have you heard of it?" Her eyes sparkled knowingly. "Would you like to hold it?"

Lily saw the edge of the roof approaching quickly, and without hesitation vaulted the gap. One thing she had quickly learned about herself was her youthful athleticism.

Unfortunately her landing was not great went tumbling on the other side. Unable to regain control, she went thudding into the opposite balcony, startling a couple who had dozed off in each other's arms.

The male's cursing echoed behind her as she staggered to her feet and began limping away at a reduced speed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 07, 2013, 07:27:09 PM**

Adrian stood silently next to Emilena, however his gaze kept drifting to her, a small blush coloring his cheeks...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 07, 2013, 07:48:04 PM**

Its extremely addicting, few are lucky enough to break free of its grip' Marita said, gazing at the bag. ' so i'm guessing you know where she is, and if i help you with- well whatever it is you're trying to do- you'll let me see her. Am I in the ball park ' Marita said ' Her name is Rose, in case you are wondering.." she added.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 08, 2013, 02:46:46 AM**

Axel heard a shout somewhere to his left, and he changed direction, shoes skidding on the rough surface. He soon reached a gap between the two rooftops, and as he approached he slowed down instinctively; heights weren't his strong point.

"They're jumping the roof to complex 3S!" Someone cried out behind him. Axel glanced over his shoulder and saw the cops were catching up, though their heavy body armor slowed them down. He picked up speed and leaped over the gap, stumbling when he landed on the other side but managing to keep his footing.

In front of him, a man was leaning on his balcony, a woman by his side. "Hey, did you see..." Axel started.

"Woman on the roof?! She went right. Bitch is crazy, you gotta put a leash on her!" The man said, gesticulating wildly. His companion nodded gravely.

Axel turned and started in that direction, catching a glimpse of a grey dress disappearing around one of the ventilation units. "Wait up!" he called out. The distant rumble of an approaching helicopter was getting louder. *We need to find cover, now...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 08, 2013, 03:16:17 AM**

"You're smart," Emilena smiled. "We need someone smart. And yes, you can see Rose again, but only if you get us into The Electric Sheep. Your druggie friend is a....performer there. Let's go with that. And if you're a *really* good girl, we might let you have some biproxytol. It's been...what, ten years for you? Surely you miss the thrill."

The taunting certainly wasn't necessary, but this Great Dane had been involved in Emilena's humiliation at Soren's house, so she didn't feel like pulling any punches.

Lily was panting by the time she reached the edge of the roof. Below her she saw the apartment complex's illuminated pool.

Well, she was already wet...

Jumping feet-first over the side, she became incredibly startled when she hit a glass roof within ten feet and went sprawling. When she tried to get up, her leg seared in protest and didn't respond; it had been dislocated.

"No, no no no...." she muttered, tears stinging her eyes from the pain. She tried to get to her feet, but she'd cut her arm on Axel's window and her hand slipped in her own blood.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 08, 2013, 07:43:46 AM**

Adrian glanced at Emilena, then stepped towards Marita.
"I will expand on that deal. If, and only if, you fulfill the terms of the contract, I will help this woman be treated for her addiction."
He said curtly, eye glinting...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 08, 2013, 08:57:24 AM**

There was a thump up ahead, and as he rounded the ventilation unit Axel heard a cry of pain over the edge of the roof. He ran up and peered over, starting when he saw Lily lying in a heap on the glass ceiling over the pool. There was a small crack in the glass, but it didn't seem to be getting any bigger.

"Hang on, I'm coming down..." Axel slowly lowered himself over the side, and when he was hanging by his fingertips he let go, landing with a light thump. He made his way over to her, stepping gingerly and trying not to look down. "Are you okay?" Then he saw her leg twisted at an impossible angle. "Oh jeez..."

Voices rang out above them. "Which way'd they go?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 08, 2013, 11:13:01 AM**

My my aren't you a vindictive bitch' Marita said curtly to Emilena. ' as i said before that stuff is extremely addicting, and its extremely difficult to break free from its grip. i dont want any part of that stuff.. i'm guessing this is somehow payback for me reminding you of your responsibilities as an officer... you dug up dirt on me to get even, huh. i'm guessing your superiors are loving you right about now?' she returned the jibe emilena had thrown at her. ' the electric sheep huh ' not exactly a high rent place , even as strip clubs go. they don't make enough to afford the highest level security so hacking in, will be a relative breeze.. what is roses stage name? Marita said as she went to her computer and powered it up..' i'll help you, but not for your sake. Its for Rose that I'm doing this. and you had better come through with that promise of detox.' she said looking at Adrian. " rose deserves better than what shes had to deal with.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 08, 2013, 02:48:52 PM**

Adrian nodded.
"I don't go back on my word. Once we're in, I'll get her out. That is a promise."
He said, eyes gleaming confidently...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 08, 2013, 05:17:15 PM**

Emilena smiled. She'd suffered far greater insults from far more eloquent and dangerous people to care about such emotionally-charged retorts.

"Her stage name is 'Honey Bunny,' which makes no sense to me but I suppose it pays the bills...here's a false bio and work account for my own stripper identity," Emilena handed Marita a flash drive. "I thought we had incorporated the account already, but we must have erred somehow because we were denied access to the club. So just figure out what mistake we made, and get that account activated.

She glanced at Adrian. "Figure out something for you to do while you're at it. Adrian is my bodyguard, in name only." She felt like adding that last part to make it very clear she needed no protecting.

"Help me up!" snapped Lily, who despite the request managed to get to her feet on her own. With a pop and a flash of pain, her dislocated leg relocated itself. She began hobbling toward the side of the roof. She saw trees, and in her mind trees meant safety.

Before she reached it, she looked back at Axel. "If you can...break the glass...they'll think we went that way..." she forced out, and then dropped over the side of the building, aiming for some large bushy hedges flanked by a concrete walkway and a grassy but solid terrace.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 08, 2013, 05:36:47 PM**

Adrian chuckled.
"I'm already in their system. Long story."
He said calmly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 08, 2013, 05:52:18 PM**

Marita plugged in the hard drive and began to type away.. ' ah i see you forgot to double encrypt your pass word, and and file 3 years of experience along with references from previous

work. they double and triple check new employees but if you have experience, its easier.' she added as she worked on incorporating the false id. ' after about 6 minutes she straightened up. ' Done' she said I'm a model agent who is looking for talent for a stage show
she said as she printed out ids ' hers read ' elisa turner. ' heres yours ' she said tossing it to Adrian. and yours' she said to Emilena. ' by the way ' you're scheduled for a performance at 10 pm ' she smirked. ' had to make it convincing after all.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 08, 2013, 08:30:04 PM**

Adrian grinned as the two halves of the cybernetics that covered the lower half of his face, rolling his neck.
"Cutting it a little close, aren't you? Heh. Whatever. Once we're in, point out your sweetheart to me, and in the event that things get loud, I'll do what I can to get her out of there."
He said, voice masked by the overlay.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 10, 2013, 04:07:14 PM**

Axel watched Lily drop over the side, then turned back to the glass. The scuffing of feet from the roof above was getting closer, as was the thumping of the police helicopter heading straight for them. She was right, and it was now or never.

He stretched his foot out, and with a grunt stomped it down as hard as he could over the crack that had already formed. The glass panel shattered, the shards scattering over the pool below - luckily, nobody had gone in for a swim.

"Hey! Did you hear that?! It came from this way!" Someone yelled.

Axel quickly scrambled to the edge and fell over the side, landing with an *Oof!* next to Lily in the bushes, praying they hadn't been seen going this way.

(Sorry for not adding to this for a bit, hadn't seen it was updated)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 10, 2013, 07:12:48 PM**

Emilena started. "What? I wasn't actually going to dance, you dolt! There are more important things to focus on while we're in there!"

She checked the time. Of course, at top speed they would arrive with just enough time to make her...dance.

After a long frustrated guttural noise, Emilena put her tenchcoat back on and stomped out the door. "If any of those disgusting cyberphillic drunkards try anything, they'll be losing more than their tips..."

Lily helped him to his feet. "They're going to call for backup, and backup *always* arrives from the opposite direction of the initial cops!" She whispered frantically. "We can't leave the city! Where do we go?"

It was taking all her effort not to sprint for the forest...she knew they'd catch her. She had to put her faith in Axel once again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 11, 2013, 01:16:09 AM**

"Ok... Where are we now?" Axel gasped, trying to get his breath back while craning his neck for a street sign. When he saw one, he nodded. "It's a few blocks away. It'll be safer if we cut through the side streets. C'mon, we can get to Soren's quick if we hurry."

Luckily, it looked like all the police had followed them up to the rooftops. He pulled Lily down the road and through the alleyway opposite. Whenever they had to cross the road, he looked anxiously from side to side, but apart from a few cop cars racing past, it was clear. The helicopter soon thundered over them, but kept going.

After 10 minutes, Axel spotted a large house in the distance. "We're here..." He smiled hopefully at Lily. "He'll take us in." Leading her up the driveway, Axel started thumping on the front door. "Soren! You in?! You gotta help us!"

Marcus stalked his way down the Electric Sheep's entrance corridor, his normally heavy footsteps dampened by the pink carpeting and pounding music up ahead. He tucked his fake identity card into his pocket. It was expensive, but worth it; fooling the guard had been easy.

He reached the two main double doors and pushed them open and instantly the music swelled, assaulting his ears. There were less patrons than usual, as would be expected at an earlier time like this. He skulked over to a table in the corner, brushing aside a dancer who tried to stroke his arm, and took a seat, watching the small crowd writhing on the dance floor. *One must know something...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 11, 2013, 10:48:23 AM**

as i said , i had to make it convincing. ' marita said as she grabbed a few things and followed emilena and adrian out of her apartment.. she headed down the steps to aderians car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 11, 2013, 11:08:25 AM**

Soren heard the pounding on the reinforced door echoing through his house. Quickly throwing on his shear-thickening fluid impregated clothing over his pajamas. He donned his head mounted display and grabbed his shotgun. He silently prayed they weren't the bent cops he'd encountered earlier.

His house was illuminated with infrared light, rendering it completely dark except to those who could naturally see in infrared or who had augments or equipment designed to do so. Luckily, his head mounted display allowed him to see in such wavelengths.

The man made his way to the front door and patched his HMD into the house's cameras. As if the door didn't exist, he saw an Augment and a normal Human woman.

He recognized the Augment; it was one of his best customers. He opened the door but kept his gun ready.

"Axel," Soren said with a yawn. "It's four in the f---ing morning. What's so important that it couldn't wait until the next day?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 11, 2013, 02:47:50 PM**

"Soren! Hey..." Axel grinned nervously. "I, uh, I know it's early but... we could really use some help." He indicated the girl standing next to him. "This is... well, we actually don't know her name, but..." Axel coughed, knowing what a mess they must look, and how bizarre the situation must be for Soren.

From somewhere in the distance there was the faint wail of police sirens. Axel looked behind them nervously. "Look, I know this looks really weird, and we'll explain everything, but could we come inside? It's not safe for us out here. Please."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 11, 2013, 03:56:16 PM**

Adrian chuckled and nodded to Emilena.
"If any of them get too close, they'll lose their limbs. That, I can promise you."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 11, 2013, 10:28:53 PM**

Lily didn't say anything. This man was clearly armed, and she trusted Axel's ability to persuade him over her own.

She shivered in her damp clothes and couldn't help but glance behind her to see if the police were close enough to get a visual.

Emilena sat in the front, keeping her face and tone neutral. "Let's just get there and get this moving quickly. How long does a strip dance even go anyway?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 12, 2013, 07:55:28 AM**

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well it depends on the dancer really. some only go for a minute or two, others can go for 15 or 20 minutes.. yours..' marita typed in a few libnes.. ' will be for 3 minutes. a short one. so grit your teeth, flash a smile- and your tits- and bear it for 3 minutes..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 13, 2013, 09:49:02 PM**

Soren sighed but quickly ushered the two into the house and bolted the door shut.

The lights immediately lit up, revealing a very sparsely decorated foyer ó just a few potted plants and sculptures made of old cybernetics hardware. He slung his shotgun over his back.

"How about we discuss this over some hot tea?" he said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 14, 2013, 05:09:11 AM**

"*You* would know how long strip dances go off the top of your head, wouldn't you..." Emilena muttered, still sore from the prospect. "Make sure to stay ten miles under the speed limit for the rest of the drive, Adrian. Heaven forbid we get there at a reasonable time."

Lily zipped into the house impolitely fast.

"Th--that would be good, Mr. Soren..." She realized her teeth were chattering. She was colder than she thought. "Thank you, and I'm very sorry for the trouble..."

She looked at Axel, intending to follow his lead. She didn't want to risk insulting their host by touching or doing something she shouldn't.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 14, 2013, 02:10:58 PM**

Axel nodded, relieved to be off the street. "Some tea would be great. Thanks Soren." He smiled what he hoped was a reassuring smile at the shivering girl next to him, and moved closer to her. She looked completely lost.

He inclined his head towards one of the sculptures as they made their way through the foyer. "Hey, one of the old M87-D augmentations," he said, trying to start an idle conversation. "I thought those things were impossible to find now?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 14, 2013, 03:40:59 PM**

"They are," Soren replied. "They're an old class 2 augmentation made by Scaerin Cybernetics from Palladia. As you know, Palladia bans class 3 augs for civilians ó no exceptions. Even if you're licensed from another city or whatever, they won't honor the license. Consequently, someone decided to exploit a loophole in the law by making augs with built-in tools that could easily be turned into weapons. Arms with laser cutters that had a tight focus and power output equal to that of a standard laser rifle, legs with 'traction spikes' sharp enough to tear apart metal. Stuff like that. They got busted and the company went out of business. Even then, their augs tended to be on the expensive side, so they didn't sell too many."

He pointed to the part that Axel mentioned in the sculpture. "As for the M87-D aug, it came from some guy who mangled it in an industrial accident. All I could do was detach it from the mounting points and sell him a cheap replacement that functioned only as an arm. As for what that arm did, it had a built-in line thrower so someone could fire a line to someone in distress or to help launch guy lines for construction or climbing. Needless to say, it doesn't take a genius to replace the line with a harpoon, a metal slug or even a grenade."

The trio soon arrived at his equally sparse kitchen. Steel countertops had all sorts of spices and cooking equipment scattered all over. Soren dispensed some hot water from his electric kettle into some beat up mugs he grabbed from the dishwasher.

A sprinkling of tea leaves over the hot water and in a few minutes, three cups of steaming tea graced a serving tray made from some old scrap metal and rivets.

The Human took a seat and held his mug of tea. "So, Axel, what brings you here?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 14, 2013, 04:37:51 PM**

Axel took his own mug. He couldn't feel it's warmth through his hands, but the hot steam wafted up to his face, making him feel slightly more relaxed. He leaned against the counter, curling his tail around his leg nervously.

"Alright... the police are after us. Well, they're *really* after her, and now me indirectly," Axel began, indicating Lily. Then he paused and took a deep breath. "This whole thing's going to sound crazy, but I guess I should start from the beginning. It was... I dunno, a couple of hours ago. I was up on the roof, smoking. I heard a fight, and when I looked down I saw some crazy guy dragging her down an alley. He was gonna *do stuff* to her, Soren... So I ran down to help her, and there was a fight and... the guy ended up dead."

Axel turned his cybernetic eyes to Soren's. "But he was crazy, he was going to kill us!" He looked to Lily for support. "Right?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 14, 2013, 04:48:02 PM**

"What you did is not my business," Soren replied tersely. He sipped his own mug of tea.

He then fixed his HMD with its stark blue "guiding laser" on Lily. "I don't know you but since Axel says you're okay, I'll trust him. Now what's your side of the story?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 14, 2013, 07:00:43 PM**

Adrian chuckled, rolling his eyes.
"Right, right. Besides, if we're on time, we can find always have a creative excuse for our lateness."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2013, 12:48:41 AM**

She shrunk away from the blue laser instinctively, having seem similar ones while on the run in the forest.

"Creativity is lost on a mind addled with circuits and chips," Emilena stated. "Their subroutines can barely handle Boolean values, answers become increasingly ignored the further they get from 'true' and 'false.' It's like self-inflicted retardation. Sickening..."

(OOC: I wouldn't trust what Emilena is saying right here. She's just being bitter; I'm sure cybernetics are capable of handling a vast spectrum of human emotions and thought processes. Just wanted to make sure y'all knew I wasn't trying to define Augments in this world.)

"I don't...have very much to say..." Lily said meekly. "I don't know who I am, or what my name is. Or why they're chasing me..."

She took a sip of tea to calm her nerves and chattering teeth, and started from the beginning. "Four nights ago I woke up in a forest, the same one outside this city. I was wearing these clothes, and had a backpack. I traveled to the plains and saw police officers there, but when I called to them they shot at me so I ran back into the forest. After that they brought helicopters and trackers into the forest, but I avoided them for three days...I didn't have time to sleep, or eat...at some point I lost my backpack which had my protein bars and water in it. I was starving after that..."

She glanced at Axel, and gave a small smile. "I reached this city and Axel let me into his house. But they tracked us there and...oh...they're probably after you now, too!" she realized. "I'm so sorry! You've been so nice to me, but now they're probably searching your house and telling the trackers about you...oh, I'm causing so much trouble for everyone..." She teared up slightly, but blinked and forced the tears at bay. She didn't want to break down again, not in front of Soren. Having already ruined her first impression with Axel, she didn't want to do so again.

She took a deep breath and another shaky sip of tea. "I wish I just knew who I was, whether I was worth all this. What if I'm a convicted killer or something? I have absolutely no clues to my identity..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 15, 2013, 02:16:24 AM**

"We're going to figure it out. I promised you," Axel said firmly. "Look at her, Soren. Does she look like a mass murderer to you? She's even got some creepy tattoo that she knows she didn't have before. It's like some kind of... conspiracy or something."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2013, 04:42:47 AM**

Lily nodded and pulled her dress collar down until Soren could see the eye-shaped tattoo above her breast.

(ooc: dont forget about the sticker on her boots.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 15, 2013, 11:10:26 AM**

that info is available on the website, so dancers know what range they have to dance in ' Marita said. ' I wonder if rose will recognize me..' she said thoughtfully.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 15, 2013, 07:20:14 PM**

Adrian smirked a little.
"If you two were as close as it sounds like...then I would say yes. The heart is a funny thing. It often remembers things that even the mind forgets."
He said softly, then glanced at Emilena.
"And you know, Emilena, quite a few cybernetics keep their original brain."
He added.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 16, 2013, 07:39:56 PM**

(OOC: Serris, you're up)

"If it was a brain that desired cybernetics in the first place, I shant think too highly of it," Emilena muttered.

She opened the door before the car had even gotten into the parking space and marched over to the cyberbot guarding the door.

"Hey you ferromagnetic Foukou, here's my damn paperwork, now let me in before I miss my dance. It's in *forty-seven seconds* in case your internal chronometer was over-promised in the sales brochure."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 16, 2013, 07:52:32 PM**

Adrian stepped out of the car, rolling his eyes a little as his visor snapped shut, walking towards the door guard.
"Are you going to let us in now, or am I going to have to contact my supervisors with the request to start removing limbs until you let my client in?"
He said coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 16, 2013, 10:57:17 PM**

Marita's hacking had done its job. The droid scanned over Emelina.

"Welcome, Starpuppy Cimerron." The droid moved aside to let "Starpuppy" and her "bodyguard" into the dressing room.

One of the Augment dancers was using a wrench to adjust some wires on her gleaming metallic legs. The dancer was a Golden Retriever but her legs were distinctly equinoid with polished chrome hooves.

Soren looked at the tattoo. His HMD even scanned for matches on the web. Two words blinked in his visual field: No results.

"I've never seen a tat like that before."

He turned to Axel and drained the rest of his tea. "Speaking of conspiracies, something stinks about the police here. I mean, fire breaks out in my workshop, I call the cops, one of them tries beating me up and using a fake warrant to go snooping through my house."

He rubbed his temples, being careful not to knock his HMD off. "Something ain't right and I want to see what the hell'a going on!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 17, 2013, 02:25:20 AM**

Axel gulped down some of the tea. "Yeah, I saw the cars. Aw man, there was was a fire in your workshop? Was it an accident? Is it bad?"

(OOC: The sticker's still in Axel's pocket, just thought it would be better to talk to Soren about his problem first)

"Keep talking," Marcus ordered.

"Oh, well I would... but... *hic*... my glass is... uh, empty..." The drunk slurred, the stench of alcohol on his breath strong enough to make Marcus' eyes water. He'd overheard the drunk talking with his similarly inebriated friends about a 'flying man in the city with a sword'. Gritting his teeth, Marcus had pulled him aside to the bar.

He narrowed his eyes. *A broken arm would get him talking just as easily.* Begrudgingly, he lifted a hand to the barman to signal for another whiskey, then returned his glare to the drunk, his back to the stage.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 17, 2013, 03:36:28 AM**

"You have a workshop? What do you make?" asked Lily. Perhaps she could get on his good side by showing interest in his chosen profession.

Emilena was barely let into the dressing rooms when a man in a tight suit rushed over to her. "Are you StarPuppy?!?" he demanded in a high voice.

"It's 'Miss Cimarron' to you," she retorted, narrowing her eyes.

"We found her, roll tapes!" he yelled into a headset. "If you're ever this late again, you can forget about working here ever!" he shouted at her.

She snarled in response, but held her tongue as he raced away. In the dressing room she unflinchingly borrowed the other dancer's blush.

"Hey--!" the Golden Retriever protested, but quickly submitted when Emilena flashed her eyes and bared her teeth menacingly.

"Quiet! Get out *now* or I'll rip your jugular from your neck!" Emilena hissed, and the stripper wasted no time complying. Emilena turned to her teammates. "Marita, you've done your job, go do whatever you want. Adrian, perhaps these three minutes could be spent locating where the less publicized functions of this establishment occur."

Ten seconds until show time, her mental clock counted. With that she strode backstage, and after a reassuring (and unwitnessed) gulp, crossed the curtain.

When she took the stage, there was no announcement, no fanfare, no real recognition. Just a bunch of rowdy drunks, some wolf whistles and cat calls, and the pungent smell of sweat, drugs, alcohol, and oil. After a brief curl of her lip when she noted the greasy state of the stripper pole, she began her best attempt at dancing sensuously, though she couldn't quite keep the frown off her face.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 17, 2013, 07:21:41 AM**

Adrian had made his way from the back of the stage to the floor of the club, keeping his visor shut so as to obscure any visible part of his features. Casting a glance around the room, his visor's systems quickly scanned through each face, comparing each to known members of the Purifiers. Passing over most as small-time members with little to no criminal involvement, he froze when he saw the back of Marcus's head over the crowd. Even with his visor unable to run the face through the database, he knew the Doberman. Instinctively, he took a small step back, memories of the incident that had cost him his arm and eye flashing through his mind. Unfortunately, that small step bumped his leg into a vacated table, rattling the glasses on it and sending one to the floor with a remarkably loud clattering sound...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 17, 2013, 09:34:58 AM**

marita pulled out her computer and access the clubs website. she typed in roses stage name and it brought out her location- in dressing room 5, her next performance was in 12 minutes. ' can i get you something? asked a waitress wearing a skimpy bra and thong, she was carrying a tray of drinks. ' a pepsi please, also i have a package for rose, stage name honey bunny.
- ah honey bunny. shes in room 5. interested in a blackout? the waitress smirked. usually thats 100 bucks, but her price is 20.. poor girl.. this place is basically her home.. she got

foreclosed on when she got busted with the stuff. its said to see what shes become, that stuff is really powerful. shes a beautiful dancer when shes sober, but those days are fewer and fewer these days.. do you know her?
- yes i do, we were friends before.. she got hooked on the stuff. once it hooks you, theres nothing that can be done for you. therw detox buts its extremely expensive. Marita said.
- you better believe it, its 40 grand for a couple weeks worth of the detox stuff, and it literally squeezes the stuff out of you, in rivelets . its hard to watch and harder to endure. i bet. i'm marie.. " nice to meet you marita said. i'm a talent scout, looking for dancers with talent and moxie.. from what you've told me honey bunny could be a girl with potential.. if we can get her detoxed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 17, 2013, 10:00:28 AM**

"I'm a licensed cyberneticist with permits to work on class 1 and class 2 external augs. I also have a license to make and modify class 3 external augs for personal use." Soren got up to refill his his cup with hot water.

"Anyways, Axel," he continued, sprinkling some additional tea leaves in his cup. "The cause of the fire's unknown. But I suspect it was arson. As for how bad it is, it's completely destroyed. I'm going to salvage what I can in the morning. I'm pretty much out of a job. Sure, I've got some cybernetics tools in my basement and house but my workshop had a nanolathe where I could pretty much create a part to order."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 17, 2013, 05:24:52 PM**

"Oh god, I'm sorry Soren," Axel said sympathetically. "If there's anything we can do to help, just ask. Maybe we'll be able to find something that'll tell us who started it?" He nudged Lily. "Hey, maybe it's all connected! Or... maybe I've been watching too many detective shows." He took another gulp of tea and blushed.

The drunk burped. "Oh yeah, he's like a... *hic*... a ninja who... protects Virtuatron..."

"Virtuatron?" Marcus narrowed his eyes. "What are you talking about?"

"Wha... wha' you mean?" The drunk giggled. "You haven't seen... *Robo-Ninja VII*?"

Marcus' ears flicked. "A film? You've been wasting my time with a film?" He started to rise angrily, but a clattering behind him turned his head. His eyes flicked over the crowd, noting that a new dancer had come on the stage, and came to rest on the table on the opposite side of the dance floor.

A figure was backing away, wearing a full visor which prevented him from seeing his face. But his size and figure were the same... *Kibagami?* Marcus rose slowly, keeping his glare focused on the figure opposite, his hand reaching down to the Magnum tucked under his trench coat.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 17, 2013, 06:08:58 PM**

Soren nodded looked outside his window at his ruined workshop. He sighed. "Since I'm awake, I might as well start salvaging what I can."

He finished his tea and headed downstairs into his basement.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 19, 2013, 08:44:25 AM**

Lily drank her tea too quickly, and started hiccuping. "Th-thank you for having me, Mr. Soren," she choked, words sounding slightly off because she'd singed her tongue.

She turned to Axel. "What are you going to do now?" She asked softly. "You don't want to live a life on the run, it's horrible. And you know who you are, so you have friends, and a support net...at least, I'm assuming you do. The cops will go after them if they think it'll help catch you."

At first Emilena merely tried to finish her dance. The whole time she hadn't stopped thinking about the vile perverts filling the audience in front of her. *Just stomach their sinful gazes for another two minutes, thirty seconds...* she told herself, gritting her teeth behind her lips. *Then this unwholesome display will finally be...*

Hold on? She started realizing that not many of the audience was actually viewing her. They were talking, drinking beers, doing drugs...nobody was actually staring at the stage. *Why the hell aren't they watching me?*

Despite herself, she began putting more oomph into her performance. A twirl of her hair, a flare of her buttocks, she matched the beat of the song and stretched her body to its limits. Grasping the stripper pole for the first time, she ground her chest against it and with a twirl, seamlessly incorporated an unclipped bra into her performance.

Nobody really cared. They'd seen hundreds of stripping women before.

Emilena's eyes flashed angrily. Using her removed bra like a strap, she swayed and turned and pirouetted, putting all her combat reflexes and sword maneuvers into creating as stunning a display she could muster. Sweat rolled off of her as she focused painstakingly on getting somebody's attention.

Perhaps its for the best nobody was noticing, because what she was doing actually looked nothing like strip dancing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 19, 2013, 10:53:16 AM**

Adrian swore under his breath as Marcus turned to face him.
"Damnit, why did it have to be him, of all people? ... At least I can safely say that the Purifiers are involved somehow. Now I just have to hope that he doesn't realize it's me...Just long enough to get what data I need, for Marita to get Rose out of here...and for Emilena to finish her dance..."
He thought, before he noticed Marcus's hand reaching for something. Instinctively, he reached back, hand finding the hilt of his sword as he tensed...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 19, 2013, 11:38:50 AM**

Marita got her Perpsi and thanked the waitress befre heading back towards the3 dressing rooms./.
- in room 5 rose stared at the mirror. a haggard tied face statred back at her. she had been working at the club for 5 years now, but her dancing had continued to decline in quality thanks to the drug addiction she had.. ' i can't.. keep going.., like this..' she said slowly, as she pulled out a small bag of stuff from her dresser. ' it contained ' sawdust' as Biproxytol was called. she had been hooked on it for years, and it had caused her breakup with marita, who had

managed to break free from it. there was a knock on the door. Honey Bunny? came a voice that sounded familiar ' i'm Elisa turner , from Starlight modelling.
- STARLIGHT MODELING?' Rose shot straight up, dropping the bag of Biproxytol on the floor. Starlight was a top-flight talent agency, involving acting, dancing, and voiceover work. as long as you had talent they would overlook it if you stripped in the past. ' do come in ' she said as marita entered the room.
marita gasped involuntarily as she saw rose. she looked terrible, her teeth were stained from biproxytol use and there were bags under her eyes from lack of sleep. ' well honey bunny, today is your lucky day. i've been told you're quite the dancer. so i'm offering you an audition in Mushu city on friday. you will have to leave now if you are going to get there on time..
- excuse me' said a suit who came up behind her. ' shes on in 9 minutes! We'll have to talk after her dance, Miss Turner/

_
sir, my instructions from the agency were quite clear. Miss Honey Bunny has an audition at 9 a, Friday morning at Central plaza in Mushu City, if she wants to get there on time, she will have to leave immediately.' Marita replied pulling out a list, which was made from official Starlight itinerary. 'we will compensate you for any losses in revenue from her missing her dances for the next few days. this is a golden opportunity for her sir, and we wouldnt want her to miss it, now would we?

_
the suit looked at the list.. ' alright, alright, you' he barked at rose. ' get your things and get out!' rose got up from her seat and rasn back to where she had her meager belongings. in a minutes time she had everything.
-
give my regards to Miss Runiyuki" the suit said to Marita " Honey , you dance your ass off for them, understand, or dont bother coming back here!

_
Yes mr Means" Rose said quickly. "good. i'll get tamara to pull double duty.. have a good evening Miss Turner" the suit nodded as marita gave him a calling card. and left. rose following right behind her..- they reached the main floor , where emilena was in the last half minute of her performance...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 19, 2013, 05:12:58 PM**

"Um. Well, I've never really had many friends," Axel said, shifting uncomfortably. "I've never really been the outgoing type, you know? The only people I feel comfortable being around are Soren... and you. And my Mom, but she's up at an old folk's home being reminded what her name is, so... yeah," he added quickly, turning red.

Axel looked up. "So I guess I'll hang around. If it's okay with you." He suddenly remembered what he had in his pocket. "Hey, I might even be useful. Here." He took out the barcode sticker and passed it over to her. "I found it on your boots. Maybe it'll help us find out... well, *something* about you."

Marcus' grip tightened on his magnum. He felt it start to slide out from the back of his trousers... Then another stripper stepped out in front of him.

"Hey baby, you look stressed. I can help that," she said, her voice slurred from drugs or alcohol, running a finger up his chest. Marcus glanced down at her, his concentration momentarily broken.

"Not interested," he growled, pushing past her. He looked back at the person opposite, and saw him moving his hand down behind him. *Right where he always kept his sword...* That was good enough for Marcus. He yanked his gun out, aimed across the room and fired, the blast sending a familiar impact up his arm.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 19, 2013, 05:35:44 PM**

The gunshot had its effect. The stripclub instantly flew into a panic with patrons, strippers and everyone else pushing and shoving in their haste to make it to the exit.

Sanjay Bhat gulped down his cocktail and slithered into an open liquor cabinet. He silently swore as he tried to calm his racing heart and ignore the shouting.

Soren returned clad in a full-body powered exoskeleton. His face was hidden underneath an armored helmet while his body was concealed inside a bulky armored metallic suit. Worklights attached to the sides of the helmet lit up the dimly lit kitchen with beams of stark white light. He reached an armored hand up to his helmet and flipped up the visor.

"Well," Soren said. "If either of you need me, I'll be outside. Help youselves to anything in the kitchen."

He opened the backdoor and stepped out into his yard.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 19, 2013, 06:06:46 PM**

Adrian swore as the gun was drawn, drawing his sword in a flash, using it to deflect the bullet as it flew at him, sending it ricocheting off into a ceiling light. In a flash, Adrian had grabbed a table, flipping it up and using it as a makeshift shield as he started making his way towards Marcus...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 19, 2013, 07:06:03 PM**

She took it. "Is there are way to track these sorts of things? Maybe find out who bought the boots?" Her eyes lit up. "Could I actually figure out my identity?"

Emilena has just finished her strip dance, and was about to angrily chastise the audience for not paying better attention when a shot rang out. Very quickly any patrons with firearms/combat-oriented augments of their own got involved. And considering the dangerously high levels of intoxication/drug use, it was guaranteed to get ugly fast.

One thuggish augment with cybernetic parts covering his face, torso and muscular hands leapt the stage. "Hey dancer, you're coming with me," he sneered. "I'll protect you, and you can give me and the men another...*performance* at the barracks." One of his index fingers flipped open to reveal a loaded chamber.

"Well, I'm glad *somebody* liked my performance--hey!" Suddenly she realized what he had meant. "No, get the hell away from me," she snarled.

The thug chuckled and pointed his hand cannon at her. "Yeah? What's your butt-naked ass gonna do to stop me?"

She dodged his meaty fist when it tried to grab her. "You really should have developed a fetish for skin and fur," she retorted, pulling out a thin slip of metal which retracted into her beloved katana. With a twirl reminiscent of her recent performance, she dismembered his hand cannon. "Get a metal one of *these!*" she spat, stabbing him through the crotch viciously as he staggered backwards.

She saw security coming from behind the stage, so she vaulted into the melee in the seating area. Time to find Adrian and hope he'd made progress locating the hidden recesses of this facility.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 19, 2013, 07:31:38 PM**

marita had gotten rose out of the building before the shooting had started. rose got into adrians car, the backseat to be precise. ' thank yo for giving me the opportunity to perform, miss Turner.' She said. 'how long have you worked there now/ Marita asked . " 5 years, 5 long interminable years. the pays horrible, the guys and girls are often drunk, and its degrading in a way you wont believe.." " not as bad as the the biproxytol you're still hooked on.." marita said. 'what- how did you know?" Rose demanded. ' your teeth are stained yellow, you have bag under your eyes, and your arms are pockmarked.. Marita said ' All telltales signs of biproxytol use..
- yeah, i'm been hooked on it for a long time. to get clean would require like half a million dollars.. which will take me at my current salary about 200 years. i mean if you can give me the gig..'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 19, 2013, 08:17:14 PM**

The Golden Retriever dancer bolted for the door and with a burst from her equinoid augments, she leapt nearly fifteen feet straight up. The floor cracked as she landed, the augments taking most of the impact. Luckily, no one noticed her run away.

An massive but unaugmented Bison was trading blows with an Augment. The sound of tearing metal was heard as the Bison grabbed his opponent's arm and tried to rip it from its mountings.

The *whump* of compressed air was heard as the Augment fired his built in line thrower at his attacker, nailing him to the bartop.

The arm whirred as it severed the cable and attached a new tip to the line. Glistening metal plates slid back into place as the launcher morphed back into a hand.

He clutched his right arm, now dangling by a few wires and dripping hydraulic fluid and rushed for the exit.

Sanjay gulped as a harpoon ó probably fired from a modified line thrower augment ó slammed into the liquor cabinet. He dared not enter the fracas ó lest he be killed. At the same time, when the police came, he was going to be in deep s---.

He had to make a choice.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 19, 2013, 09:52:28 PM**

What was I supposed to be doing again? thought Emilena, as she parried a drunkard's swung bottle and slashed his stomach open. "Now you've achieved your lifelong dream of having a *disc drive*, you freak!" she taunted.

Someone was making a run for the exit, who appeared to be a peddler of neurocotics, illegal mechanical skin patches that use artificial "cells" to alter desired brain functions, for a drastic, irreparable, and incredibly damaging (but incomparable) high. She thrust and stabbed him through the thigh.

She advanced on the horrified dealer, who was not pleased to see a naked psychotic stripper with a bloodied katana approaching him. "What's the matter?" she smiled widely and narrowed her eyes. "You like sex don't you? I've heard its kinda like this...only it's your turn for a whore to penetrate *you*."

She was raising her sword over the sobbing man when a bullet grazed her arm. She turned and noted that a deer with a small assault rifle was firing on her. Well, she'll deal with him as soon as--

"--*Aughh*!"

Taking advantage of her distraction, the neurocotic dealer had slapped a patch onto her hip. Immediately, Emilena felt woozy, and stumbled. Smashing her knee against a table, she tumbled to the floor as the dealer bolted for the exit.

Feelings...pain...maybe...she couldn't tell. Her head was spinning, but she forced herself to remember the skin patch was rewriting some aspect of her brain.

Groaning, she stumbled to her feet. Another bullet embedded itself in the floor near her. The deer hadn't forgotten about her, and only his severe intoxication had prevented her from being hit already.

Shaking her swimming head, she glanced around at her environment. Her eyes lit upon a Black Mamba hiding behind an upturned table. Is it the skin patch, or is that Sanjay Bhat, escaped Augmented soldier and treason-class felon?

She stumbled over to the panther and rolled awkwardly over his table. "Sanjay Bhat," she said through slurred speech, "Public enemy number 7, wanted for...uh...cases of Augment theft, evasion of arrest, and violation of your sworn...as a national soldier...you are in...*so much deep...* if you don't kill that deer. I'm a cop and...will have them...you in *jail* after they rip the...from your body!"

What *was* this feeling the patch was pumping through her system? If she could only keep her damn head straight!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 19, 2013, 10:10:21 PM**

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so how much will this gig pay/ rose aske d eagerly.. : well, rose you need to detox before you are going to dance..' detox? but that would take weeks.. isnt the audition friday..
- there is no audition. i merely said that so i could spring you from that awful place..' Marita said. " its been a long time Rose.. and to be frank, you look awful..
- Rose stared at her blankly.. then her eyes flew wide as she recognized her at last../ MARITA? how.. wait.. so you're not a talent scout..
- no but you are going to get detox, but i have to help a cop bust some Augment dealer shes trying to nab first' marita said. ' you're coming along for the ride. and maybe.. when we get some alone time.. ' roses began to smirk.. ' just like old tmimes huh.. look ii'm sorry i haven't been able to kick the stuff.. you were always the stronger one marita.. how old are you now? 25 and you're 24 right.. ' next week, so 23 for one more week..' rose said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 20, 2013, 01:34:40 AM**

Axel nodded. "Yeah, should be simple. It'll let us know where you got them, and from there we could get into their system and see who bought them using the code as a reference. Unless you were some kind of notorious shoe thief," he teased.

When Marcus saw his target deflect the bullet, he swore loudly. *It IS him!* He started striding forwards, continuing to fire on the upturned table Adrian was using as a shield. The bullets punched through, not finding their target. "Just die, you slippery bastard..." He snarled under his breath.

All around him, hell had broken loose but he paid no attention to the screaming, the gunfire, the terrified patrons tearing for the exit. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed one of the club guards, a human, running towards him with a taser. Marcus slid a combat knife free from the sleeve of his trench coat. As the guard reached the taser out, he quickly leaned back to avoid it, then brought his arm upwards in a sweep, cutting the man's arm off at the elbow. As the man stared in disbelief at his stump, Marcus spun his revolver around and put a shot through his chest, sending him flying backwards.

Focusing his attention back on Adrian, Marcus speed-loaded his gun, a well practiced move that took only a few seconds, then leaped over the barrier onto the dance floor. Bulling his way through the screaming civilians, he charged towards Adrian.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 20, 2013, 04:57:53 AM**

Adrian growled as the bullets struck his makeshift shield, one of them grazing his left arm just above where the augment stopped, causing him to wince in pain. The instant he heard the sound of Marcus's gun reloading, however, he sprung into action. Quickly assessing the situation, he saw the deer with the assault rifle, saw Emilena go down when the drug dealer slapped something on her, and noticed a Black Mamba slithering off. Without hesitating for a second, he turned, using the augmented strength in his arm to fling the table at the deer, striking him soundly in the chest and sending him sprawling. However, throwing away his shield was a poorly-planned idea, and as he did so, another human member of the Purifiers fired at him with a high-powered handgun, several shots tearing into the vulnerable skin at the base of his augmentation. Adrian staggered a little, cursing as he tossed his sword up, grabbing a throwing knife from a leg pocket and sending it through the man's throat as Marcus charged him. Flipping himself over another table, he caught his sword as it fell, dashing towards Marcus.
"Damn you, Marcus. This time...I'll pay you back for what you did to me...with interest!"
He chuckled coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 21, 2013, 04:19:09 PM**

"I'll finish the job this time, freak..." Marcus snarled as he ran forward. He leaped up onto a table between them and kicked himself higher into the air, firing continuously at Adrian whilst drawing back his combat knife with the other hand. As they came together, he sliced the knife downwards, aiming for Adrian's face.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 21, 2013, 08:32:29 PM**

Sanjay considered helping the cop but seeing as someone already killed the target she told him to attack ó and that said cop was currently drugged, he simply shrugged his shoulders.

"See ya!" He crouched low to the ground and hugged the wall, avoiding gunshots and other projectiles.

Seeing as the liquor cabinet was smashed open, he took the opportunity to swipe a bottle of Kozlov brand vodka.

Soren tossed aside a several hundred pound piece of concrete as he worked under the dim light of dawn. The rubble had cooled enough that it was safe to handle barehanded ó not that his exoskeleton would have been affected. He scowled.

He hauled out a crushed and scorched case and placed it aside. He smashed a large piece of concrete with his fist and threw the pieces aside.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 22, 2013, 01:00:37 AM**

Emilena glared as the cretin dashed away from her. Why the hell did she think somebody would HELP her anyway? That's not how the world works.

In her hatred for the punitive figure vanishing into the darkness, she had her first clear, unbothered thought. *I am going to stab that man without warning if I ever see him again...*

That was what she needed, she realized. Genuine rage. The only thing that can cut through this fog of confusion that damn patch had done to her.

Channeling her years of overreacting into a new focus, she got to her feet. She gripped her katana. "I cannot afford to be incapacitated now..." she hissed through gritted teeth to nobody in particular.

She marched forward, one step at a time. She had to find her own way into the recesses of this facility. She can't rely on anybody else.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 22, 2013, 07:26:56 AM**

Adrian spun his sword gracefully, knocking each bullet fired at him aside before bringing his sword up to meet Marcus's knife, stopping it mere inches from his head.
"Heh. Is that the best you have? After what you did to me last time...I was expecting more from you!"
He taunted, slinging a foot up to meet Marcus's chest...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 22, 2013, 02:26:51 PM**

Marcus grunted as Adrian's foot connected. He recovered quickly and kept pushing forwards. "You got lucky last time," he growled, baring his teeth, meeting each of Adrian's attacks with his knife. A disorientated patron stumbled towards them, and Marcus kicked him away.

"But your impants can only take you so far!" He roared, as he ducked under Adrian's sword and swung his arm up, smashing the butt of his revolver on the underside of Adrian's visor.

Axel heard a crunching sound and looked over his shoulder. Through the window, he could see Soren out in the yard, clearing through the burned ruins of his workshop. "Aw man, I feel so bad for him. Who the hell would do this?" He winced as he recognised a expensive augmentation part sticking out of the smoking cinders.

"Do you think we should try and help him out there? You know, before we ask to borrow his computer?" Axel said, looking back at Lily. "That workshop was his life..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 23, 2013, 11:39:34 PM**

Lily wanted no more than to go to sleep, but Axel made a valid point. She nodded sleepily. "If we can help, we should. He's sticking his neck out for us, letting us stay here."

She walked out to the workshop. "Hey Soren, can we help you rescue what we can? Or at the very least clean up..."

A security guard had his pistol out and was accosting two drunks wielding broken bottles. "This is your final warning! Leave now!"

The drunks looked itching for a fight, but after a glance at something behind the guard immediately complied. Out of his peripheral, the guard noted a lithe female form.

"Can I escort you to safety ma'am--" he started, but before he could blink a blade was pressed against his throat and she had him pinned to the ground.

"I know there's a hidden facility here," she whispered huskily. "Take me there or I slit your neck!"

She seemed to be drugged or something, so he kicked her in the stomach. She staggered, and he pistol-whipped her in the head. As she slid backward screaming along the ground, he aimed his pistol but hesitated; he wasn't one for shooting wounded females. Instead he decided to go warn the higher-ups that the underground facility had been compromised somehow.

Shooting two Hell's Angels out of his path, he reached the offices and punched the entry code into a seemingly unusued one. After rotating a potted plant, the desk slid aside to reveal a set of stone stairs leading down.

As he began his descent, he felt a sickening *thud* and fell to the floor, unconscious. Emilena stood behind him, shaking.

"You brought me here as promised...so I'll let you live..." She muttered even though he can't hear her. She stepped forward.

But something made her pause and look at the unconscious man lying below her. Nobody would know what she did here...she could stroke his hair, expose his body...do other things...She felt a surge of blood in her abdomen thinking about it.

What the hell? Why am I suddenly thinking such horrid thoughts?

Repulsed, she tore her gaze away from his body and staggered down the stairs, sword at the ready. She had to get to the bottom of this. His body will still be here when she gets back.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 24, 2013, 12:23:48 AM**

Soren hurled aside a large piece of concrete. He turned to face Lily. "Dunno what's left to salvage but I could use a hand."

Sanjay slithered into an alley as two tracking bots flitted over the dirty road. He looked upward and noticed a fire escape. He slithered onto a dumpster and reared up as high as possible. Teetering precariously, he grabbed hold of the rung and wrapped his body around it.

With a grunt of effort, he began slithering up the ladder.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 24, 2013, 01:55:01 AM**

Axel followed behind Lily and stood looking at the wreckage. "Alright... do you want us to clear out some of the stuff that's collapsed inside?" He took out a cigarette from his back pocket and started to light it, then paused as he realised it might not be in the best taste. "Sorry."

He seized a piece of concrete and, after struggling with it for a few moments, managed to push it along the floor with a grunt. He went back to the ruined workshop and leaned inside. His nose twitched. "You know, I think you were right to be suspicious. It stinks of gasoline in here, and not the type you normally use."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 24, 2013, 06:25:52 AM**

Adrian smirked, dodging back as his visor flew off, clattering to the floor a few feet away from him.
"You think this is because of my implants? Heh.....Hahahaha! Then you're sadly mistaken. Think about that one in hell!"
He said, parrying another of Marcus's attacks before slamming the pommel of his sword into the Doberman's shoulder...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 24, 2013, 12:28:20 PM**

Lily was struging with a piece of concrete herself. "At least it didn't spread to the rest of--"

Suddenly she dropped the concrete, her eyes went blank, and she reeled.

She wasn't in the workshop any more. At least, that wasn't what she was seeing. She was on a doorstep, and after a few seconds she recognized Soren's. Her gloved hands were sliding a thin laser through the door creak, and with a hiss the lock physically melted. Her gloved hands checked a HUD on her gleaming silver watch, where the words "SECURITY SYSTEM DEACTIVATED" were blinking in red. She pushed the door open...

And then she was back in her own body, collapsed on the floor in shock.

"Somebody's here!" She squealed. "Somebody's outside!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 24, 2013, 12:45:06 PM**

"Are you okay? What are you talking about?" Soren asked. He hauled away an augment that was battered beyond repair.

His HMD suddenly flashed a warning: UNKNOWN BEING HAS BREACHED PERIMETER.

"You two can keep clearing the rubble. I'll see what set off my security system." He headed towards the area where the alert was coming from...the front door of his house!

(OOC - I'm not sure what Lily is seeing but I'll have a looter get too curious.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 24, 2013, 02:18:40 PM**

(Ooc: It's whatever this world's equivalent of a CIA agent is. As for HOW Lily saw that, it is currently a mystery.)

Emilena found herself in a tightly sealed room. Several computers with cryptic messages and locked file cabinets sat in the corner.

The untrained eye would instantly begin searching these for clues, but Emilena was more interested in the ink pad on the desk. It was actually a police-grade thumb scan. She realized it would be unlikely for the secret group to leave anything important in the first room; everything in here was no doubt a decoy.

Returning to the previous room, she dragged the security guard down the stairs and pressed his thumb against the ink pad. There was a click behing a large file cabinet, and she pushed it aside to find a hallway.

Heart beating faster, she marched deeper into the unknown.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 24, 2013, 02:31:41 PM**

Axel watched with alarm as Soren headed back inside his house, then hurried around the rubble piles to Lily's side. "Are you okay?!" He said, helping her to her feet. "What the hell's going on? How do you know someone's outside?!"

Marcus felt a jolt run down his arm as Soren struck it, and his knife fell from his fingers, landing with a *thunk* point down on the floor. He roared with blind rage and seized Adrian's wrist, yanking him up to eye level with him. "Dodge this you freak," he snarled, as he drew back and slammed his forehead as hard as he could into Adrian's face.

He spun around and threw Adrian across the room, sending him crashing against the bar, smashing through alcohol bottles and dropping out of his sight. Marcus looked at the alcohol dripping down where he'd thrown Adrian. "That suit fireproof?" he called out, as he aimed his revolver and fired at the flammable liquid, igniting it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 24, 2013, 03:18:45 PM**

Adrian chuckled, kicking out from behind the bar, flames clinging to his coat as he landed.
"Actually, yes. After you 'killed' me last time, I made sure to be as fire-resistant as I can possibly be."
He taunted, rolling a bottle of alcohol at Marcus's legs, then striking his sword on the ground to ignite it.
"And after this, once I get out of here, you and your terrorist friends are going down. Hard."
He taunted...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 25, 2013, 11:43:26 PM**

Soren entered his house to grab his shotgun. Thanks to magnets on his gun and suit, it stuck to his back.

A verbal command to his exoskeleton dialed down the power so he didn't need to worry about accidentally mangling someone.

He scowled as he noticed that someone had melted the lock on his door. The hair on the back of his neck stood up as he ordered the house AI to kill all the lights in his house and switched his HMD to show infrared. Another command switched his two worklights on his helmet to infrared.

Something crashing to the ground in his kitchen got his attention. Charging into his kitchen, Soren saw the intruder. A massive Rhino with a mechanical eye and arms was currently going through all his belongings.

The crook peeled back one of the walls, looking for something.

"Hey ass----! Get out of my house or I shoot!" Soren shouted.

"No need to worry citizen, I am just here toó"

Soren scowled. "Get out. If you're really a cop, go get a warrant and come back."

"Not until I find this person." The Rhino handed Soren a picture of Lily.

Soren's hair curled. "She's not here." It was then he realized that was the wrong thing to say.

The Rhino smiled. "I see. Now I have a few questions to ask you."

"No."

"Perhaps I did not make myself clear. That wasn't a request."

Soren crossed his metal clad arms. "Like I said, come back with a legit warrant and I'll talk."

The Rhino sighed. "Very well." In a lightning fast motion, he picked up Soren and tossed him through the back door and into his yard.His gun, remarkably, was not damaged.

"Axel, hold this please." Soren handed his shotgun to the Rat as he set his exoskeleton to the highest setting.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 26, 2013, 12:40:29 AM**

(OOC: I'd...mentioned before that it was supposed to be a CIA Agent. I was setting something up. I can't really work with this psychotic rhino. Is he going to further the plot somehow?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 26, 2013, 04:32:46 AM**

(OOC: Maybe the Rhino could be the CIA agent, and he was crashing around the house looking for Lily (I'm guessing) and Soren mistook him for a looter? Just an idea to get back to your idea if you were planning something)

Axel gaped at Soren. He looked at the shotgun and took it hesitantly. "Sure, but what-" His eyes widened when he saw the huge wall of muscle charging through after Soren.

"Who the hell is that?!" Axel cried, instinctively firing the shotgun at the rhino, the bullets pinging off the rhino's tough exterior. The gun's kickback was stronger than Axel had anticipated, and it sent him flying back to land on his rump in a daze.

Marcus wrenched his knife from the floor and jumped back from the ball of fire that Adrian had sent at him. "You think I haven't heard that before? We won't stop until every one of you... *things* is wiped off the planet," he spat, the heat in the room making him breath heavily.

The years of accumulated spills of alcohol and other liquids had taken their toll on the fire safety of the club. The flames easily spread along the wooden floor, climbing up the walls coated with stained fabric and reaching the ceiling.

A wall of flames burst up between them, separating Marcus from Adrian. The smoke made it difficult to breath, and his eyes stung as he glared across at his enemy, ignoring the screams of patrons who'd found themselves trapped by the fire.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 26, 2013, 06:37:47 AM**

Adrian coughed a couple of times, then swore.
"Where's Emilena? Damnit, this isn't good..."
He thought, eyes flicking through the fire until...there! A door that was hanging ajar, probably the one that Emilena had gone through. He reached into his coat, pulling out a flash grenade and arming it as he looked back towards Marcus.
"Keep telling yourself that. You're the ones who will end up gone."
He taunted, throwing the Grenade down and shielding his eyes as it detonated in a blinding flash, then rushing towards the open door, though not before grabbing as many patrons out of the fire as he could...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 26, 2013, 07:03:42 AM**

(OOC - Yeah, we can have that. The Rhino's the agent and Soren thinks he's a common street thug.)

The Rhino finished rooting through the house and set his sights in the backyard. His night vision goggles showed three figures ó and one was a Human woman.

He ignored Soren and Axel as he approached Lily. "Lily. I recall you escaping our tracking drones a while back. Quite a feat. But I'm here for business. The Agency wishes to speak with you."

"Agency?" Soren asked. "If you think posing as a goverment spook's gonna fool me. You're wrong!" Soren charged forward, throwing a punch at his opponent's face. His metal fist, driven with artificial muscles powerful enough to shatter concrete, actually knocked the Rhino back a few feet.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 26, 2013, 12:22:22 PM**

(OOC: My CIA Agent was going to be a suave MIB who lets his words show his authority...the sort of character you'd expect to be a CIA Agent. I guess I can work with a druggie thug, but he's depressingly one-sided.

Also I thought the workshop and the front room were two different places. Why are Lily and Axel present?)

Lily shrieked and ran as far as she could away from the thug. Finding a charred workbench, she hid underneath it and started shaking uncontrollably.

Her anger having given her focus again, Emilena found herself facing a long empty hallway. A locked door was at the end, but her memory of the strip club layout told her that she'd reached the end of the building. This was no doubt a dead end.

She heard footsteps coming her way, two pair coming down the hallway after her. With no hiding places of note, she decided to collapse and play dead, hiding her sword underneath her.

She heard the pair stop. "Hostile spotted. She appears to have passed out."

A radio cackled. "Tapes show she was hit with a neurocotic thirty minutes ago. Apprehend but use extreme caution."

Emilena waited until the pair was close before twirling her sword and bifurcating the closer one. The other opened fire but Emilena used the deceased as a shield as she unholstered his sidearm and finished off his teammate with a shot through the mouth.

Now armed with a gun and sword, Emilena located a small activator on the guard's person and pressed it. It opened a door further down the hallway.

Closing the door behind herself, she progressed further. She was close to her goal. She could sense it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 26, 2013, 12:48:30 PM**

Meanwhile Rose was telling marita about what had happened to her since the breakup. it had not been a pretty picture by any means. ' she had been busted with possession of biproxytol, before it had been upgraded to a level 1 controlled substance which carried a 25 year minimum prison sentence. she had gotten 6 months, but had gotten out early for good behavior. she didnt get her possessions back, which included the home movie of her and marita having sex. she had lost her apartment, and been forced to live at the strip club. thanks to her spiraling drug habit she was getting less and less customers, and had to drop her prices to attract anyone.
- so there you have it.. she said, befiore the facade of the club suddenly collaspsed. ' ok, time to get out' marita said opening the dopor thgat was on the streetside. rose grabbed her things and climbed out. it was just in time too, as debris from the collapse landed on the car , crushing it. ' well so much for a ride ' rose muttered. ' dowbn this way' Marita said pointing to the alley.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 26, 2013, 02:20:06 PM**

(OOC - Soren found the guy in the kitchen. And ended up getting thrown through the backdoor into his backyard where the workshop is. And if need be, I can rework the whole thing.)

The Rhino shook off the powerful blow and retaliated with one to Soren's chest, which his exoskeleton absorbed. "Stop making this harder than it needs to be. Tell me where Lily went, I'll get her and leave!"

"Why should I?" Soren snapped as he dodged another punch.

"Because if you don't, once I find her, I could have you hauled in for assault on a federal agent and for obstruction of official government proceedings. And trust me, you *do not* want to be convicted of those charges."

"Tell me what should I cooperate after you busted into my house and trashed the place?"

The Rhino sat on a piece of concrete and sighed as he spoke.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 26, 2013, 02:46:06 PM**

(OOC: You could say the CIA man sent in the rhino as someone working under him to test out the water, send a message, something like that, and have him appear soon after? Maybe after we've dealt with the rhino problem? He sounds like an interesting character. And Axel / Lily are still out in the yard, Soren got thrown back outside.)

Axel winced as the two traded blows, then stumbled to his feet, tucking the shotgun under one arm. "Keep him away from her!" he shouted, sprinting across the yard to Lily. He bent down breathlessly. "Come on, he's after you! We need to to hide you somewhere!"

Marcus tried aiming his revolver through the fire, but it was no good - the fire prevented him from getting a clear shot on Adrian. Through the haze, he saw the fleeing figure toss something towards him. At the last second, he recognised it at a flash grenade and threw an arm over his face. Even through the shielding, his vision flashed white.

When he lowered his arm, Adrian had vanished. "Don't run! Get back here!" he roared. A loud groaning drew his attention upwards, and with a crash part of the ceiling collapsed in front of him. Marcus swore loudly.

He had to escape the club, but Adrian hadn't seen the last of him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 27, 2013, 12:32:56 AM**

Before the rhino could speak, his eyes rolled into his head and he fell over. A smoking hole had appeared on his temples, and blood leaked out of his nose.

"So sorry about that," spoke a newcomer, a tall wolf in a crisp black suit. He put a long thin lethal-looking instrument back in his breast pocket. "Mr. Extasis is what we call a 'loose cannon' at the Bureau. We don't appreciate loose cannons. They don't tend to get results. Luckily, it seems Greg was...shall we say?...one day away from retirement," he smirked.

He bent over and snapped something onto the rhino's collar, and the body was promptly vaporized. "I am very sorry for the distraction. You will be reimbursed in full. Would twelve thousand dollars cover the damages to your apartment?"

The next populated room contained two individuals in grey unisuits, who both leapt to their feet when they saw her. She dispatched with both before they could trip a silent alarm.

Emilena was sure she was in the right place this time. The words on the computers were still encrypted, but it was a cypher she recognized from her research on the latest cryptographical advancements. With her rudimentary understanding of the cypher, she accessed their databases.

Without wasting time, she filled a hard drive with everything she could collect. Then, curiosity got the better of her, and she spent far longer than she should have locating the files on her orphanage. With trembling fingers, she began to read about her past.

"Hey. Turn around slowly, and we may ask you who you are before we kill you."

A lithe androgynous figure in a catsuit had two large-barreled revolvers pointed right at her chest. The emotionless expression and use of the royal 'we' identified it as a Strain, a shadowy race of mercenaries who sacrifice everything for cybernetic upgrades, and have dedicated their lives to killing for pay and spending it on improving their cybernetics.

"I would rather die than submit to an abortion of nature like you!" she hissed, and he replied by blasting both of her hands. She cried out and her weapons went spinning onto the floor.

Without further ado he re-cocked his safeties and prepared to fire again.

Lily wasted no time racing away with Axel, leaving Soren alone with the wolf.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 27, 2013, 09:36:41 AM**

Soren crossed his arms. "Okay first off, I want some answers. Why did this man break into my house and tear apart my kitchen? And who are you people?"

His HMD warned that his exoskeleton's batteries were running low but he ignored it for now.

Sanjay leapt from the rooftop he was on and onto a repulsorcart. He quickly magnetized the gripping soles on his clothing as the vehicle sped through the skies. Once the vehicle landed, he'd head to the "suburbs", hitch a ride and disappear.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 27, 2013, 01:31:23 PM**

Adrian dodged around another another chunk of debris falling from the ceiling, rounding a corner to see the Strain menacing Emilena. In a heartbeat, he darted between them, drawing his sword and facing the mercenary.
"You. You're a Strain... How the hell could you choose to do that to yourself. To sacrifice your humanity for power...you're a monster."
He said coldly, then turned to Emilena.
"Emilena. Listen. This place is coming down around us, and we're gonna have to get our of here."
He said, smiling softly at her.
"Also, that outfit looks good on you."
He chuckled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 27, 2013, 02:16:03 PM**

"Hey, there's another guy down there!" Axel said, pulling Lily over to the window, his nose pressed up against the glass. "Looks like some kind of spy or something..."

After running from the rhino, he'd helped her back into Soren's house through an open window, then lead her upstairs to hide in the bathroom. When he heard talking outside, Axel had crept forward to look down cautiously.

He craned his neck. "I don't see the big guy anymore, but he was looking for you." He swallowed. "We really need to find out who you are. And fast."

Marcus coughed raggedly, his lungs filling up with smoke. The cave-in from the roof had blocked his route to the door and he darted his head around, looking for another exit. The windows were small, but Marcus thought his large frame should just be able to squeeze through.

He skirted past a flaming table and made his way over. "Help me.. please..." A small voice said behind him. Marcus turned around and saw the drunk he'd been talking to earlier lying on the floor, a chunk torn from his leg. "I can't move, I think I've been shot..."

Marcus sighed and took a step towards him. Grabbing the man by the scruff of the neck, he started dragging him towards the window, ignoring his cries of pain as his leg bumped against overturned furniture. Stooping to pick up a chair, he threw it as hard as he could against the glass, shattering it. He heaved the drunk through, then followed, squeezing himself out.

He landed in a grungy alley, next to the injured drunk who lay amongst the jagged shards of glass. "You should call an ambulance. You're losing blood," he said, looking down at him.

The drunk writhed in pain on the floor, clutching his leg. "I don't have a phone... please..."

Marcus grunted. "Not my problem," he muttered, as he turned around and made his way down the alley.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 27, 2013, 06:55:01 PM**

Marita and roase soon came upon the drunk, whose rose recognized as a regular at the strip club. his leg was missing a chunk and blood was pooling out of it. ' Hold still' Marita said as she pulled out some gauze and a bandage. marita usually carried a small first aid kit with her, fortunately fr the drunk, she had brought it woth her. she wrapped the area of the wound tight with the gauze then pulled out a small vial of rubbing alcohol, which would be used to sterilize the wound. the gauze soon was crimson red as it absorbed the blood, but at least the drunk was no longer bleeding out. ' mr gittsun?' Rose asked the Drunk. " we'rre heare to help you. ' just put your arms around mine and mariotas shoulders and we'll help carry you out of there, until we can call an ambulance.' She said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 28, 2013, 07:17:24 AM**

Not one for small talk, the Strain fired both cylinders, reloaded, and prepared to fire again. He prepared electrically charged bullets so they'd lethally shock if blocked with a sword.

Emilena had a very hard time of it, but managed to get her damaged hands to complete the download, remove the chip, and wipe the database behind her. Dropping to the floor, she used Adrian's distraction to grab her sword.

"This was all a big misunderstanding," the wolf agent assured. "We're on the search for a dangerous fugitive, and Mr. Exstasis got a little carried away. We were only supposed to ask if you knew anything about this individual."

He showed a picture of 'Lily North,' a pristine headshot that looked like it came out of a company personnel bio. "She is a danger to others and herself, and needs psychiatric help. It would be for her own good to come with us. Anyone who helped us locate her would be amply rewarded."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 28, 2013, 09:08:48 AM**

Adrian twirled his sword, parrying the first two bullets, then darting in for a sliding kick at the Strain's legs.

"Heh. Not much of a talker, are you? Well, that's fine. You'll end up as scrap soon enough." He said, slashing upward, aiming at the Strain's arms...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 28, 2013, 03:11:04 PM**

Joe Gittsun groaned as the the two women helped him up. Just minutes ago he'd been comfortably buzzed, the drinks making him feel like the king of the world. Now, pain and fear had cleared his head until he felt almost sober again.

He looked at the Great Dane supporting his left arm. "Th... thanks. I don't know what I would've done..." Joe turned to look at the girl on his right and his eyes widened in recognition. "Rose? What're you doing out here? There was shooting..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 28, 2013, 08:40:08 PM**

Soren took the photo and looked at it. "Can't say I've seen her."

He turned to the agent. "I'll let you know if I see her. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to fix my apartment and charge my exoskeleton."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 28, 2013, 09:56:45 PM**

The club's collapsed and everyone is running wherever they can' Rose replied. " as for shootings, well we've had a few of those in the club, especially when two girl dancers refuse to make-out for the guys entertainment, a lot of those guys are drunk and packing heat. thus shootings and generally, lousy aim" She turned to Marita "in the parlance its a twin bill with cherries' she muttered to Marita. i've heard of it. as if showing them your goods wasn't enough.. marita nodded as she tightened her grip on Gittsun's Shoulder

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 28, 2013, 11:40:01 PM**

"Of course," smiled the wolf. He made to leave, but noticed the burnt workshop. "Good Heaven! Whatever happened there? That doesn't look like Mr. Extasis was involved."

He stepped forward and examined. "This was almost certainly caused by arson," he noted. "As I'm sure you've figured out as well. Mr. Almaya, the government takes care of their citizens. I can promise you that I will personally divert manpower to finding out who burnt your warehouse *and* reimbursing you for the damage...as soon as I'm not so preoccupied with finding the missing fugitive..."

He smiled, hoping Soren caught his drift.

Lily nodded. "We should investigate that sticker from my boots first chance we get," she agreed. "Assuming I survive this man's visit..."

Every one of Adrian's strikes rang true, and the Strain found himself a quadruple amputee in seconds.

Staggering forward, Emilena held her sword in both mangled hands and plunged it into the

Strain's neck, for a particularly unsatisfying kill.

"Let's...go--" coughed Emilena; the room had filled with smoke. He way back to the strip club was almost certainly unusable. "Why did you **cough** come back for me you **ack** damn fool?" she choked, honestly not understanding it. Nobody she'd ever met before would have bothered to try and rescue her from a burning building.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 29, 2013, 12:12:12 AM**

Adrian smiled at her, then reached into his coat and pulled out a small breath mask.
"Because. You mean a lot to me, Emilena. I know that the feeling is probably not mutual, but I'm not about to let you die."
He said softly, the system over his right eye glowing as he scanned the area...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 29, 2013, 03:30:19 AM**

"Don't worry, Soren'll get rid of him," Axel reassured her. He watched as the wolf made to leave and then stopped to gesture at the ruined workshop. "Come on, get out of here!" he muttered.

He flicked his tail impatiently, and accidentally caught a row of bath product bottles, knocking them off the side of the bath with a loud crash.

Gittsun winced as Marita's grip hardened. "That's quite a grip you have there..." He watched as black smoke poured out of the club's cracked windows and flames occasionally flicked outside. "I don't think I'll come here anymore. Maybe it's time for a break for you too, Rose. You never looked...*ow*... happy here."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2013, 01:06:47 PM**

I hated the club anyway' Rose repl;ied. ' so i'm going to find new work, something a little more dignified/
- i"m Marita' marita said " rose is an old Friend of mine. I'm helping her land on her feet. As for you, well no ones going to the black sheep anymore.
- you can say that again, said a voice behind her ' It was the waitress who had served her at the club ' mind if i tag with you folks for awhile.. my car got totaled when the back of the building fell on it.. so i'm rideless for awhile.

_
 Sure Marita shrugged. ' you can tag along..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 30, 2013, 06:56:56 PM**

"Well, Mr. Almaya?" The wolf waited. "It's not a difficult question. If you know anything about the missing fugitive, there's a 1 million dollar reward for her safe apprehension. We only want to give her the therapy and rehabilitation to live a normal life. And in addition I would be honored to help you discover who burnt your warehouse, and aid in their apprehension."

The wolf's smile widened as he heard the crash, but he didn't take his eyes off Soren and otherwise made no indication that he had heard it. "If you can't help, I'll just have to continue my investigation into these matters alone..."

Emilena slipped the mask on and breathed pure air. Her eyes still stung and her ash-choked fur reeked of smoke, but she could see the outside of the burning club.

"We must be gone before the other police arrive," she said urgently, for she heard all-too-familiar sirens in the distance. "My apartment is too far away, and I no longer have the key. Do you have a dwelling or elsewhere we could hideout in?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 01, 2013, 09:24:34 PM**

Adrian nodded, eyepiece flaring as he searched the room for a weak point they could use to escape.
"Yeah. I have a bolthole somewhere not too far away. First though, we need to get out of here."
He said, finally pinpointing a target in the wall...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 01, 2013, 11:35:15 PM**

Soren pondered for a moment. The million bucks was awfully tempting and he knew nothing about Lily. At the same time, he realized Axel had decided to help her ó and betraying his friend was pretty much a dick move.

He made up his mind. "Sorry. I have better things to do than help you deal with a potentially dangerous fugitive."

Soren then turned around and headed into his house through the ruined back door. He groaned as he realized that the sun had begun to peek through the smoggy skies.

Sanjay waited until the repulsorcart's engine shut off and then slithered down the vertical side. Luckily, the men driving the vehicle were too busy in charging the vehicle's batteries and getting something to eat to care about the figure that just slithered behind them.

The Cobra scowled as he realized he was in a nasty truck stop. Empty vials littered the ground and armed drones flitted overhead in the smoggy sky. A large electronic billboard advertised the latest model hoverbike. Two women ó one an Augment ó loitered outside. Both of them had the unnaturally blue eyes that came with the use of carboxzyal ó AKA Bliss ó a drug once developed for memory enhancement but withdrawn once it was found to be incredibly addictive. Prostitutes favored it for its alleged ability to enhance sexual prowess.

Feeling the need to relieve himself ó and decidedly *not* wanting to enter the truck stop, Sanjay ducked behind a scraggly bush next to the building.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 02, 2013, 02:19:41 AM**

Axel was holding his breath, his face frozen in a grimace. When Soren turned back to head inside the house, he let it out with a *whoosh*. "I think it's alright, that guy must be leaving..." he told Lily. To be sure, he kept peeking over the edge of the window to see what the wolf would do next.

Gittsun nodded along with Marita, sneaking a quick look at the waitress' chest. "Sure you can come, the more the merrier!" he grinned, apparently pleased with the way things had turned out. "Any of you got any booze? Because... uh, my leg is starting to hurt again."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 02, 2013, 03:44:47 AM**

The wolf shook his head sadly. "A shame. Oh well. Not your fault you don't know anything...But we all must make sacrifices in the name of global protection. You have 24 hours to change your mind in case you *recall* anything you may have forgotten. And I must remind you, every minute we are getting closer to finding her. And we will do *whatever* it takes for her apprehension."

With one glance, he glanced around and noticed Axel. Giving Axel his largest, toothiest grin, the wolf turned and left the building.

"Well? It's not a particularly difficult shot! Fire!" snapped Emilena, losing her patience. "Would it help if I rubbed your--!?"

She broke off. She was about to sarcastically suggest she do something incredibly inappropriate, supposedly to 'motivate' him. She had never made a lewd remark about her own actions before. Concerned about what was happening to her, she merely remained silent and waited for him to take the shot.

Lily was huddled close to Axel. She wasn't brave enough to look herself, but she shivered as she listened to Axel's interpretation of the situation.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 02, 2013, 06:52:08 AM**

Adrian chuckled, smiling at Emilena as he turned and drew a set of knives, flinging them into the wall before dashing at it and kicking it cleanly apart.
"There. We got our way out. And if you're gonna rub anything, it'll have to wait until we get out of here."
He said with a grin, offering her his uninjured arm.
"Shall we?"
He joked...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 03, 2013, 05:57:15 PM**

Emilena dove through the hole and went tumbling onto the asphalted ground of an alleyway. She quickly glanced left and right; nobody had arrived yet.

"Lead the way," she said, refusing his arm.

As they ran, she looked troubled. "A drug dealer tagged me with...something in there," she admitted. "I suspect it was a neurocotic, but I don't know...and now I can't figure out..."

She trailed off. Not only can she not figure out how she felt, she couldn't even think of the words to explain how she felt.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Nick22** on **October 03, 2013, 06:44:42 PM**

no, i have no booze' marie the waitress said ' All the booze we had went up in that' she motioned back to the fire. ' booze is the last thing you need right now anyway' Marita said ' those bandages are the only thing keeping you from bleeding out. if you bump into anything, the bleeding will start all over again. so its best to be sober.
 - rose paused as they continued down the alley, flickering red and blue lights showing that the police had arrived to investigate the fire.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 03, 2013, 07:57:10 PM**

Adrian looked at it, then blushed slightly as his overlay processed what the drug dealer had stuck Emilena with.
"Uh...Emilena? I think I know what you were stuck with..."
He said softly, then stepped around in front of her.
"We'll look into it when we get to my hideyhole. How about that?"
He said with a grin.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 03, 2013, 10:38:55 PM**

Soren headed back into his ravaged apartment and into the basement where he plugged his exoskeleton into the charger. He found his shotgun in the foyer where it had been discarded by Axel in his haste to get Lily away from the agents. After checking to see it was still intact, he kept it in hand as he headed upstairs.

A yawn escaped his mouth as he willed his muscles to keep moving. After trudging upstairs, he flung open his bathroom where he found Axel and Lily.

A scowl was on his face as he kept his shotgun aimed at the ground. "Okay, I want the full story on this." He thrust the poster that the Wolf agent had given him at the two. "I know that y'all are hiding something from me and it cost me thousands of dollars in damage. Now out with it!"

The open blister pack of moziafil -- a powerful drug that allowed one to function perfectly for over a day with minimal to no sleep -- on the countertop tempted him. But he decided against taking it right now because the act of reaching over and grabbing the pack might give the two a distraction that they could use to disarm him. Moziafil had very few side effects and was non-addictive; unfortunately it was extremely expensive. The six pack he had on the counter cost him nearly a month's pay to buy. All this was due to the long and complicated synthesis, expensive feedstocks as well as the very low yield.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 04, 2013, 01:29:12 AM**

Axel blinked uneasily at the shotgun in Soren's hands. "Soren, wait, we aren't hiding..." He trailed off as he noticed the picture being held out to them. "Hey, that's you!" he exclaimed, looking back at Lily and pointing.

He leaned in to look at the name printed on it. "Lily North. That's a nice name. Ah, I mean it's nice that we finally know what your name is!" He said quickly.

Looking back at Soren, Axel's eyes widened. "What did that guy want? You can't trust him, he's a spook!"

(OOC: I'm assuming her name is on the picture, if it isn't I'll edit my post.)

"If you say so," Gittsun groaned. The flashing police lights in the distance made his head hurt, so he looked down at the floor. "Maybe they'll catch the bastards that did this."

Marcus grunted as he hoisted himself onto the rooftop. When he'd heard the police sirens approaching, Marcus had used a dumpster to boost himself up, clambering up the side of the building it faced against.

A sharp pain ran up his right arm, and he glanced down to see a cut running up his coat. Shrugging off the sleeve, he saw a deep laceration running up his arm, the sleeve of his T-Shirt stained red. Blood tricked down his fingers to drip on the gravel floor. One of Adrian's attacks; he hadn't felt it in the heat of the moment. *I'll deal with it later* he thought, as he watched the alleyways below from the darkness.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 04, 2013, 02:18:09 AM**

"I don't I..." Lily stammered. "I told you already! I don't anything more than I've already told you!"

She scrambled nervously away from the gun. "If you want me to leave, I will! But I don't know if I did any of the crimes listed on that poster!"

Emilena sighed. "Acceptable..." was the only thing she could think to say. The day's event were beginning to take a toll on her stamina. Plus she realized that running naked through back alleys was not the best way to reach a healthy retirement age. She merely kept her eyes peeled for movement as they headed closer and closer to Adrian's hideout.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 04, 2013, 09:58:44 AM**

Adrian glanced back, then took off his long jacket, stopping to wrap Emilena in the coat.
"Here. You looked cold, plus you were giving everyone a free show. Didn't think you wanted that."
He said gently, giving her a small hug before picking her up and holding her bridal-style.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 04, 2013, 05:50:53 PM**

"I honestly have stopped caring..." was the mumbled reply Adrian received. The neurocotic was doing a number on her endocrine and nervous systems, and she was rapidly succumbing to a state of semi-consciousness now that she didn't have to walk.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 04, 2013, 06:46:52 PM**

Adrian gently ran a hand over her face as he ran down another street, stopping at what appeared to be a dilapidated building, where he, never even breaking stride, tapped a hidden panel open with a shoulder.
"Hey. Hey we're here, Emilena. We're safe now. C'mon, stay awake..."
He said worriedly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 04, 2013, 08:14:03 PM**

Soren rubbed his temples with his hands as he let his shotgun dangle from his sling. "Look, I'm not going to turn y'all into the feds but I really want answers. Both about who Lily is and what the f--- was that guy doing ripping my house up *and* who the hell burnt down my workshop. I mean, they used gasoline -- something only used by classic car enthusiasts -- to burn down my workshop!"

He took a breath. "Look, sorry about my outburst before. I'm having a rough day. Now if you both could leave me alone for a moment so I can take a shower see if I have clients."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 12:48:10 AM**

Lily silently nodded, face pallid.

Once Soren had left she hugged Axel. "I want to know all of that too..." she sighed. "I've got to know what I did. We've still got that sticker, how soon can we analyze it? And shuld we leave? I don't think Soren wants us here..."

Emilena groaned and shuddered, her eyes remaining closed. The strangest visions were fluttering across her mind's eye, psychedelic visions of harsh colors and imaginary sensations racking her entire body....and that need was just getting worse and worse...building up inside her with no way of release...

How? she thought desperately, *how do I make this feeling go away?*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 05, 2013, 02:54:18 AM**

Axel hugged her back, his fingers lightly brushing against her hair. "I don't think we *can* go anywhere else. Soren's a good guy, he won't throw us out. He just needs time to think."

He looked over her shoulder, down the corridor leading away from the bathroom. "I think he has an office around here somewhere. We can use his computer to go through that sticker." Breaking from the hug gently, he started leading her down the corridor. "Soren!" Axel called over his shoulder, "We need to use your computer for a second. I won't mess around with anything, I promise!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 05, 2013, 07:41:40 AM**

"The one in the office is not connected to the Internet. That's a record keeping conputer. You can use the one in the living room!" Soren called back.

He quickly popped a pill of moziafil and soon felt his tiredness melt away. Stripping off his clothing, he leapt into the shower and began scrubbing himself down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 08:05:28 AM**

Adrian laid Emilena on the bed in the saferoom, placing a hand on hers as he tapped a code frequency into a wall panel. Almost immediately, a screen flashed to life, a balding older male

with glasses appearing in the frame.
"Ah, Adrian. What seems to be the trouble? I presume it pertains to the young woman currently on your bed, nein?"
He asked, to which Adrian nodded.
"Yeah. Seems she got stuck with a Neurocotic by some drug dealer, and she doesn't seem to be handling it so well. Talk me through getting her out of it."
He responded, worry evident in his voice. The man in the glasses nodded.
"Ja, ja. I will. Firstly, you need to get that patch off her. Tug it off, und zat should stop the hormones and chemicals. I already synthesized a counter-agent, but you'll need to administer it via mouth-to-mouth contact. It should halt the damage and keep it from spreading any further. Most likely, your fraulein will awaken at that point. However, she will likely need your help to...ah...release some of the tension."
He said, chuckling as a vial of clear liquid slid out from a panel in the wall. Adrian took it, nodding as he removed the patch from Emilena's body before biting the cork holding the vial shut, tipping it into his mouth before leaning in and kissing Emilena, letting the contents of the vial trickle into her mouth...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 08:54:29 PM**

Lily followed to the computer in the living room. "I'll let you handle this," she said, standing crouched over beside his chair. "If I was a computer person, I'm not any more..."

(OOC: From this angle, he can slightly see down her shirt. If he does so, he'll notice the tattoo has changed; the white O has become a 9.)

Emilena's eyes snapped open and registered Adrian's face. At that moment, everything became crystal clear; she realized what she needed, and it repulsed her. But she couldn't stop herself.

Grabbing him by the collar, she pulled him down and kissed him passionately back. Digging her claws into his back, she tore his shirt off of his back in ribbons and wouldn't let him pull away.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 09:01:42 PM**

Adrian blushed, but, knowing that what he was doing was for Emilena, smiled and relaxed into the kiss, running his tongue along her lips as he kissed her, his hands tracing down her body...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 09:41:46 PM**

Rolling over so that she was on top, Emilena broke the kiss, panting. "Don't you dare try and stop me!" she hissed as she threw Adrian's overcoat aside and ground her bare body against his. Groaning, she blinked through teary eyes and shuddered as a mix of carnal passion, dominance, and anticipation coursed through her.

Feeling the need to assert her control, she slashed his pectorals with her claws and snapped her jaws a centimeter from his face, but her glare quickly faded as her body spasmed again and her eyes rolled back into her head.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 09:43:41 PM**

Adrian winced a little at the feeling of her clawing his chest, but he gently pulled her into a tight embrace when she started spasming again, holding her close so that she wouldn't injure herself...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 10:12:53 PM**

After a long time, Emilena was getting frustrated. Any release was fleeting, the pressure inside her abdomen returning with every pulse of her chafing. A low growl escaped her throat as Adrian's cold belt buckle scraped between her thighs, and she realized he wasn't fully undressed yet.

Unbuckling his pants and flinging them aside disdainfully, she briefly broke her stride and froze blinking when she saw what presented itself underneath. Sure, in her line of work she'd seen nude males before, as well as static images or film, but she'd never even thought about getting this close to one...or even having to......

Not wanting to give her prey the satisfaction of seeing her brief flounder, she brandished her claws threateningly near his new exposed weak point. "I expect *perfect* cooperation from you!" she threatened, snapping her jaws at it for good measure.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 10:17:07 PM**

Adrian smiled slightly.
"Of course, Emilena. Why wouldn't I cooperate with you?"
He murred...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 10:26:19 PM**

"You better!" she snarled, expecting betrayal at any second. She ached for release, and her life had taught her that if she wanted something bad enough, somebody would find a way to stop her from getting it.

Grasping it without any regard for gentleness, she positioned herself above him, shuddering both with trepidation and anticipation of maybe, *finally* feeling release. Taking a deep ragged breath, she plunged downward.

Immediately she cried out, and squinted shut teary eyes as a lance of pain shot through her legs and midsection. She reflexively arched to pull out, but when she did so some of her pressure evaporated...just a sliver. Moaning, she gritted her teeth and plunged through the pain again. And again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 11:01:36 PM**

Adrian gingerly reached up, taking Emilena's hand and giving it a gentle squeeze, blushing profusely...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 05, 2013, 11:17:58 PM**

marita, marie and Rose helped guide Gittsun towards the next alley.' marie shivered.. she had lost nearly everything she possessed in the strip club.. all she had on was her work outfit, which was skimpy.. " the nearest hospital is 6 blocks from here' she panted, as they kept walking..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 11:42:21 PM**

Emilena panted loudly, cringing with each thrust. But at last she felt her pressure building to a breaking point, one that felt like it would pass through her, like a wave, so long as she kept this up...she moved faster and faster, yearning for that breaking point to come, but not quite understanding *how* exactly that happened...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 11:44:20 PM**

Adrian moaned softly, his hips bucking up to meet Emilena's every time, a vivid blush coloring his features as he felt his own climax nearing...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2013, 11:50:24 PM**

The pressure was unbearable! Her eyes flew open and she squealed immodestly. A feeling started welling up inside her, something she'd never felt before. Something powerful.

Her back arched of its own accord, and she let out an unrestrained scream.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 05, 2013, 11:55:16 PM**

Adrian's response was somewhat more restrained, but nearly as loud and passionate as Emilena's as his body convulsed with pleasure, his climax spilling into Emilena's body...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2013, 12:07:02 AM**

For at least fifteen seconds, every muscle in Emilena's body tightened and the pressure in her abdomen crested through her, setting her hair on end.

In time her scream lessened to a long low moan, and her exhausted muscles completely lost the ability to support her. She flopped on top on her partner, tongue lolling to the side and her heart thudding loudly in her chest.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 06, 2013, 02:40:38 AM**

Axel nodded. "I've got this," he said, rolling his shoulders. Pressing a switch, the screen flickered to life and demanded a username and password. He blinked and his eyes changed from blue to red, glowing slightly. The screen changed to a wall of text and numbers and after a second Axel found the information he needed, tapping it into the keyboard and hitting enter.

When the desktop loaded up, Axel connected to the internet and pulled out the bar-code sticker. "Alright... so if we just put this in..." he muttered to himself, typing in the numbers without looking away from the screen. After a short pause the jumble of number and letters returned, and he was able to interpret them: an expensive store called *J. Goldsmith's.*

Axel whistled. "You got them from J. Goldsmith's? Very fancy..." He loaded up the webpage. "Hmn, says here that the closest store is on Boarding Avenue. That's on the other side of the city, right? Next to the hospital?"

He looked back up at Lily, leaning over him. As he did so, his eyes passed over her chest and lingered for a moment, his breath catching. Then he noticed the tattoo and his eyes widened, changing back to their normal vision in his shock. "What the hell?! Uh... Lily... your tattoo's changed..." Axel spluttered.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 06, 2013, 08:16:21 AM**

Adrian murred, blushing and wrapping his arms around Emilena's body and holding her close.
"Feeling better now, 'Lena?"
He asked softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2013, 04:31:15 PM**

As the carnal instinct wore off, Emilena's natural standards started settling back and she realized what she had just done. The nickname Adrian had chosen didn't help. "Don't call me by that name!" she exclaimed, leaping off the bed and instinctually covering her breasts. She glanced around for clothes, then realized she didn't have any.

Lily was having a similar reaction to seeing the tattoo. The white O had changed to a 9. "What does that mean? How did it even do that?" She tried to scratch it off with her hands, but succeeded only in inflaming the surrounding skin.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 06, 2013, 05:22:51 PM**

Adrian grinned idly.
"Right. Sorry. There are some clothes in the closet over there. Don't have any bras or panties, so you'll have to go without. If I were you, I'd pick a thicker shirt. Oh, and the bathroom's through that door, if you feel like... Cleaning up.
He said softly, pointing to a pair of doors...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2013, 08:04:59 PM**

Emilena returned from the bathroom looking slightly nauseous. "I can't believe I just..." she trailed off. She couldn't decide whether to hate the man lying in bed before her, or to admit that she would be immeasurably more unhappy had he not been available. Plus, she was going to need his help again in the future...

She sighed. "I am sorry..." she said for the first time in her life. "Lena was the name of my mother. And I burned an orphanage down so that I'd have no ties to my parents of any kind. I don't...like remembering what I know about them."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 06, 2013, 08:10:10 PM**

Adrian nodded, then got up and hugged her close.
"Right. Sorry to bring up those memories. I just...anyways. Anyways, apology accepted. I'm

sure you had your reasons for hating your parents, and I won't pry."
He said softly, smiling gently...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2013, 08:35:40 PM**

Emilena sighed. "The nicest thing they ever did for me was put me in that orphanage so I didn't have to grow up with them..."

She lay back down on the bed. "I didn't know anything about my parentage until after I became a police officer, when I had the authority to demand the orphanage's files. My parents were Augmented soldiers. They freelanced as mercenaries, and in 2030 got rid of me to continue their hedonistic, libido-filled lifestyle..."

She trailed off, wondering whether to omit the worst part. Finally, she added, "...they were brother and sister..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 06, 2013, 08:37:13 PM**

Adrian blushed, looking at her as he lay next to her.
"That...heh. Well at least you know about yours. Me? All I've got is their name."
He said softly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2013, 09:40:41 PM**

"Be grateful," she replied bitterly. "I would love to never think about my parents again...idly participating in a violation of nature like that..."

She trailed off. "We need to reconnect with that hacker so we can read the files obtained from the Electric Sheep. Though I used to know that code. I suppose I could do it myself..." She yawned. "...tomorrow morning."

As much as she didn't want to touch him, the bed was small even for one so she had no choice. *After all*, she reflected, pressing against the side of his body, *That feeling is already coming back...I better get used to this...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 06, 2013, 10:06:15 PM**

Adrian gently wrapped his arm around Emilena, holding her close, but still loose enough that she wouldn't be uncomfortable.
"Yeah...Sleep well, Emilena. I'll talk to you in the morning."
He whispered softly. As he lay there, he finally allowed himself to think back.
"Heh...it's a funny thing. All these times we've worked together...and I never realized it before, but...I fell a little in love with her each time...And now..."
He sighed softly, shutting his eyes and drifting off slowly to sleep...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 06, 2013, 11:27:27 PM**

Sanjay zipped up his uniform when he was done. He noticed two huge men standing behind him.

"Can't you give a guy some privacy when he's taking a piss!" the Cobra snapped.

In response the two approached him. "The Purifiers would like to have a word with you."

"Yeah, here's my reply, f--- off." He then turned to slither away when he felt a sharp sting and he suddenly started to feel drowsy. Reaching behind him, he removed a dart.

One of the men bent over to pick up the incapacitated snake but Sanjay used the last of his strength to belt the man across the temple with his stolen bottle of vodka. The man grunted and then fell, unmoving, to the ground.

The last thing Sanjay heard was his bottle shattering as his grip loosened thanks to the drugs working on his body.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 07, 2013, 02:19:12 AM**

"Hey, stop that!" Axel said, firmly but gently grabbing Lily's wrists to stop her scratching. "You're just going to hurt yourself. Look, we made a good start here. We know what your name is, even though the rest of the stuff on that poster was crap. And we know where you were a couple of days ago."

He gave her what he hoped was an encouraging smile and held her hand. "I know I haven't known you long, but I can tell how brave you are. Don't let something like this-", he indicated her tattoo, "-scare you. We'll get to the bottom of it. I swear."

Axel stopped. "You look exhausted, maybe you should get some sleep. Tomorrow, we'll head across the city and get some answers."

Marcus ran, panting. The wailing of the police sirens was still there, but much fainter. He was getting away, but it was getting much harder to move; his arm had gone numb, and his legs had started aching. Blood continued to drip from his fingers, spattering on the floor and forming a gruesome trail for the cops to follow. *Goddamn him, it won't stop bleeding...*

He turned left into a narrow passageway and knocked into a pair of dustbins, sending them crashing to the floor and almost falling over.

Gittsun looked at Marita curiously as they walked. "You know, you look awful familiar. Have I seen you before? Maybe on...*ow*... Maybe on TV?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 07, 2013, 07:20:16 AM**

Lily didn't resist. "You're right...just, can you promise me we can trust Soren?" Her exhaustion was returning quickly as the adrenaline rush died down. Regardless of Axel's answer, she allowed herself to be led to the guest bedroom and lay down. In a few moments, she would be asleep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 07, 2013, 08:07:58 AM**

Adrian lay awake still, having barely been able to sleep at all. Somehow, something about being close to Emilena like he was had been stirring memories. Vague flashes of a past that had been taken from him.

"Why do I keep seeing these things? It's like...being around Emilena is bringing something back...are these my memories? I see...a family? Is that my family? Did I have a sister? No...not a chance. I was told that I was abandoned at that orphanage alone. But...what if they lied?"
He wondered to himself, staring at the ceiling in the dark...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 07, 2013, 09:22:31 AM**

"I promise. I won't let anything happen to you." Axel sat next to Lily, watching her breath slow as she drifted into sleep.

He looked at the alarm clock on the bedside table. 4:00AM. Axel knew it would be more polite to stay up and thank Soren again, but he felt completely wiped out. *Just a few hours...* He lightly brushed aside a lock of Lily's hair from her face, then settled down, between her and the door. Closing his eyes, he fell asleep almost immediately.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 07, 2013, 11:17:45 PM**

I dont think so'Marita said as they continued on down the alleyway. ' i prefer my privacy.. being on tv takes that away..' she olooked round, the temperature around them was dropping.. ' we need to keep going. neither rose nor i have much warm clothing on' marie said ' i'd like to find a store so i can buy a change of attire..
We have to get Gittsun here to the hospital first.. hold on, i've got to put on a fresh round of bandages, hold him still' Marita took out the scissors from the first aid kit and cut away the blackened bandages, re-wrapping the wound with a fresh length of bandage. the bloody bandages dripped blood onto the ground, thats how thoroughly saturated they were.' rose picked them up and threw them into a nearby trash can.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 08, 2013, 12:06:28 AM**

Soren got out of the shower and dressed.

He headed to the kitchen to cook himself a meal of catfish sausage and hash browns. As he slowly savored his meal, he recalled that bent cop who tried to beat him up for no reason at all.

Sighing, he got up and adjusted the shotgun slung across his back. The faint chemical smell of the air wafted through the door. A quick adjustment and a scrap of metal shoved into the hinges kept the door from falling inwards. The now exposed pipes and wiring in his kitchen could be fixed later.

Sitting back down, he finished his meal and placed the plates in his dishwasher.

Seeing as he was wide awake and he wasn't open for another three hours, he headed to his office and decided to check his records.

As Soren looked over the spreadsheet, he scowled. In the weeks before his workshop was destroyed, there was a spate of people coming in with severely damaged augments but totally incongrous backgrounds. Like an office worker who had somehow had all five fingers on his light class 1 arm completely ripped off. Or a waitress who somehow managed to get every servo-wire in her class 1 hand torn out.

Usually, he saw damage like that to laborers sporting class 2 augments and who had a bad encounter with heavy machinery. Furthermore, now that he examined the pictures, the damage looked almost deliberate.

He scratched his head and continued looking through his records to find any other discrepencies.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 08, 2013, 08:01:42 AM**

As Marita and Rose finished changing Gittsun's bandages, the sound of a heavy boot step alerted them to the figure that came striding around the corner a moment later. The tall, muscular Hokkaido wolf glanced at them, hand resting uneasily on the hilt of his sword for a moment before relaxing.
"Well...what do we have here?"
He said, voice soft, and cultured...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 08, 2013, 09:06:19 AM**

Gittsun blinked at the wolf, eying his military armour. "A little early for halloween, isn't it buddy? Listen, do you know how far the hospital is? I'm not exactly in dancing shape here," he said, indicating his leg.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 08, 2013, 04:39:59 PM**

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we're just taking him to the nearest hospital' marita said ' can you take us there? we dont have a car..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 08, 2013, 07:08:44 PM**

The figure in the coat nodded.
"I can get you there. Come on. Follow me."
He said calmly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 09, 2013, 02:58:39 AM**

Gittsun stared at the wolf's sword as he lead them down the dark passages. It looked sharp enough to slice through steel.

"So... who are you?" He asked uneasily, holding Marita and Rose a little ahead of him.

Marcus reached the end of the alley he'd been following and leaned out cautiously. He looked out into a main street, but at this early time of morning it was deserted. Movement across the street caught his eye. Through a convenience store window, he could see a young human stacking shelves, preparing for the day ahead.

Perfect. He couldn't risk going to a hospital, but it looked like he'd be able to fix himself up DIY-style. He crossed the street, making sure nobody was looking, and pushed open the door while slowly pulling out his revolver.

The man inside heard him and looked over his shoulder. "Oh, sorry sir. I'm not open to customers yet."

Marcus closed the door and flipped the bolt lock shut. "I'm not a customer."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 09, 2013, 06:51:15 AM**

The wolf paused for a moment, then looked back over his shoulder.
"My name is Kojuuro, and I'm offering to help you. That's all you need to know at the moment."
He said softly, turning back around, making his way down the street towards the hospital...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 09, 2013, 10:51:02 AM**

Soon enough, the huge neon sign announcing the city hospital loomed over the group. It wasn't too soon; the new bandage Marita had wrapped around Gittsun's wound was already beginning to soak through.

"I'm not... *ow*... gonna complain about the morphine, that's for sure," he announced to the others, wincing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 09, 2013, 06:53:03 PM**

Marie followed Maritas and Rose inside, as they helped Gittsun into the hospital. ' we ned a doctor' Rose said to the clerk ' Hes missing a chenk out of his leg. he'll need a skin graft to repair it i think..
- a couple of doctor, one of which was an anthro eagle and the other a large saint Bernard, came up to them ' wheel him in into Room 107 for surgery' the Saint Bernard sad as he easily picked up Gittsun and laid him on a stretcher..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 10, 2013, 12:34:58 AM**

Just then, a repulsor-ambulance landed and some EMTs wheeled in a Shetland Pony. The pony in question was an Augment mare ó on her forehead, just below her mane, was a spiraling metal horn. Just like that of the mythical unicorn.

IV tubes ran into her arms and an oxygen mask was placed on her snout. She gave no movement or sound as they hustled the mare into the detox unit.

One of the nurses, a lean Fruit Bat sighed as he adjusted his HMD. "Anne again?"

An Augment orderly shrugged his metallic arms. "Judging from that 'radio horn' implant and her tan coat...yeah."

"What'd she do this time?"

"Looks like she OD but we don't know what."

The nurse sighed. "The doc'll order a full tox screen."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 10, 2013, 01:30:32 AM**

Gittsun stared at the strange pony as she was wheeled past, then groaned as the Saint Bernard knocked his leg. "Watch it will you?! Thanks girls, if it wasn't for you I probably would've died back there."

"And thanks to you too, uh... Kojuuro. Will you guys be hanging around? Maybe I could treat you all to a drink when I'm fixed up?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 10, 2013, 02:46:34 PM**

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sorry, sir' the st bernard whose name was roller said. the eagles name was flightwing. DR Flightwing spoke up' you're lucky it was only a chunk taken out. missing a whole leg, or both legs would be even worse..;' yeah, this operation should only take about 3 hours ' DR Roller said.
_ a drink would be fine Marita said ' solong as its not too alcoholic.;' i could go for a bourbon actually' Marie said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 11, 2013, 12:08:04 AM**

"Bourbon? A girl after my own heart," Gittsun chortled. "How about you, furball? You've got 3 hours to spare, don't you?" he called out to Kojuuro as the doctors started to wheel him away.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 11, 2013, 08:27:17 AM**

Kojuuro chuckled a little.
"Hm. I suppose I can spare the time. After all, I highly doubt that the person I'm looking for will go anywhere in that time."
He said, grinning...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 13, 2013, 07:44:26 AM**

Gittsun snorted. "You sure do love being mysterious. Guess I'll see you all after they slap a band-aid on this, then." The orderlies wheeled him away, pushing the gurney through a set of double doors. Gittsun banged the back of his head. "Watch it I said! I'm not airline luggage," he complained, his voice growing fainter as he was taken away.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 13, 2013, 11:19:08 PM**

Soren rubbed his forehead as he shut down his computer. A sip of his now cold tea and the headache from the pill he took melted away.

Heading up to his guest room, he knocked on the door. "Lily, Axel! Do you want breakfast?"

Doctor Gibson injected carbizal, a general purpose antidote to most synthetic depressants into Anne's IV line.

The Human at the store gulped as he laid eyes on Marcus.

"What do you want? The cash? The cigarettes? The drugs? Just take them!" he blubbered out.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2013, 08:56:07 PM**

All night Lily had one neverending dream; she was floating in green gel. She could vaguely see dark figures walk past her occasionally, in pristine white rooms outside the gel. She reached out and touched smooth glass...and with a jolt realized her hands were grey and clammy, with six long slender fingers on each hand.

When Siren called in, she awoke in a cold sweat, hyperventilating. Anxious not to let Axel see her like this, she took several deep breaths before she woke him up. "Hey," she smiled at him. "Siren wants us for breakfast. How did you sleep?"

(OOC: Last night, both of her eyes had been normal brown. Today one of them has a red iris. Your call if Axel feels like bringing this up.)

Emilena woke up in a similar state; the pressure in her lower body was giving her a stomachache. After attempting meditation for a few minutes, she gave up and mounted Adrian instead; she can't possibly function today in this state. *Besides,* she thought, panting, *he might not even wake up...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 14, 2013, 09:31:51 PM**

The moment Emilena mounted him, Adrian cracked one eye open, blushing.
"Mmmph...G'morning to you, too, Emilena."
He chuckled softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 15, 2013, 01:49:03 AM**

Axel stirred, yawning and stretching an arm out. "Hmn. Breakfast? Wha-" He realised where he was and sat up, blinking. "Oh! Yeah, I slept great. How about you? Are you feeling okay?"

He smiled shyly at Lily - but his smile faltered slightly when he saw her iris. *I can't tell her now... she won't be able to deal with it... But jesus, what the hell's happening to her?!*

Marcus stepped forwards and leveled his revolver at the human's head. "Not them. I need a stitching kit and alcohol. Move. Call for help and I'll break your neck."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 15, 2013, 04:02:25 AM**

"Shut up..." groaned Emilena, not interested in explaining herself.

Thirty minutes later she shuddered, gave a large sigh of relief, and rolled off him when she felt he had also finished. Getting off the bed, she walked to his personal computer and, without bothering to sit down, plugged in the flash drive she had stolen.

The computer blithely informed her the file was corrupted. She cursed. She'd removed the flash drive before it was done converting. With the destruction of the Electric Sheep, all of that data was gone forever.

She walked back to Adrian. "We lost all the data. All we've got is what I can remember...and I remember thinking at the time how odd it was that there were so many references to the city hospital."

Lily smiled. "I'm feeling a lot better! I think the sleep really helped, I was running on steam near the end there!"

She hugged him. "I know I've said it already, but thank you so much for your help. I think you're the main reason I'm still going at this point. I actually feel like I have a friend right now...and that feeling is so nice!"

She got to her feet and opened the door, smiling at Soren. "Sorry to keep you waiting! We'll come down soon for breakfast!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 15, 2013, 08:17:56 AM**

Adrian nodded, still in the process of pulling on a new shirt. Once it was over his head, he looked over towards Emilena, then, without warning, wrapped his arms around her in a warm hug.
"Alright. Well, it looks like that'll be our next destination, won't it?"
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 16, 2013, 02:57:36 AM**

As he watched Lily cross the room, Axel felt a surge of affection run through him. *I have to do whatever it takes to protect her.*

When she opened the door to Soren, Axel nodded at him. "Hey. Yeah, breakfast sounds great."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 16, 2013, 04:10:17 AM**

Before today, Emilena would have stabbed a man who hugged her the way Adrian just did. But as Emilena prepared to suppress her murderous urge, instead she found that it never came. Adrian had more than earned her trust...actually, it was rather alarming how many opportunities he'd had to kill her while she completely defenseless. Somehow, it had become second-nature for her to trust him, which almost felt like something of a nice break from standard operating procedure.

Still, she broke the hug. They had a job to do. "The easiest way to get in would be to pose as patients. Your left arm is injured, as are both of my hands. We'd have to pretend to be interested in getting the wounded areas cybernetically replaced," *Hell, he might legitimately be interested in doing just that*, she realized, "but I will simply refuse the surgery at the last moment. It still gets us through the door and into the back rooms, where we can investigate."

At breakfast, Lily ate ravenously. With her strength back, she quickly put it to good use replenishing the energy she'd lost on her 3 days on the lam.

"So," she said, in between biting into her fifth grapefruit, "We need to get into Mantreads Shoe Suppliers, but I can't be seen in public. I was thinking we disguise ourselves as Sapaar."

The Sapaar were a religious group that had fully integrated into modern society. The men behaved and dressed pretty much like anybody else, but the women dressed head-to-toe in a silver reflective tunic that covered even the head, representing their subservience to the modern world. "I figure we don't have silver cloth floating around, but the poorer ones use white. We could cut up a sheet or something!"

She seemed remarkably chipper, especially considering her subdued behavior the night previous. She was still riding the high from a good night's sleep, and from the reminder that not everyone in the world was indifferent to her plight or wanted her dead.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 16, 2013, 11:27:06 AM**

Soren passed a plate containing scrambled eggs, catfish sausage and hash browns to Axel. Some fresh fruit was in a communal dish.

"I may have some heat resistant silver cloth left over from a project of mine," Soren added. "Let me go look."

Anne quickly regained consciousness as the drugs in her system were neutralized "Hey, what the hell's up this time?"

"You're in Stephenson Memorial Hospital," an orderly said as he got a wheelchair ready.

"I know that! What I wanna know is how the f--- I got here!"

The orderly passed her the doctors report. She scanned over it and scowled. "That does it, I'm finding the prick who sold me that bad batch and dumping him off an elevated walkway."

She threw the blankets off the bed and got to her feet, only to suffer a sudden attack of dizziness that forced her to sit down.

A nurse ran into the room as Anne's act of getting up had tripped an alarm. "Ms. Phoe, the drugs have not been fully neutralized yet." He looked at the patient care directions. "Speaking of which, it's time for your carbazil injection."

The Human quickly fetched the alcohol and the sewing kit. "Look just take it and leave me alone! Please!"

(OOC - Sapaar? *Darwin's Soldiers* reference?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 16, 2013, 01:33:35 PM**

Axel gratefully accepted the plate Soren offered him, and sat down at the table to eat it. He was hungrier than he thought, wolfing the food down in moments. As he swallowed the last bite he looked at the two uneasily.

"It's not just the cops we have to look out for - what about that wolf? I think he knows something's up here."

Marcus indicated the counter with the point of his gun. "Put them there." As the human did so, he noticed a tiny supply closet behind him. Holstering the pistol, he grasped the man by the front of his uniform and effortlessly lifted him up into the air with his good arm.

Marching forwards, he tossed the human into the closet and slammed the door shut after him, jamming a box under the door handle. "Stay in there and shut the f--k up." Marcus turned around to face the sewing kit, shrugging off his coat.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 16, 2013, 01:34:55 PM**

Adrian nodded, rolling his neck a little.
"Right, right. Figure it'll be good to get this damn arm replaced If I want to be much help."
He said softly, smiling at Emilena...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 16, 2013, 06:20:42 PM**

Soren returned with a small 2 inch by 2 inch patch of silver cloth. "Sorry, that's all the silver cloth I could find. It's aluminized carbon nanotube fiber. I had some left over when I repaired a foundryman's arm."

He then sipped his tea. "Anyways, I noticed something funny with my client records."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 16, 2013, 07:12:42 PM**

(OOC: Haha, someone actually read one of my stories? I figured nobody would catch that. I like the word because it has two a's in a row.)

"Thanks, but we need enough cloth to cover my entire body," Lily told Soren. "We can make do with white cloth."

Lily nodded at Axel's caution. "To be honest, that's why I want to get out of here as soon as possible. No offense to you Soren, but I suspect that wolf knew I was here. He's going to be back, and I don't want to be here when he does..."

"Yeah, you violate your body once with machinery, might as well do it again," she responded flippantly. She then softened when she thought those words over. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't talk like that," she said, returning his hug in a form of apology. "It's not your fault you had to become an Augment. And at least it'll keep you useful."

She left to take a shower. "I'll just have to take of myself while you're under. The hospital requires general anasthesia for all cybernetic surgeries."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 16, 2013, 07:15:33 PM**

Adrian chuckled and nodded, then smiled and stripped down before joining Emilena in the shower with a blush.
"I uh...hope you don't mind...we can save a little time this way..."
He said softly, then smiled at her.
"And it's okay...I don't like the augments any more than you do...but...I had to live..."
He said, blushing more...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 16, 2013, 07:25:29 PM**

Emilena smiled. "I like efficiency."

It was not a two-person shower, but considering she'd used a sanitizing towel her entire life she considered it practically luxurious.

She looked with confusion at the soap, shampoo, and body wash dispensers. "Speaking of efficiency, could you show me how these work? I admit I'm not very experienced with this method of hygiene."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 16, 2013, 07:35:17 PM**

Adrian chuckled a little, nodding as his tail curled around Emilena a little.
"Of course. This one is for your hair..."
He said, tapping the shampoo dispenser.
"This one is for your body..."
He said as he moved his finger to the body wash
"And this one is for...well, for your privates and your feet and stuff."
He said, indicating the soap...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 16, 2013, 09:24:46 PM**

Soren finished his meal. "I don't really trust him either." He used a cloth to clean off some grease from his HMD's lens.

He heard the doorbell ring. "Must be a client," he muttered.

He pushed his chair in, donned the work clothes he had hanging from a rack and headed to the door.

Soren patched his HMD into the house's cameras and the hastily patched door became transparent. He scowled; he didn't recognize this client. But nevertheless, he needed money. He disengaged the locks and opened the door a bit. "Hello, you've reached Almaya's Augmentation Repair and Mod Shop. How may I help you?"

(OOC - The person he meets isn't a client. It's a Purifier. Your call on what the Purifier does, but no kidnapping or killing Soren.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 17, 2013, 02:04:50 AM**

Axel heard the slight shift in Soren's tone as he opened the front door. Tensing up, he gripped his fork a little tighter and shared a puzzled glance with Lily.

Staring back at Soren was a small man dressed in a denim jacket and jeans. Greasy blonde hair hung matted over sleep deprived eyes, and as Soren cracked open the door the stink of sweat and alcohol wafted through the gap.

"What the hell is wrong with you, huh? You know how *easily* we could kill you? What, you can't take a f----n' message?!" As he spoke, his voice scratchy and hard on the ears, he leaned on the door. His weight started to force the door inwards.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 17, 2013, 05:11:55 AM**

Still slightly puzzled, Emilena leaned over awkwardly, trying to get her head underneath the shampoo dispenser. "Watch out!" she snapped, since he was entirely in her way. A few seconds later she lost her footing and sent both of them spilling onto the shower floor with a crash.

Lily froze with fear, halfway through eating a toasted bagel. This proved to be a bad decision when she choked on it and began coughing uncontrollably.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 17, 2013, 10:00:30 AM**

Adrian had attempted to move out of Emilena's way, but when she fell, he ended up on his back, with her on top of him. He smiled and blushed bright red, smiling at her shyly.
"Right...forgot to warn you that the floor gets slippery when it's wet..."
He said, chuckling softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 17, 2013, 05:57:03 PM**

Soren leaned hard on the door, trying to keep the man outside. "Axel! Lily! Get my gun!" he barked. For someone so small, the man was surprisingly strong.

He turned to the intruder. "What's *my* problem!?" he thundered. "What the f---'s your problem!? Busting into hard working folks' homes to destroy livelihoods for another rush of drugs? Now GTFO!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 18, 2013, 12:31:09 AM**

Axel leaped up and started to run to Soren's aid, but stopped when he heard Lily spluttering and turned back to see her choking. Torn between the two, he paused. Then he dashed back to Lily's side. "*Crap!* Hang on, Soren!"

Hooking his arms around her stomach from behind, he started heaving, tightening his grip and releasing repeatedly. He had no idea what he was doing, but he'd seen it done in the movies so he was praying it would work.

"Drugs? You're even more stupid than I thought Almaya." He laughed, a harsh barking noise, and released his hold on the door. "You don't need your bitches to help you - this was just a... friendly warning. We're watching you." The man spat at Soren's feet.

He stepped aside, letting Soren see the symbol he'd sprayed on the path leading to the house; a red, cracked gear. "What happened before was just the start. Keep it up and you'll really know who you're f----n' with."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 18, 2013, 02:17:01 AM**

Lily swallowed a painful gulp of water. "Forget about me!" she spluttered. "Go help Soren!"

Emilena groaned. "I'm not cut out for showers," she decided, and crawled out onto the bathroom floor. "Don't take too long," she said, drying off. "Earliest surgeries are bookable thirty minutes from now, and using public transportation that's about how long it'll take to get there. I want to be looking through hospital files as soon as we can."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 18, 2013, 08:34:34 AM**

Adrian rolled to his feet, flicking the shower off and chuckling, running a hand through his hair before grabbing a towel and drying off.
"Right, right. And we don't need to take public transportation."
He said with a small smile...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 19, 2013, 12:21:50 AM**

Soren's HMD scanned the cracked gear emblem. Several news reports and a Wikipedia article on The Purifiers appeared.

"It can't be," he whispered, his jaw dropping in shock. "The Purifiers."

He scowled. The shock was soon replaced by burning rage. "You intolerant f---s are the ones who destroyed my workshop!? Get out before I call the cops or my friend returns with my gun!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 19, 2013, 02:40:48 AM**

When he saw Lily could breath again, Axel backed out of the room. Soren's shotgun was propped up against the wall, and he snatched it up as he dashed out.

He reached the entrance and joined Soren's side, aiming the barrel down at the man. His nose wrinkled as he caught a smell of him. "I'm here. Who the hell's this?"

The purifier raised his eyebrows when he saw Axel appear, unimpressed. "I'm someone you and everyone like you should be afraid of, ---hole."

He looked back at Soren, his lips curling up into a grin. He raised his arms mockingly and started backing away. "Remember what I said. We have eyes everywhere." His grin vanished as his eyes flicked back to Axel. "I'll make sure they kill you slowly."

Shoving his hands into his jacket pocket, he turned around and sauntered down the path, around the corner and out of sight.

Marcus grunted as the needle poked back out of his flesh. He pulled it and the thread trailing behind tightened, sealing the deep cut. He bit the needle free and tied a small knot in the thread, then looked down at his handiwork. He was no surgeon, the stitching running crudely up the length of his arm, but it would do. He poured the bottle of alcohol over the wound with a hiss of pain and stood up.

The right side of his T-Shirt had completely soaked through with blood, so he'd stuffed it in the waste disposal. Stalking over to a small stand with cheap white shirts, he selected one which was around his size and buttoned it on, trying to decide his next move.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 19, 2013, 08:49:09 AM**

Soren scowled. "It's one of those Purifier nutcases. Apparently, they're the ones who burnt down my workshop."

He then sighed as he rubbed his forehead, being careful to avoid knocking his HMD off. "He's serious about the threat too."

"F---, I'm gonna have to basically go nomadic or into hiding."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 19, 2013, 09:49:22 AM**

"A Purifier?" Axel lowered the gun once the man had walked away. "I guess that explains why he didn't take a shine to me..." He laughed nervously, but his stomach was turning itself in knots. He knew enough about them to know they weren't a joke.

He put his hand on Soren's shoulder, trying to make him feel better. "That guy was probably full of it, Soren. It'll be okay." He looked around anxiously. "But maybe we should close the door, just to be careful."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 19, 2013, 12:13:36 PM**

"I'm not interested in finding out. And I don't want him going after my clients," Soren said. He shut the door and with several heavy clicks, the locks engaged.

"Speaking of which, I have something weird to show you about my client records."

He then headed back to his office.

Aaron fumed as his coworker, an Augment with a laser cutter arm attachment was busy cutting some rebar to size.

Despite his neutral expression, his flattened ears conveyed his displeasure as he carried an armload of rebar to the worker.

"Anything else, *gleamer*?" he spat.

The Augment scowled but said nothing as he continued working.

"Aaron! Cut that s--- out!" a Fruit Bat shouted from five stories up where she was riveting some girders in place. Seeing as she had no more rivets, she leapt from the high perch and spread her arms, letting her membranous wings catch the wind as she glided down.

Aaron said nothing as he went to get more rebar. A crane nearby lifted a group of Avian ironworkers to the top of the building. Avians and Bats were prized as ironworkers owing to their utter fearlessness about heights and their wings. While their wings were not strong enough to let them fly, they were more than capable of gliding.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 19, 2013, 04:26:17 PM**

Emilena looked with disdain at the clothing selection available to her. "The other thing we're doing is going to the clothing store next door. I am most certainly not adopting your fashion preferences."

Lily darted into the kitchen and grabbed the largest butcher knife she could find. Swallowing her fear, she burst into the main room to see Axel and Soren staring at an empty walkway. "Who-who was he? What did he want?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 19, 2013, 05:01:55 PM**

"It's alright, they're gone now," Axel said, propping the shotgun up against the wall and giving the knife Lily was holding an amused smile, "You can put that away, Michael Myers. I guess we know who torched Soren's workplace now - those crazy Purifier guys."

He ran a hand through his white hair. "You feeling better? Soren was going to show something weird he'd noticed in his records. Want to come see?" Axel nodded his head in the direction of Soren's office.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 19, 2013, 05:33:01 PM**

Soren booted up his computer and sipped from the canteen of tea he had in the office.

He booted up his spreadsheet and scrolled to the area where he found the most discrepencies

He scowled as laid eyes on the letters and numbers on the screen. Soren was now newrly certain that the Purifiers were mutilating his clients' augments to send him a warning.

(OOC - Soren's referring to recent spike of Augments coming in with incongruious and/or deliberate damage to their parts (taking their background, augmentations and jobs into account).)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 19, 2013, 08:39:04 PM**

Adrian smiled at Emilena.
"Geeze, harsh~. What's so bad about simple, practical stuff?"
He chuckled as he slung an outfit on...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 20, 2013, 01:47:37 AM**

"It's not the practicality," Emilena wrinkled her nose. "All of it smells like motor oil and chrome."

Lily nodded. "But be careful! I don't want you getting hurt by these Purifiers, or worse..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 20, 2013, 02:24:28 AM**

Axel flushed. "Don't worry about me, it'll take more than a Purifier to damage this tough exterior," he said, puffing out his weedy chest.

"Come on, Soren's waiting." He lead her down the corridor to Soren's office and leaned over his shoulder, looking at the spreadsheet. "So, what did you notice?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 20, 2013, 09:49:00 AM**

Soren pointed to the screen. "Axel, Lily, notice how the previous weeks before my workshop was burnt have had a spike of people coming in with augment damage? And I mean *real* serious damage. But here's the thing, they're office workers or other low impact jobs. I'm seeing them with damage that I'd usually see in laborers who gotten involved in industrial accidents. Finallyó" Soren bought up a picture of a class 1 augment with all of its fingers removed, probably by a laser cutter. The caption below indicated that it belonged to a lab tech from Pelvanida Cybernetics "ósome of the damage appears deliberate."

He templed his fingers. "I suspect the Purifiers are attacking them and deliberately mutilating their augments to send a message."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 21, 2013, 02:45:51 PM**

Marie , marita and rose were waiting for Gittsun's surgery to finish, before looking for the others. it had been s couple hours.
-
broadstreets called Emilema's pager. ' echo? this is friendly reminder that you have used up two days of your deadline. you must get your target to me by midnight tonight, or i will be coming for your badge."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 21, 2013, 04:04:31 PM**

"I don't mind the practicality," Emilena wrinkled her nose. "It's that they all have the faint smell of motor oil."

Nevertheless she squeezed into a khaki long-sleeved shirt and trousers, and clipped her retracted katana into a utility belt. "Let's get out of here."

"I was actually going to go sew that Sapaar suit out of our bedsheet," Lily glanced down the street hoping to get a glimpse of who had intruded shortly before. "But please be careful! I don't want you getting hurt by these thugs..." She hugged him for reassurance. "You're like the one thing I have."

Lily held her tongue when she observed the reports. "Is there any way I can help, Soren? You've helped me so much already."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 22, 2013, 02:21:26 AM**

"You're right, something does seem off," Axel said, nodding. "There must be something we can do. Hmn..." He focused on the lab tech who's fingers had been removed.

"Well, we know where this guy works; 'Pelvanida Cybernetics'. I guess the simplest start would be to ask him? Maybe once we've investigated the clothes store for Lily, we could check that place out?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 22, 2013, 09:19:01 AM**

Adrian chuckled, glancing over Emilena with a smile.
"Looking sharp. Let's get rolling, shall we?"
He said with a grin, grabbing a set of keys from off the wall...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 22, 2013, 04:41:32 PM**

Emilena cocked a single eyebrow at the keys, but followed Adrian nonetheless.

Lily lay a hand on Soren's shoulder. "You're right. Something's up. I'm not in a position to be giving you suggestions, but I don't think it's safe for you here anymore. Would you like to come with us to the clothing store for a quick look into my purchasing records, and then we can go into hiding together?" she smiled. "I won't lie, it's not an easy life...but it's easier when you're not alone."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 23, 2013, 01:05:48 AM**

Soren templed his fingers. "I won't bow to those Purifier freaks," he growled. "I'll keep my business running, no matter the cost."

He was interruped by the doorbell ringing.

Bringing up the view from an external camera, he saw who was at the front door. He sighed. "Her again!?"

He scowled and went up to the door, throwing on his work uniform/armor. The bolts unlatched and he opened the door, revealing a rather beautiful Shetland Pony mare with a metallic horn sticking out of her forehead.

"Hey, Soren, I got something for you," she said.

"What is it this time?"

Anne pulled out a neurotester, a device intended to make sure the augments were working correctly and the nerves were properly hooked up to the augment. "How much for this?"

Soren looked it over. It was clearly a well made ó and expensive piece of equipment. And he needed to replace the stuff that he lost in his workshop fire. "Fine. I'll give youó" He noticed a riveted tag that read "Property of Stephenson Memorial Hospital". "Hey! I ain't payin' you s--- for stolen goods!"

Anne scowled. "What the hell!? You were perfectly willing to buy augments from me, even though you damn well knew where I got them from!"

"Stealing medical equipment from a hospital is heavily investigated by the cops. Stealing augs...not so much."

"You know what? Take it then!" Anne left the neurotester at the door and walked away to steal more stuff to hock.

He sighed. "Well, Lily, I'll have to come with you now to go and return some stolen goods." He picked up the neurotester and carefully put it in an unmarked cardboard box.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 23, 2013, 01:53:23 AM**

Axel opened a corner of the cardboard box, and gasped when he looked inside. "Hey, an N18! This is one of the best neurotesters out there! Couldn't we just keep it for a bit..." He trailed off when he saw Soren's face. "Alright, I guess not." He closed the box with a wistful sigh.

"Well, we should probably leave as soon as soon as we can. Let's find some cloth for Lily and get out of here before more weirdos show up." He didn't mention how he and Lily probably counted among the weirdos.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 23, 2013, 10:26:18 PM**

The hospital was a flurry of activity; doctors and orderlies passed patients who were wired into holo-networks, passing the time virtually until their turn came. As this was the section for cybernetic upgrades, there weren't as many wounded as elsewhere in the hospital.

The genders here were separated due to the sensitivity of the surgery's nature. With a single "Take care of yourself," Emilena left Adrian's company and headed back.

"You're just in time for your appointment," smiled a skunk receptionist. Emilena wondered what augments she had; it wasn't visually apparent. "If you could please fill these out and return them, we'll wheel you back!" the receptionist finished, handing over a stack of papers.

Fifteen minutes later Emilena was led to a surgical room, where she was asked to remove her clothing and put on a drafty gown. The nurse also wiped her wrists down, checked her vitals, and said, "The doctor will be here in ten minutes. Make sure you are lying down and ready!"

Emilena had no intention of following through with the surgery; this was her opportunity to sneak into the private recesses of the hospital. Once the nurse had left, Emilena began picking the lock to the surgical room.

Minutes later she was asleep. Had she carefully read the papers before signing them, she'd had noted that this hospital applies the anesthetic through wrist wipes.

Markus received a call on a private channel, a channel reserved for a certain very powerful individual.

(OOC: Got a suggestion for Markus' superior's name?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 23, 2013, 10:43:48 PM**

Adrian sat in the waiting room, glancing at the wall before another nurse, this one a male feline, walked in.
"Mr...Kibagami, correct? There was a package delivered for you earlier. With instructions to install it promptly."
He said, motioning for Adrian to follow him. Adrian looked suspiciously at the feline for a

moment, then nodded, following him into the surgical suite where, much like Emilena, he signed the requisite forms and was led to the room where the surgery would take place...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 23, 2013, 11:53:21 PM**

(you pick it LBT)
Marie headed towards the vending machines in a nearby section of the waiting aea. she grabbed a soda as well as a bag of potato chips for munching on. marita and rose came up to her, and marie haned them the drinks to hold while she got two more sodas and two moe bags of chips. ' thought we might use a bite to eat ' she said with a smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 24, 2013, 12:38:57 AM**

Soren carried the box to his garage and placed it in his repulsorcar. He disconnected the charging cable and took his position in the driver's seat.

"Lily, Axel, get in!"

Anne whistled as she rooted through the electronics waste bin at a local computer repair shop. Most of what was in her bag were circuit boards that were wortheless ó save the precious metals in them.

She smiled; those masters degrees she had in genetic engineering and industrial design were being put to good use...just not in a way her parents would like.

Rattling was heard as another bum rooted through a trash can.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 24, 2013, 01:26:15 AM**

Axel held the car door open for the now covered Lily, and hopped in after her. "C'mon, let's get going."

When Marcus heard the beeping coming from his pocket, he reached in and pulled out his phone, snapping it open. ***UNKNOWN*** flashed on the screen. The corners of Marcus' mouth tightened. It was *him.* He tapped answer. "Zeroth."

"Yes." Never using the same number for any extended period of time, the distorted voice on the other end was responsible for the majority of orders issued to members of the Purifiers. Nobody knew his real name, and only a very select few, including Marcus, had ever seen his face. The alias he went by for the time being was 'Zeroth'.

"I found Kibagami, at the 'Electric Sheep' of all places. Engaged him, but he managed to escape."

"We know. There are 15 patrons dead. 15 non-augmented patrons. It's... inconvenient."

"I'm sorry," Marcus said, the words bitter in his mouth.

"It doesn't matter. In fact, it seems you might have another chance. Kibagami's booked himself into the city hospital to have repairs carried out on his arm. We don't know if he knows about our operations there or not, and there's a chance he's working with someone outside. If this was anyone else, one of our insiders would be sufficient but as this is Kibagami... Go to the hospital, and rendezvous with one of our contacts, he'll be waiting for you. And on no accounts can you kill Kibagami. Not yet." The line went dead as Zeroth hung up.

Marcus replaced the phone in his pocket and snatched his jacket up off the counter. To the left of the cash register was a set of car keys belonging to the human locked in the cupboard. He picked them up and let himself out of the shop.

(OOC: I figured the person who gives Marcus orders would be all illusive with code names and whatnot, but if someone wants to give him a real name go ahead)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 24, 2013, 01:41:49 AM**

Lily emerged from the house, completely clad in a form-fitting white unisuit, complete with balaclava. "How does this look?" She smiled, even though only her mismatching eyes were visible. "Does it hide every way of easily identifying me?"

She climbed into the car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 24, 2013, 02:17:32 AM**

Axel looked at the white shape getting in the car. "Yeah, looks pretty good. Except..." A lock of Lily's hair had fallen out from under the balaclava, and he gently pushed it back into place. "There." He grinned reassuringly at her and clipped his seatbelt on.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 25, 2013, 02:58:41 PM**

The engines started as the garage door opened and the repulsorcwr lifted into the midafternoon sun. Luckily, Soren lived on the outskirts so air pollution wasn't too bad.

He merged into one of the skyways and set the autopilot. The man adjusted his loose fitting dark blue pants and a grey long sleeved shirt. Despite their plain appearance, the clothing was impregnated with shear-thickening fluid as well as shock dampening fibers, allowing him to absorb blows that would otherwise cripple or kill him.

"So Lily, Axel, know how to get that neurotester back without them thinking I stole it?" Soren asked. His HMD was providing real time data about the environment around him. The repulsorcar lurched slightly as Soren dropped in altitude to avoid something thrown by two passing hoverbikers.

"Anyways,

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 25, 2013, 06:28:59 PM**

Adrian stirred, the anesthetics steadily wearing off as he brought his new arm up to take a look at it. The sleekly-molded black metal was nearly indistinguishable from his own fur. Flexing the fingers of it experimentally, he grinned as the indicators flashed into his overlaid systems, projected into his mind like images in a manual. Noting the new integrated weapon systems, he froze when he noticed the installation of a tracking device that was keyed to an unknown frequency. Glancing around the room, he quickly undid all the external armor plates, reaching into his arm and tugging the device out, wincing in pain as he did so. He looked at it, chuckling a little.

"Heh. Purifiers.   Always selling us Augs short, seems like."
He said to himself as he crushed the device in his hand. Noticing that he wasn't hooked up to any vital monitors or anything of the sort, he immediately rolled out of the bed, standing up and preparing to go find Emilena and his gear, the panels on his arm sliding shut as he did so...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 26, 2013, 06:00:13 AM**

Emilena stirred as well. Her mind immediately went into hyperdrive. *I wasn't supposed to get knocked out? What the hell? Oh god, they didn't...*

Her eyes fluttered open and she moved her hand to her face. She could feel it. Cybernetics merged seamlessly with her fingers, and her palm felt hollow and tinny. She became aware that she was wearing a hospital gown and laying on the surgery table, with some familiar blood stains dotting the sheets.

She tried to get up and saw a rabbit orderly leap away in fright. "Who the hell are you?" She snapped in fright, trying to leap to her feet, but her left leg was cuffed to a railing.

The bunny drew a long syringe and stabbed at her knee, but thanks to her double joints she bent out of the way, then took that opportunity to kick him square in the head with her right foot. As he hit the floor, she spotted her personals on a footstool out of reach. She tried to shake her foot free, but of course that didn't work.

The bunny leapt to his feet, this time with a dart gun. She recognized the make; it contained powerful horse tranquilizers. She slapped him with her intravenous fluid bag and caused his first shot to wildly miss.

As he reloaded, Emilena grasped the foot cuff in her fingers and tug. To her amazement, her new Augmented hands tore through the thin metal, easily freeing her foot from the warped cuff. She hardly had time to reflect on this, as the bunny had reloaded. Leaping forward, she delivered a hard right hook to his chest, sending him staggering but stable. He was tougher than she thought.

Diving through the curtain, she found herself in the inner recesses of the hospital. Her pursuer giving chase, she raced down the hallway, attempting to locate Adrian or an exit, whichever came first.

Lily shook her head cluelessly. "You could tell them the truth," she suggested. "That someone left it on your doorstep. They may figure no thief just returns stolen goods. You could even gain a reward. Just, make sure I'm not there when you talk to them. Last thing I need is to have the theft pinned on me..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 26, 2013, 08:08:06 AM**

Axel nodded. "That makes sense. You don't look like a thief - and that reward could come in handy if they actually give one."

Marcus watched Adrian through the CCTV in the security room. His contact, a jackal sat on a chair in front of the monitors, zoomed in on the image as Adrian pulled the tracker free. "He found it," the jackal complained.

Marcus swore under his breath. "I told you it wouldn't be enough. We've tracked him before, he knows what one feels like." He balled his fists, his claws digging into his palm. He couldn't let this opportunity go...

"What the hell..." The jackal muttered as he noticed something in one of the smaller screens. He changed the image on the main screen. It changed to a female fox struggling with one of the orderlies. Her face turned briefly towards the camera, and Marcus frowned. She seemed familiar...

His eyes widened as he recalled that she'd been the dancer at the Electric Sheep, who'd turned up right at the same moment Adrian did. She didn't seem to be much of a dancer... and now they both just happened to turn up at the hospital together? It was too much of a coincidence.

Marcus snatched the tracker up from the table next to the contact and loaded another chip into it. Though a tracking chip would give the best signal if inserted into an augmentation, a chip shot under the skin would still be useful. He slipped out the door, hiding the tracker under his jacket.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 26, 2013, 09:19:07 AM**

Adrian grinned, quickly hacking into one of the hospital's terminals to gain access to the patient records so that he could figure out where his articles had been stored, as well as where Emilena had been taken. Quickly bypassing the locks on the code, he rapidly located Emilena's room, then the patient storage where his articles had been taken. He cracked his neck, then turned to one of the cameras, flipping it the bird as he turned and ran off...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 26, 2013, 09:51:37 AM**

A cybernetic surgeon, apparently halfway through an operation, walked out of a room in front of Emilena. He gasped in surprise when a tranq whizzed past the approaching fox's ear and embedded in his neck.

Emilena took the opportunity to dart into the open door. An anaesthetized bear appeared to be halfway through receiving cybernetic arms; the left one was still sitting on the preparation tray. Emilena snatched it up and beaned her assailant in the face when he entered the room. Wailing on him for a good ten minutes, she finally stopped when he looked less intact than the bear behind her.

Fishing the tranq gun out of the bed, she froze when a security guard walked idly past the door, then froze and looked wide-eyed at the scene within.

"Uh, I can explain?" started Emilena, but he quickly drew a pistol and she was forced to shoot him. His shots went wide as she continued her exodus, but he still radioed in as he passed out. "Emergency...rogue patient armed with a gun and dangerous...two, maybe three people dead...send backup to the Upper Extremities wing..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 26, 2013, 10:39:06 AM**

Adrian looked back at the unconscious guard behind him, hearing the announcement pertaining to an armed patient escaping, chuckling a little to himself.

"Couldn't wait to get out of here, huh, Emilena?"

He muttered to himself, then rolled his eyes as another guard rounded the corner, gathering an electrical charge in the palm of his new arm before lunging the guard, slamming the crackling palm into the guard's sternum, the electricity coursing through the unfortunate guard and dropping him to the ground as Adrian made his way through the halls to the Upper Extremities Wing...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 26, 2013, 10:48:07 AM**

In the meantime, Soren parked his car on the street. He shut off the engine and opened the door to the passenger compartment.

"I'll be back in a bit," he said as he picked up the box.

"Hey man, you got some cash?" an intoxicated bum went up to Soren. His right arm, once a top of the line augment was tattered and patched up with wire, scrap metal and who knows what else scavanged from the streets and garbage cans of Lanthae.

"Sorry. I'm busy now."

Anne Foe emerged from an alleyway with a messenger bag full of assorted electronics scrap that she could process and sell for a few creds.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 26, 2013, 04:23:36 PM**

"Okay. Be careful, Soren." Axel watched through the windscreen as Soren walked away, then turned to Lily. "So, you want to check out that clothing store? There's no way they'll be able to recognise you."

Marcus' shoes clumped against the hard, polished floor as he made his way briskly down the corridor. He turned left, right and left again, following the signs to the Upper Extremities ward, where the camera had shown the fox making her last stand.

As he neared the ward, he slowed his pace. Things were made more complicated by the fact that he wasn't able to kill either Adrian or his companion - but he had to make sure a tracker stayed on them. When he neared the double doors leading to the ward proper, a group of four security guards rushed past him. Marcus leaned against the wall, looking nondescript. After they pushed through the doors, he waited a few seconds then followed behind them, making sure he wasn't seen.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 26, 2013, 05:18:29 PM**

Soren made his way to Stephenson Memorial Hospital. When he got there, he noticed it was cordoned off by the hospital's surprisingly well armed and armored security guards.

"Hospital's closed sir," a guard said. Judging from the shape of the guard's helmet, all that could be said was that the guard was canine.

Soren raised an eyebrow. "What happened?"

"There's been a shooting inside. One of the new Augments apparently took violent exception to what she was given."

Soren straighted himself up. "Well, anyways, someone dropped this off at my house." He pulled out the neurotester and showed the label to the guard, who scanned it with a wristed mounted reader.

"Thank you." The guard handed him a credit chit worth 35,000 credits ó a little over a quarter of the neurotester's value.

Soren sighed and tucked the credit chit into his pocket. As his booted feet splashed in the dirty water that pooled on the sidewalks, he passed by a street vendor selling some noodles.

He shrugged and bought three take out boxes of vegetarian stir fried noodles and three herbal sodas. All in all, the meal came out to 220 creds.

Soren trudged back to his car. Using his pocketknife, he dislodged a drug vial that had gotten stuck in the tread of his boots.

"Lily, Axel, we can't go to the hospital. Some Augment apparently didn't like what they got...so they're taking it out on the staff." He placed the bag containing the three plastic takeout containers and drinks in the backseat. "Anyways, I got a reward for turning the thing in and some lunch."

(OOC - FYI, credits are the currency in this 'verse. They're equivalent to about $0.10. Why yes, I did base the exchange rate on the HK dollar.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 27, 2013, 12:31:18 AM**

Lily put her hand to her mouth. "Are they calling for backup? Is everything about to be swarming with police officers? Let' s do this quick, Axel!"

She practically dragged him to the clothing store.

The clerk smiled when he saw them. "Can I help you with anything?"

Lily grew silent and held Axel's arm. Sapaar women were supposed to be seen and not heard.

Emilena traded shots with a pair of guards, who decided to retreat. *These guys weren't prepared for combat at all,* she thought smugly, as she rolled under a gurney and the pursuing guards raced past her. *I can keep this up all day...*

"Analena, get the hell out from under that!"

One of her fellow police officers was down the hall, gun drawn. The bandage on his thumb suggested he happened to be a patient in this wing. "Throw your gun out first!"

Emilena tried to shoot him but he blasted it out of her hand.

"What are you going to do?" She spat, holding her arms up in a martial arts pose.
The officer narrowed his eyes. "What the hell is wrong with you, Analena? Brownstreet is here, and he's gonna tear your ass off for this."

"Brownstreet is an idiot!" Emilena shot back. "I've stumbled across something bigger than you could ever understand. What that old mule wants doesn't matter. Now if you're gonna shoot, better do it now."

She turned away and dashed down the hall. The officer sighed and watched her go. Then he grabbed his radio and called Brownstreet at his office downtown.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 27, 2013, 03:01:30 AM**

Axel smiled at the clerk uncomfortably and smoothed down his ruffled T-Shirt. He always felt self-conscious when he talked to people he didn't know.

"Ah, yes. I wondering if you could tell me anything about this purchase..." He handed over the now slightly worn bar code sticker. "It's from a pair of boots that were bought here maybe about a week ago." He paused. "Well, I was actually hoping you could tell me if you remember anything... unusual about the person who bought them," he said, hoping the clerk hadn't seen the news lately.

As Marcus moved down the evacuated corridor, he heard the fast, slightly lighter footsteps of a female somewhere ahead of him, around the corner. They were coming towards him.

Looking around, he quickly ducked into an empty operating room and pressed himself against the wall as the fox ran past. Marcus waited for a couple of seconds until she sounded sufficiently far way, then lightly opened the door and leaned out, clicking back the tracking gun.

He could see her nearing the end of the corridor, about to turn the corner. He took aim and fired, the tracking gun making a tiny *clack* as it fired the tiny tracking chip. It sank painlessly into the back of her leg. *Now I just need to get out without being recognised by the police.*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 27, 2013, 01:54:06 PM**

Detain her and bering hrr in for questioning.' Brownstreet ordered. ' i give her an extension, and she goes postal while while receicving treatment at a hospital.. for well gods only know. you get her down and bring her to me.
-
marie marita and roswe were told to leave by a security guard ' we are in lockdown outside of this wing.. mr guttsun is being brought out, the surgery was a success. you three better get going, its not safe with a crazed lunatic on the loose.
- will do' Marita said. marie sighed ' just when i thought it was going to be a bi easier, not something else happenes. ' we'll we could head to my place for the rest of the evening ' marita said. ' alright. could we stop at my place first ' its on 32nd and stillwater ' 5 blocks from here' marie said.. ' i.. guess i'm tagging along wth you for awhile ' she sighed. um marita.. ' yeah.. ' thanks for letting me come with you.. i appreciate it. ' lets get gittsun and go, ' marita said. '

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 27, 2013, 08:26:37 PM**

Soren stuffed the food into the backseat of his repulsorcar and sprinted after Axel and Lily.

He sighed and sat down on a bench. He looked at the wares. Most of the shoes were simple sneakers or boots reminiscent of combat boots worn by the assorted soldiers and security guards.

Anne unlocked the door to her apartment and entered with her satchel of old electronics. Her "apartment" was filthy, but not with organic detritus. Instead, there were scraps of metal and other electronics waste scattered everywhere underfoot and the entire apartment stank of solvents, grease and heated metal.

Turning on some loud industrial rock to drown out the noise of the shredder, she fed the unusable circuit boards into the device until that that was left were a pile of fingernail sized chips.

The Shetland Pony transferred the material into a large fermentation vat. This vat contained a mix of genetically engineered bacteria (stolen of course) that would break down the bioplastics used in the circuit boards and concentrate the precious metals into large nodules. For safety reasons, the bacteria were engineered to require a purely synthetic amino acid to live and reproduce. She pumped in the nutrient solution and headed back to her couch where she could maybe light up a joint and relax.

Two marijuana plants sat in the corner of the room under some grow lights. Anne smiled as she laid eyes on the plants. Sometimes, it was good to go back to the basics.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 27, 2013, 10:27:07 PM**

"Well, let's see." The clerk entered his database. "Ummm...they were purchased by a Lily North on Monday at 11:38 am. Would that be you?" He asked the wife pleasently.

Lily shook her head frantically.

"Then I'm afraid that is all I may do for you," the clerk stated, when Lily said in desperation, "It's my daughter! Our Lily has been missing for a week, and this is the last place we knew she was! Please!"

The clerk paused. "Oh dear, I am so sorry..." He continued clicking. "All right. She did not pick them up in the store. She had them custom fit and delivered to an address. Do you live on 125 Tingham Lane?"

"Er, yes. that's where we live..." Lily muttered.

"All right. I wasn't on duty the day, but let me check our security footage," the clerk brought up security feeds and rewound. "Please don't mention to my manager I'm doing this...ah, here we are."

On screen, Lily walked into the store, wearing her gray dress and a hiking belt, rugged backpack, and carrying a walking stick. She was chatting happily on a cell phone, and looked perfectly content.

She spent several hours trying on hiking boots, selected her favorite style, and then checked them out. Then she left, heading to the ice cream parlor next door.

"She's so...normal..." breathed Lily, amazed.

"I'm sorry this wasn't much help..." the clerk sadly shut the feed down. "I truly hope you find your daughter. Please let me know if there is anything I can do."

(Ooc: they should check the brand of shoe in the back of the store.)

Emilena sent a scalpel spinning into an overhead light, drenching a guard-filled hallway with backness. She used the distraction to kick her way through.

Unfortunately, someone with a taser got a lucky swipe, and she fell to the floor, incapacitated for only a few seconds. But it was long enough for half of the guards to dog pile her.

Unbeknownst to her, she was close to the main hallway, and had almost reached Adrian...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 28, 2013, 08:40:05 AM**

Adrian rounded the corner to the main hallway, and, the instant the lights went out, moved in. As the security forces began to go at Emilena, he darted into the melee, grabbing two guards and tossing them aside, both hitting a wall with a dull thud, blacking out immediately. The remaining guards turned towards him, but he grinned, activating the embedded neural augments he had. In a flash of red fur and movement, he darted into the middle of the group, then lashed his right leg out, smashing a guard across the face with a vicious kick and sending him flat to the floor. The next guard met a swift backhand, another two falling to a rapid spinning kick. Without any hesitation, Adrian grabbed Emilena and slung her across his shoulders, kicking away another guard who got cocky enough to rush him, then took off down the hallway, dodging bullets in the process, before finally spotting a window and leaping through it...

Not too far away, Kojuuro sat on a rooftop, and, hearing the commotion from the hospital, looked over the side of the roof just in time to see Adrian break through the glass of the window and take off running...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 28, 2013, 11:46:01 AM**

Staggering out of her apartment, Anne headed out into the street to get lunch.

Her head swam from the enhanced marijuana she grew but she felt euphoric.

The mare went up to a street vendor selling some burgers. The Wolf in front of her walked away with his catfish burger. Her upper lip curled in the characteristic flehmen response of equines when she smelled the food.

"One tempeh burger," she said, leaning over the counter.

The Human shrugged and quickly handed a wrapped package to her. She swiped her credit chit and went on her way, not caring that she had planted her steel shod hoof on a discarded soda can.

(OOC - Anne's going to be a constant pain in the ass for Soren, Lily and Axel. She'll eventually redeem herself.)

Soren had been looking over Lily's shoulder. "Hmm, judging from the external feed it looks like she went to the ice cream parlor next door."

He turned to the clerk. "Can you tell us anything else about her? Any records?"

(OOC - not sure how they can check the stuff at the back of the store. Maybe a distraction so Lily can sneak in?)

Soren nodded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 28, 2013, 12:44:11 PM**

Axel nodded along with Soren. "Yeah, there must be something else..." He frowned. "Was there anything special about the shoes she bought? She spent a while picking them out." He put a comforting arm around Lily and put on his best 'concerned' face. "We're *very* worried about our little Lily-Flower."

As Marcus looked around for an exit, he heard gunfire coming from the corridor the fox had run down. Cursing, he turned back and sprinted towards it. *I can't let anything happen to her... not while she still has the tracker...* As he neared the corner and peered around, he caught a glimpse of a dark shape kicking aside a guard and leaping through a window, clutching the fox he'd tracked. *Kibagami...*

The guard Adrian had kicked stumbled to his feet and to the window, aiming his pistol. Marcus charged up behind him, seizing his head and twisting. The guard's neck snapped before he could fire a shot. Marcus let his limp body fall to the floor and looked out to see Adrian sprinting away. The corner of his mouth turned down slightly. He never thought he'd be *stopping* anyone from killing Adrian.

One of the guards had a high powered rifle with a scope slung across his back. Marcus bent and yanked it off his body then ran for the stairway, heading up. He'd have an easier time covering their escape from the roof.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2013, 01:10:50 PM**

(OOC: Never mind about the shoe thing, got an even better way to show it)

"Nothing you don't already know," said the clerk. "5-year Premium member of our VIP Club, which qualified her for some of our finest footwear. The pair she picked was a designer brand, built for comfort over endurance. Nothing unusual for her age and social status."

Lily opened her mouth to speak again when someone unknown said her name.

"Lily, my dear. Please come home..."

On the store television was a pasty-faced human, civilian clothes, very normal. He was tear-stricken. The broadcast appeared to be part of the citywide television network.

"Lily, if you can hear me, this is Danny. Please come home, I'm worried about you. Our kids are worried about you...There are doctors here, they want to help you, you're not well. You can get better...you can be with your family again. If you love us...please come back..." The man broke off, overcome by emotion.

The clerk suddenly looked incredibly suspicious.

Emilena groaned and her eyes fluttered open. "I can walk...let me down..."

The guards had hit her rather hard, and she was moderately disoriented.

Several police cars roared into focus. They hit the brakes hard, forming a roadblock, and filed behind the crusiers' protection, pistols drawn. "Freeze! Drop the patient and put your hands up!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 29, 2013, 01:35:33 AM**

Soren's hair stood on end. "Thanks for your help," he said to the clerk.

Heart racing, he quickly looked around for cops or anyone else who might pose a threat. Luckily, only pedestrians seemed to be outside. The area around Stephenson Memorial Hospital was one of the few areas to be at actual ground level. Once one headed deeper into Lanthae, elevated walkways and stores built on them became more common.

"Lily, Axel, how about we have lunch in my car and we go pay one of my customers a visit?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 29, 2013, 02:15:15 AM**

Axel's ears drooped, and his mouth opened and closed as he searched for something to say. When Soren thanked the clerk, he cleared his throat. "Yes, your help was very... helpful." He turned and walked stiffly out of the shop behind Soren, his arm still around Lily's shoulders.

"Yeah, I think lunch would be good," he said as they reached the pavement. Axel looked down at the white shape next to him. "You have kids and a husband?! Holy crap!" he whispered.

(OOC: Is Soren parked just by the shop? If he is then Soren could recognise Emilena as she goes into the shop while they're eating)

One of the police stood behind the roadblock clutching a megaphone. "There's no way out of here for you, so put her down *now*! Nice and sl-" The back of his head exploded as a shot rang out. One of the cops steadying his aim on the car glanced back and let out a cry. "Oh ----, we have a shooter-" There was another shot, and his head jerked sideways, his pistol skidding across the car bonnet as his body tumbled to the floor.

The rest of the police threw themselves behind their cars with shouts of "Take cover!" and "Sniper!" Far above, on the rooftop, Marcus watched through the scope of his rifle. He knew he could only take so many shots before they figured out where he was. When he saw the cops dive behind cover, he moved the scope briefly over Adrian and the female, resisting the strong urge to pull the trigger. "Come on. Get out of here."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 29, 2013, 05:40:40 AM**

Lily left wordlessly, already aware the clerk was rapidly retreating into the recesses of the store to do god knows what. She didn't say a word until they'd reached Soren's car.

"I don't get it..." she muttered, dazed. "A week ago, I lived a perfectly normal life. What the hell happened...?"

She tried to picture Danny, any memories of him or their kids. She came up completely blank.

"I don't remember that man at all...could he really be telling the truth? What if there *are* doctors who could help me...?" She turned to her two friends. "Could it be true?"

Emilena kicked the door to the clothing store open and dragged her incapacitated comrade through, eyes darting both ways nervously. Other than three civilians in a nearby car, nobody seemed to be around.

Adrian had been hit with a lucky EMP pulse, which shut down his cybernetic parts, which meant instant and complete loss of function when cybernetics were as ingrained into the central nervous system as his were. Emilena, luckily, was almost completely organic and managed to drag him almost as far as he'd carried her, to the other side of the hotel. They'd only succeeded because something was preventing the police from leaving the safety of their cars; Emilena didn't have time to pursue the issue.

She stored Adrian behind the counter. "You're all right, it'll wear off in a few minutes...probably..." she comforted him. "But while we have the chance, I'm getting some regular clothes."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 29, 2013, 04:46:22 PM**

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meanwhile Marie,Marita ad Rose were headed towards Maries flat which was in brownstone build. ' they headed inside, feeling elieved to eel tye warmth from the heaters after being ot in the chilly air. ' its on floor 7 , we'll take the elevator' marie said with a smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 30, 2013, 08:07:51 AM**

As Axel climbed into the back of Soren's car, he heard a few *cracks* from somewhere close by, and the cry of raised voices. He assumed someone was letting off some firecrackers, and slid aside to make room for Lily.

"Look, it might be true... but I think we should take some time to plan our next move." He reached into the plastic bag and took out the three boxes of noodles, handing one each to Soren and Lily and opening his own. "They *really* want to find you, and until we find out why I think we should be careful. I just... want to make sure you're safe."

As he spoke, the dim image of someone dashing around the clothes shop caught his eye through the window, but he dismissed it, still deep in though about what to do next. "Who was this customer you mentioned, Soren?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 31, 2013, 12:03:28 AM**

Soren swallowed his mouthful of lukewarm noodles. "Guy's name was Jacob Alytn. From what he filled out on his form, guy worked as a lab tech. Right now, I think paying him a little visit might yield some info on the Purifiers."

Anne staggered up to the car and leaned into the open driver's side window. "So Soren, are youó"

"Go away." Soren pushed her away and rolled up the window. He rubbed his forehead. "Anyways, got any plans on how to speak to Mr. Altyn?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 31, 2013, 12:42:52 AM**

Emilena crept cautiously into the back of the clothing store, looking for signs of an employee. It struck her as odd the store was unattended.

Her keen hearing picked up movement in the Staff room. Putting her ear to the door, she heard a moment of dial tone, following by the person dialing a three-digit number, where the last two numbers were the same.

Her heart leapt into her throat. She could guess what number that probably was. Without further ado she kicked the door down and stunned the clerk with a judo chop to the windpipe before the call had finished connecting.

"9-11 emergency, how may I help you?" The phone asked.

Emilena disguised her voice as well as she could. "I heard something going on at the hospital, I think police officers should investigate."

"We are well aware of the situation, but thanks for letting us know! Can I help you with anything else?"

Emilena hung up and crept deeper into the inner recesses of the clothing shop. Grabbing the highest quality hiking clothes they offered, she checked them out using the clerk's master card.

"All right," she said to the still-unconscious figure. "Now we have to escape the city. They'll have most methods completely blocked."

She glanced outside and the car with three occupants caught her eye. Firstly, it had a small gray bumper sticker which allows it access to government cybernetic facilities; the owner but be either a worker or a contracter for one. Secondly, it had a huge trunk.

She smiled. "I think I've found our exit plan."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 31, 2013, 01:43:02 AM**

"Uh..." Axel watched the mare stumble away then turned back to Soren. "Alytn. Oh, that's the guy who had his hand all messed up?" He flexed his fingers uncomfortably. "He worked at Palvanida Cybernetics, didn't he? That's a pretty big place, I don't think they'd just let us walk in to meet him. Maybe we could scout the place out, see if there's a back way in or something?"

Axel frowned and continued, "But, jesus, if we get caught breaking into a place like that... Especially you, Lily."

Marcus saw one of the officers pulling a radio out, probably to try and call for more backup. He put a bullet through it, scattering shards of plastic through the air, and snapped his cross-hair onto the officer, pulling the trigger. There was a heavy *CLUNK* and nothing else.

Marcus moved the scope away from his eye and looked down at the gun to inspect it. It had jammed. *Cheap s--t. No wonder the police are losing their war on crime.* He used the scope to quickly scan the streets, and couldn't see either Adrian or the woman.

With no more bullets raining down on them, the cops had started to cautiously emerge from their cover, pointing at his general direction. More of them would soon be here. *I've done all I can, now it's up to them. And then we'll see who they work with...* Marcus dropped the gun and ran across the roof, leaping onto the escape ladder and sliding down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 31, 2013, 04:55:11 AM**

Lily was lost in thought. " Let's do it," she said. "Soren's been nothing but helpful to me; it would be unfair not to return the favor. If I can help solve his problem with the Purifiers, I can."

Emilena slinked up to the trunk, approaching from the far end of the parking lot. She recognized the make and model of the car; she remembered from her early days as a 911 phone operator that there was a rash of calls about breakins with this model because the windows weren't laden with translucent wires, meaning that a broken window doesn't trigger the car's break-in alarm system.

She grasped a tool purchased from the construction store across the street; a superheating conductor plate, no larger than a button, designed to boil large bodies of liquid quickly by rapidly exciting the molecules. It had a similar effect on glass, which had many of the properties of liquids.

She pressed the tiny button and the window completely liquefied, splashing down into the trunk. Unless they were paying attention to the rearview mirror, the occupants shouldn't have noticed.

Finally, she hurled a jagged rock over the top of the car, waited for it to hit the clothing store window, and flipped her and Adrian into the trunk while the occupants were hopefully observing the distraction.

"What was that?" Yelped Lily as the rock smashed through the window of the clothing store. She didn't even notice she'd wrapped her arms around Soren in fright and was almost strangling him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 31, 2013, 09:42:25 AM**

Soren carefully disentangled himself from Lily and collected all the trash.

A minute later, he returned. He stuck the key in the ignition and was about to turn it when he recalled the Purifier's words to him earlier. Decidedly, *not* wanting to be a bombing statistic, he got out of the car. "Lily, Axel, I'm going to go give my car a once over to make sure the Purifiers didn't stick a bomb or tracker on it."

He got out of his car and popped the hood. Most of the space was taken up by the repulsorlift and thrusters. So far, he didn't see anything.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 31, 2013, 11:09:10 AM**

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marie led marita gittsun and rose to her apartment which was the number 737. marie unlocked the door and let her friends in. ' ok, its not much, but on a waitress' salary what did you expect' she sighed ' as its not as if the electric sheep paid its waitresses well either. i had to borrow money from rose here on more than one occasion to make ends meet. ' ' when i was sober' rose explaned. ' well we can just get some things// marita said ' like a meal, and a change of clothes' marita was tired from her long day, they had busted rose out, and had picked up marie in the bargain, who she was starting to like.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 31, 2013, 03:12:21 PM**

In his shock from the window smashing, Axel had accidentally dumped his box of noodles over his lap. Picking them off, he glanced around the car nervously. "A bomb? Hey, check under the car - that's where they always put them in spy films." He checked under the seats himself, half expecting to be met with a timer counting down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 31, 2013, 04:37:12 PM**

As Emilena tossed the rock through the window, Kojuuro stepped around the corner, raising a silenced handgun raised.

"Hold it right there. I can't let you get away."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 31, 2013, 04:47:28 PM**

Emilena flipped a large tarp over herself and Adrian, ignoring the newcomer. If he was gonna shoot, he'd have done so already.

"It drove from the house fine, but okay..." Lily left the car. Then she saw Kojurro and started screaming uncontrollably.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 01, 2013, 01:58:59 AM**

"What?! What is it?!" Axel scrambled out of the car hastily, the last few noodles dropping from his jeans to the curb, then paused when he saw Lily wasn't looking at the car. "What are you..."

He followed her line of sight and froze when he saw the wolf pointing a pistol in their direction. "Woah! Hey, wait, we don't want any trouble!" Axel raised his arms up slightly and stepped in front of Lily.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 01, 2013, 08:36:33 AM**

Kojuuro smirked.
"You're not my targets. Just don't get in my way, and we'll be fine."
He said, walking over to where Emilena and Adrian were hiding, throwing back the tarp...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 02, 2013, 10:33:43 AM**

Soren's eye twitched as he recognized Emelina as the dirty cop who tired beating him up. He bodily dragged her out from the trunk of his car and roughly dumped her on the filthy street.

"I want to know what the f--- you are doing in my car!" he snapped.

Above him, an electronic billboard played a message from another anti-Augment group. This one warned about them stealing jobs. While it was true that Augments had pretty much replaced Baselines in manual labor, a lot of new jobs relating to augmentation repairs and maintenance cropped up ó and skills mattered more than implants.

Anne cheerfully whistled as she carefully cut off an Augment's arm, taking care not to cut into his flesh and bone ó not that it would have mattered since he was dead.

"Hey! Put your hands up! Augment theft is a crime!"

Anne slowly dropped her angle grinder and turned around. A cop had his gun pointed at her. She smirked. "Okay you caught me,"

"Hands behind your back!"

Anne did so and retrieved a credit chit from her back pocket. As soon as the cop saw the card, he smiled. "Actually, since this is your first offense, I'll let you off with a warning and a fine." The cop took the credit chit and left the alleyway.

Anne shrugged and continued cutting away at the augment. The cash she just surrendered to the cop was 750,000 credits ó nearly half of what she made last week. It sure beat the hell out of going to jail.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 02, 2013, 11:27:57 AM**

"Shut your damn mouth Mr. Almaya, I could have arrested you but I needed a lift out of town," she snapped. "This doesn't concern you."

She rounded on the newcomer, who continued to not be shooting her. "Every cop in the goddamn city is looking for us, what the hell is so important for your short-circuiting self to tell us *now* instead of once we're safely out of the city?! I expect an incredibly good answer or else I'll do everything in my power to find a sharp object and murder you with it!" To show her incredible frustration she spat on him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 02, 2013, 05:35:50 PM**

Axel stared at the angry fox Soren had pulled out of the car, his mouth hanging open in confusion. "Who the hell are you?! Were you always back there?!" At least the wolf who she'd spat on didn't seem to be pointing his pistol at them anymore.

Around them, pedestrians on the sidewalk had started to stop and stare at them. From somewhere in the distance police sirens were wailing. *This isn't good...* He nudged Soren on the shoulder lightly. "I don't know what you've got going on with her... or why she was hiding from the cops in your trunk... but we're getting a lot of attention here. Attention's bad for us right now."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 02, 2013, 09:19:37 PM**

"That's a load of s---!" Soren grabbed Emelina by her uniform and dragged the Fox to her feet. "That was *my* car you were in!"

When he felt Axel's nudge, he scowled and pushed Emelina into the filthy ground. He got into his car and sighed. "She's the cop who tried beating me up when I first called to report my workshop was on fire."

He started the engine and lifted off. "Let's go pay Mr. Altyn a visit."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 02, 2013, 11:29:40 PM**

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marita had decided to contact emilena, since she hadnt heard from her since they had entered the strip club. ' she pulled out her computer ad started typing. she brought out the police website and soon located emilena's phone number
she took out her phone and dialed the number. ' she held the phone to her ear and heard it ring.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 03, 2013, 03:20:30 AM**

"Wait, she's a cop? But she's *running* from them?" Axel scratched his nose thoughtfully as Soren started the engine. "You don't look like you're on the best of terms with her, but... she might come in useful if we're trying to keep low. You know, with her connections."

As the car lifted up, Axel heard a faint ringing. It sounded like it was coming from the trunk. "Do you guys hear that?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 03, 2013, 09:40:44 AM**

Adrian stirred in the trunk, eyes flicking open as he glanced around before is eyes settled on Emilena, his phone ringing in his pocket. He smiled shyly, then leaned in and wrapped an arm around Emilena.
"Emilena...What happened? I blacked out..."
He whispered. Kojuuro grinned a little, flipping onto the car's roof.
"I was going to warn you both that the police are going after Mr. Almaya and Miss Emilena, actually..."
He chuckled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 03, 2013, 10:29:07 AM**

"Well, we knew that already, actually..." Emilena muttered through gritted teeth, practically seething, "as a matter of fact, we'd *solved that problem* before your butted your stupid--"

"You're on the run from the police too?" Asked Lily, who hadn't gotten in the car.

Emilena flashed her eyes at her. "I thought Sapaar preferred to be seen and not heard," she shot back.

Lily's gaze softened. In Emilena, she saw a lot of the emotions she'd felt yesterday; panic, fear, uncertainty, and a complete lack of help to turn to.

"Come with us," Lily offered. "We'll give you passage out of the city."

"You'll what--?" gasped Emilena.

Lily gave her friendliest smile. "I know what it's like to be on the run. I know how scary it is. Let's trade stories; maybe we can help each other."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 04, 2013, 12:52:22 AM**

Axel leaned out of the car as it hovered slightly above the ground and leaned over Lily's shoulder. "Er... maybe we shouldn't be sharing much with this lady. She looks a little *crazy*," he whispered into her ear, grinning awkwardly at Emilena.

Movement in the corner of his eye caught Axel's attention, and he turned his head to see Adrian sitting up in the boot. He jumped slightly as he recognised him from his rooftop a few nights ago. "Oh, you're here too." Today had turned out to be such an odd day that he wasn't exactly surprised.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 04, 2013, 10:46:54 PM**

Kojuuro chuckled.
"Ah, so you're finally up. I was starting to worry."
He joked, as Adrian glanced at him before turning his attention back to Emilena, patting her back reassuringly.
"Listen, Emi. Right now we don't have any other choice but to take what we can for help and find out who or what is behind all this. So for now, can you please put your grudge aside? Otherwise, this is gonna get messy, and not in a good way."
He said, then, finally noticing his phone ringing, fished it out of the pocket of his pants, flipping it open.
"Adrian here. What is it?"
He asked calmly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2013, 07:02:09 AM**

"I'll put my grudge aside when he starts being helpful," Emilena folded her arms defiantly. "All he's done so far is point a gun at me and ruin what had been a perfectly executed stowaway. The Sapaar woman has been more helpful than anything he's done."

"Oh, I'm not Sapaar," blushed Lily. She took her hood off for a brief moment. "I'm in disguise. You see, I'm also on the run, though I don't know what crime I committed. My name is Lily."

She extended a hand, but Emilena drew back and began whispering with her accomplice. So Lily took the opportunity to have her own whispered side conversation with Axel. "No doubt I seemed crazy when you saved me in that alley. I practically was at that point, the lam will do things to do. I think this woman deserves the same chance you gave me."

Emilena, on the other hand, could barely restrain her excitement as she whispered with Adrian. "A fugitive...Mr. Almaya is working with a fugitive! This might be an excellent opportunity to gain the evidence needed to put him behind bars..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 05, 2013, 08:45:50 AM**

Adrian shook his head.
"Emi...I don't think the cops are going to listen to you after tonight. Pretty sure we're both wanted just as much, if not more than Lily. So, until proven otherwise, we should probably assume the cops aren't on our side..."
He whispered back, as Kojuuro looked over his shoulder, then tensed a little.
"As much as I hate to disrupt this little strategy meeting, I think I'm noticing Police vehicles coming. I'd suggest we get moving, and quickly."
He said, reaching into his jacket for something...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 05, 2013, 11:01:19 AM**

"Well, sure you seemed crazy, but at least you didn't spit at me. How could I have resisted helping someone as cute as you, anyway? If I remember right, you were pointing a shotgun at me." Axel gave Lily a small smile, then sighed. "Just be careful around them, okay?"

His ears pricked up when he heard Kojuuro speak. Leaning back into the car, Axel called up to the driver's seat. "Soren, the police are on their way. We letting them in?"

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2013, 03:42:42 PM**

Marita then switched to adrians cell phone and typed in the number. she heard the phone ring, and waited for a response.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 05, 2013, 05:59:13 PM**

Soren scowled. "After what she--" he thrust a gloved finger at Emilina "--did to me after I called the cops, I have half a mind to leave her here and let the cops deal with her!"

The sound of sirens grew closer, making him glance over his shoulder. He had enough bad experiences with the cops. He sighed. "Fine, I'll take you to the city limits. But no further!"

He opened the passenger side door for Axel.

Aaron swirled a glass of water as he sat at the local dive bar. Compared to the slightly classier -- and overtly erotic -- setting of Electric Sheep, this bar -- Club De Kard -- had a decor that was best described as industrial. Benches and bar tops made from piles of girders welded together, chairs made from rebar and scrap metal sculptures made of concrete scrap and the like.

The German Shepherd sipped the water and sighed. He had overheard the supervisor considering firing him and hiring an Augment instead.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 06, 2013, 09:53:50 AM**

Emilena spared a glance at Kojuuro. "Great. Now, if the Spanish Inquisition doesn't mind, Adrian and I will resume our hiding place in the trunk."

She climbed under the tarp without another word to anyone.

"You are of course welcome to come with us to the city limits as well," Lily added to Kojuuro. It would be the height of rudeness to offer a ride to one runaway but not another.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 06, 2013, 12:17:51 PM**

Its Marita. Could you put Emilena on? Marita asked. ' We've been trying to get a hold of you guys for some time, but the police files say she doesn't have a cell phone, so we tried yours." marita added as she climbed on the guest bed in maries room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 07, 2013, 10:42:00 PM**

Emilena grabbed the phone from Adrian's phone. "Broadstreet! I've befriended Mr. Almaya, he's accepted me into his circle of acquaintance!" she whispered excitedly. "It'll be child's play to get the dirt we need to arrest him!"

"We need all the help we can get," Lily said, climbing into the car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 07, 2013, 10:46:54 PM**

' alright broadstreet replied, his voice clearly showing impatience. ' my clock here says you have 16 hours 32 minutes and 7 seconds to get him to police headquarters. time running out Emilena. Either you get him to headquarters, or your fired, with loss of rank pay and benefits." broadstreet rang off and another call came through Emilena? this is Marita" Marita replied. " We're holed up at maries for the night, where are you guys?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 07, 2013, 11:43:35 PM**

Soren looked around. His hands sweated as he looked around. "Axel and the other guy, we might wanna hurry."

He silently prayed that the Purifiers weren't waiting for him when he got home. He had heard about their tactics: destroying Augments' property, harassment, home protests and outright violence.

(OOC - should we wait for Starfall and bushwacked?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 08, 2013, 12:50:51 AM**

"You don't have to tell me twice," Axel said, hopping up into the car. The police sirens, cutting the air with their piercing screeches, sounded just around the corner. He left the door open behind him for Kojuuro.

A small man sat at the bar of the Club De Kard, rocking a shot glass of vodka and watching a TV resting in the corner, in which a recently appointed politician was speaking into the camera. An *augmented* politician. The man ran a hand through his greasy hair and cracked his jaw. "World's gone f----n' mad..." he muttered under his breath as he down the vodka and raised his hand for another.

He felt a presence in the room, and when he turned he saw a German Shepard slouching into his seat across the room. The man smiled slightly. He was always good at being able to read others, and this guy...

He got up and strode across the room, holding his shot glass, and stopped on the other side of the bench from the German Shepard. "Mind if I take a seat here?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 08, 2013, 09:50:37 AM**

Kojuuro nodded, hopping into the car and dropping a few small spheres down as he did.
"Alright, let's go. I'd rather not have to deal with police tonight."
He said, grinning slightly. In the back, Adrian smiled and wrapped his arm around Emilena.
"Hey, listen... Thanks for before. You saved my life..."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 08, 2013, 03:19:10 PM**

Soren shut the door and sped off into the skyways.

He sighed as he watched the other flyers flit by him. "This day has gone to s---," he said. "What else can go wrong?"

He instantly regretted his words as the words "WARNING! Perimeter breach!" and "WARNING! Fire detected in house!" flashed red in his HMD momentarily.

Swearing under his breath, he immediately banked into a hard left, narrowly missing a passing hoverbiker. Opening the vehicle's throttle to the maximum, he was soon at 190 miles per hour ó nearly double the skyway's speed limit.

"There's a little detour I have to take. Namely my house because it's currently on fire and being looted!"

The Human silently cursed himself for not having a "trunk gun" in his repulsor car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 08, 2013, 03:34:51 PM**

Axel cried out as Soren swerved sharply, accidentally knocking into Kokjuuro. "Sorry..." He leaned forward over Soren's shoulder. "Wait, how do you know? Maybe you should slow down a little..." Ever since his accident a few years ago, being in speeding cars made him a nervous.

Almost to take his mind off of it, he looked back at the three new passengers. "I'm Axel, by the way," he said, extending his hand.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 08, 2013, 05:51:06 PM**

Soren slowed down slightly to avoid crashing into a repulsorcart carrying what looked like crates of electronics. He tapped the HMD that was over his left eye. "This HMD I'm wearing. It's linked to the security system and cameras in my house. And it just triggered an alert."

As he looked through the windshield, he gulped, there was a column of smoke -- coming from where he knew his house to be located!

He took a breath. "All right, everyone, s---'s about to hit the fan so get ready!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 09, 2013, 03:22:36 PM**

Marcus reached the end of the block and slowed his stride, nearing the car he'd appropriated from the shop owner. There were no police chasing him. That was good, though now it was up to Kibagami to ensure he and his companion escaped. *Knowing that slippery bastard, it won't be a problem.*

Pulling out his cell phone and flipping it open, he dialed the last number to call him and eased himself into the driver's seat. It only rang once. "Is it done?" Zeroth's masked voice gave away no indication of worry.

"There were some complications... Kibagami removed the tracker, but I was able to place a new one on a companion he's traveling with. They're also being pursued by our city's *finest*," Marcus said, sarcasm sharpening his voice. "But things should still go to plan."

"I see. I'll get our specialists on their trail now." There was an abrupt dial tone as Zeroth hung up.

Marcus grunted and snapped his phone shut. He shifted the car into gear and pulled out, hoping that when the time came he'd be able to put a bullet into all of them personally.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2013, 06:06:21 AM**

Emilena whacked her head against the trunk top and cursed loudly. "What in gods name is going on up there?" She muttered.

Lily grabbed Axel for stability and what her eyes, she was never a big fan of violence

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 12, 2013, 01:01:34 AM**

Axel could see the smoke in the distance now. It looked bad. "Soren, maybe we should be careful about this," he said nervously, holding Lily for support as he remembered what the Purifier had threatened earlier that day. A hoverbike zoomed past within an inch of the windscreen, and Axel flinched.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 12, 2013, 11:42:11 PM**

Aaron grunted as he drank his fourth glass of beer. "Have a seat."

His cellphone rang. He scowled as he read that his boss was calling.

"Boss," he said, over the breakbeat that boomed from the speakers. "I'm still on break."

"Aaron, you can stay there."

The man's heart sank and his ears splayed back as he involuntarily bared his teeth. "What happened?"

"I'm sorry but, we're going to lay you off."

"What the f--- do you mean!?" His outburst attracted several stares from the patrons.

"It's just that we have someone who can do your job better. Name's Gustave Nyobe. Demands a high wage but the guy's astoundingly strong ó metal reinforced skeleton and class 2 limbs."

"You hired a f---ing *gleamer* to take my job!?" Several hostile stares ó from both the Augments and Baselines were shot Aaron's way at his casual use of the slur.

"Aaron, if you'll take a few courses in augment maintenence ó at your own expense, though we'll reimburse some of the cost ó we'll hire you as an external augment repair tech."

The German Shepherd's mouth was open in a snarl and his ears were pinned fully against his head. "F--- you! I'm not working with them!" he growled. "I quit!" He snapped the phone shut.

He ordered another beer and turned to the man. "Dumbass decided to fire me and replace me with an Augment. The nerve of that bastard!"

Taking Axel's words into consideration, Soren parked in a side street of his development and shut the engine off.

He opened the trunk. "Okay, get out. I have some...business to attend to with those Purifier freaks!"

At the same time, he looked around for something he could use as a weapon. A discarded pill vial was by his foot. Scowling, he kicked it into the sewer. There wasn't much he could use, maybe a few discarded bottles, lumps of concrete or rusted rebar.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 16, 2013, 03:18:43 AM**

The Man sat down slowly opposite Aaron, fixing his eyes on him as he answered his cell phone. He saw Aaron's ears splay back, and even over the pounding music he could hear his tone shift belligerently. Then the Man heard Aaron mention gleamers. *Perfect.*

He sighed sympathetically when the German Shepard hung up. "I'm sorry, buddy. I wish I could tell you I was surprised, but..." The Man shrugged. "They think they're so much better. Like all their hard-wiring makes them some kind of god. Sad thing is, it seems most everyone agrees with 'em. In a couple of years, all we're gonna be good for is sitting behind the bars of a zoo, being laughed at."

He clenched his fist, popping the knuckles, then met Aaron's eyes. "Wanna know the sad thing? Few years ago, I was exactly where you are now. Tossed aside like s--t to make more room for *them*."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 16, 2013, 09:57:14 AM**

Kojuuro retrieved a pistol from within his coat, offering it to Soren.
"Here. Just in case."
He said calmly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 16, 2013, 04:34:13 PM**

Aaron ordered another beer. "Why are they doing this to us?"

He then scowled as he heard the possible future. "I refuse to be an exhibit!" he snarled. "For the sake of all Baselines, we need to stop this!"

Soren took the pistol. "Thanks."

He took a breath to steady his pounding heart as he stepped forward towards his burning house. The pungent scent of the chemicals he used in his small basement workshop hung in the air.

He saw a Doberman female standing guard by the driveway.

Creeping until he got in range, he leveled the pistol at her and spoke. "Don't move! Call off your thugs and I won't put some rounds in your chest."

"Ah, so pleased to see you, Soren," the woman said as she bared her teeth.

Soren scowled. "Shove it! Get off my property!" His finger tightened around the trigger of his pistol.

The woman snapped her fingers and the bushes flanking his driveway rustled. He spun around and fired a shot into one of the bushes. Before he could take another shot, two huge men tackled him and roughly snatched the pistol from his grasp.

The shock absorbing clothing took most of the blow and Soren slammed his knee into the nearest thug's groin, causing him to recoil back and allowing him to crawl away.

The second thug blindsided the augment repair tech and pinned him to the ground. "Hey boss! Shall we kill him?" the thug asked.

"Not yet. Tie him up while we loot his house and destroy all his goods. Then we can kill him."

The two thugs roughly grabbed Soren and hustled him to the remains of his workshop.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 16, 2013, 10:51:10 PM**

Lily shifted nervously, still back at the car. "Do you think he's..."

Suddenly she wasn't in her body.

She looked around the flaming second floor. Nothing her fireproof suit couldn't handle.

She quickly set up her high-powered sniper rifle and scanned the surrounding area. She noticed a parked vehicle.

"Hey boss, I got Almaya's vehicle in my crosshairs," she radioed.

"High-explosive rounds, aim for the battery pack," a female voice responded.

She grinned. She loved explosions. Settling down, she scanned the vehicle for a gas tank latch...

"Everyone out of the vehicle!" shrieked Lily, practically flattening Axel as she pulled the door open and tumbled onto the ground.

Emilena heard Lily, and wasted no time in obeying her. Using her memory of standard vehicular safety features, she located the incandescent trunk latch and popped it from the inside. Then she pulled Adrian and herself out of the car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 16, 2013, 10:59:11 PM**

(OOC - Soren doesn't have an antique car <in this 'verse, only antique cars use internal combustion engines>. His repulsorcar is electrically powered. But severely damaging the battery pack, with say an explosive bullet, could cause a fire or explosion by exposing the electrolytes to the air.)

Soren was dumped to the ground and roughly tied to a piece of steel rebar with some heavy cable ties.

The two thuggish heavies watched over him to make sure he couldn't cut himself free or grab a weapon.

Soren sighed. *Maybe this was a bad idea*, he thought.

He looked at the contents of his house, scattered all across his backyard. He grimaced as a Purifier was using a plasma torch to try and get into the safe where he stored his creds.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 16, 2013, 11:04:11 PM**

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marie made some popcorn and brought it in for marita and rose to snack on. marie flipped on the news. the night newcast usually has noless than 25 deaths, 150 toxic dumps, and 30 or so bribes. what a city to live in huh ' marie said as she sat btween maritas and rose.. ' pity we cant just find a new city to live. ' unfortunately easier said than done. you need prospects not to mention coin to grease the right palms.."Marita sighed. ' at keast you sprung me and rose marie said. ' we need t get out of the city, the only way to do that is to find emilena.' marita said. After watching for another half an hour the girls headed to bed. the three ecided to share for the night then head to maritas in the morning.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 17, 2013, 03:29:27 AM**

"Oof!" Axel said as he tumbled from the car and landed in a heap on the pavement. He scrambled to his feet and hurried away from the car with lily. "What? What's going on? I think Soren's in trouble, did you hear that gunshot..."

Something *THUNKED* against the side of the car. *Who's throwing stones*, Axel thought for a split second, before he noticed the sparks spitting out from a ragged hole where the battery unit was located. A blue flame caught. *Oh crap.* "Watch out!" Axel had time to yell before the car exploded, thrown up off the ground and scattering shards of glass through the air.

The man nodded. "That is exactly the kind of attitude I respect, my friend. Don't take it lyin' down, fight back with everything you've got." He paused. "Let me ask you something. How far would you take it? How far would you be willing to go, to fight for our future?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 17, 2013, 03:37:20 AM**

"What the hell?" swore Emilena, staggering to her feet.

"They've got him!" Lily exclaimed. "They captured Mr. Almaya! And they know we're here! What do we do?"

Emilena's heart skipped a beat. If these unknown assailants killed Mr. Almaya, she could never bring him in for arrest and get her job back.

She grabbed a heated pipe out of the wreckage. "We rescue him of course," she grinned, brandishing it like a club. "Who's going and who's hanging back here to be sniper bait?"

(OOC: Starfall, this might be a good time for Kojurro to give Emilena her sword back.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 17, 2013, 09:28:51 AM**

Kojuuro held a hand out to stop Emilena as Adrian rolled to his feet next to her.
"Hold it. Going in half-cocked will get you killed."
He said calmly, drawing a sword from inside his coat before handing it to Emilena with a small chuckle.
"Here. Thought you might want this back. I had enough time to get it modified as well.

Never thought I'd see that sword again."
He said with a grin. Adrian drew his own sword, smiled at Emilena, and advanced slowly towards the source of the shots...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 17, 2013, 02:17:29 PM**

Axel picked himself up and rubbed his ringing ears with a wince. "I don't know how you knew that was going to happen, but I'm sure glad you did..." he told Lily, his voice shaking, steering her into cover.

He looked at Emilena. "Yeah, I'm with you. We need to help Soren." He bent down and picked up a small chunk of concrete. It wouldn't make his weedy frame any more imposing, but at least it was something.

"Hey! Uh... you, wait!" He ran after Adrian and grabbed his shoulder, stopping him from rounding the corner. "They have a sniper covering the street. How're we going to get past them?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 17, 2013, 03:42:05 PM**

(Club De Kard ó Lanthae)

Aaron templed his fingers and frowned. He had a clean criminal record and wasn't interested in tarnishing it with a bunch of felonies.

He looked at the TV advertising the latest augmentation. He scowled, if this man was right, he and the other Baselines would be relegated to the status of the dolphins and bluefin tuna currently residing in the marine park at the city borders. A criminal record wouldn't matter if they'd all end up as zoo exhibits in a few years.

The German Shepherd nodded. He made his choice. "Whatever it takes," he said in a low growl.

(Lanthae Outskirts)

Soren struggled to break the cable ties binding him but they were simply too strong. He sighed as he resigned himself to the fact that his possessions were all but gone.

Hell, he'd be lucky to get away from this *alive*.

(Lanthae Commercial District)

Anne exited her apartment with her messenger bag. The Night Market in the Silica District wasn't open yet and she figured now would be a good time to go salvage more augments.

Passing by a street vendor selling some questionable looking circuit boards, she made her way to a boarded up shop. After making sure no one was looking, she used a set of bolt cutters to cut the lock and enter.

She sniffed the air and her upper lip curled back in the distinctly equine Flehmen response as the odor of solvent and grease hit her nostrils. She smiled as she saw a neurotester on the countertop. The device was an older model, but it would still fetch a a few thousand creds.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 17, 2013, 06:31:37 PM**

Adrian smirked at Axel, twirling his sword laconically.
"Don't worry about that. I've got a few aces up my sleeve. One sniper won't even be a challenge. You guys go get to Soren. I'll take care of the sniper and get back with you."
He said with a smirk.
"Oh, and the name's Adrian. Good to finally talk to you."
He said reassuringly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 17, 2013, 09:09:09 PM**

"Modified?" Emilena drew the sword, then gasped as it vibrated at a nearly-unnoticeable frequency. Pressing it to the heated pipe, it slid through as if the pipe were made of soft butter. "You've added a high-frequency vibrator component!" she gasped.

Lily squinted. "What does it--?"

"It can now cut through basically anything short of another HF sword or heavy armor like a tank." Emilena carved up some more pieces of Soren's old car. "These are incredibly illegal outside of heavily regulated construction services due to their lethality."

She grinned. "I think I can get us an alternate way into Soren's house. Everyone follow me."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 17, 2013, 11:19:08 PM**

Kojuuro nodded.
"Indeed I did. After all these years, that sword of yours is complete again. Make sure to use it well. It's owner would have wanted you to."
He said softly, as Adrian blocked a round from the sniper before ducking back around the corner.
"Oh...right, HF swords. Forgot about that. Then again, mine's been on the fritz, so..."
He chuckled a little, as Kojuuro raised a hand.
"Is that so? Probably because you're using a cheap, new-production sword. And not even how you're used to. Here. These are yours. An old friend of mine would have wanted you to have them."
He said, producing another pair of katana swords from within his coat and handing them to Adrian. Adrian stared at them for a moment, then grinned, slinging his larger sword across his back and placing the two new blades at his hips.
"Right, thanks Kojuuro. Now then, shall we go rescue Soren?"
He said, not even noticing the similarities between his swords and Emilenas...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 18, 2013, 01:41:53 AM**

The Man downed the rest of his drink and didn't say anything for a moment. He followed Aaron's gaze and watched the augmentation advert play out. One aug-ad was much the same as another, and they all made him just as sick. Finally, when it ended, he set his glass back down on the table with a small *clink*. "Yeah. I believe you," he said, dropping a few credits down to pay for the drink. "I can see it in your eyes. You're like us."

Standing abruptly, the Man pulled his denim jacket tighter and buttoned it closed. "It was good meeting you... Aaron Geasbrecht," he said, reading the name off of Aaron's work suit. "You'll be hearing from us real soon. But," he continued with a smirk as he stepped around the table and walked past him, "You might want to lose the name tag. Just a bit of friendly advice."

Shoving his hands in his pockets, the Man walked across the bar and out the door without looking back.

Axel gave Adrian a small smile. "I'm Axel. *Son of a bitch!*" he yelped, falling back as Adrian blocked a round from the sniper.

He joined Emilena and looked at the sword she was now wielding. It made the small rock he was clutching feel fairly useless. At least it looked like she knew what she was doing."Alright, I'm behind you. We can't let them hurt him." He felt a vibration run through the floor as the sniper fired again at their cover. His stomach churned.

Axel turned to Lily. "Maybe you should stay back here, it'll be safer..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 18, 2013, 10:21:19 PM**

Lily shook her head. "He can see the entire street from here..." she breathed. "There's nowhere safe anymore."

Emilena led them to the backdoor of Soren's house and effortlessly cut through the metal door. "Step one, we remove the sniper from the attic," she said. "I *hate* snipers, they make things far too complicated."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 19, 2013, 03:58:04 PM**

Axel pressed himself against the wall next to the open doorway, exhaling nervously. "No kidding. I can't say snipers are high up on my list of favourite people right now, either." He peeked his head through cautiously. The rear hallway was completely trashed, and the thick smell of smoke hung in the air, accompanying the crackling of something burning. But the back of the house seemed clear.

Breathing a sigh of relief, he ducked back out. "We have to be careful. If they know we're trying to help Soren, they might kill him even faster." Axel shook his head. "There's no way that sniper didn't see us coming."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 19, 2013, 06:13:00 PM**

"Agreed," nodded Emilena, "which is why Jackie Chan is going in the room first." She glanced at Adrian.

Lily was hanging in the back. She was trying to see the future again, but sadly it only seemed to work on its own schedule...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 20, 2013, 12:37:53 AM**

[Club De Kard]

Aaron swiped his credit chit on the bartop mounted reader. The breakbeat had switched to smooth chillout trance.

As he exited into the smoggy streets, he ripped the nametag off his uniform and stuck in his pocket. Passing over a drunk on his way to the lift tubes, he sighed.

[Lanthae Outskirts]

Soren continued trying to break the cable ties by rubbing them against the rebar he had been bound to. After what seemed like an eternity, the cable ties still held fast.

"Come on, hurry up!" he muttered.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 22, 2013, 08:50:41 AM**

Adrian smirked, sticking his tongue out at Emilena.
"Geeze, nice to know you're worried about me."
He teased, as he ducked into the room, drawing his sword cautiously. Kojuuro was the next in, pistol held at the ready...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 22, 2013, 05:27:28 PM**

Axel watched Adrian and Kojuuro move into the house. He almost expected them to be cut down by gunfire from an unexpected ambush - but there was nothing. It couldn't be this easy, could it?

He waited for Emilena to move ahead of him, his heart hammering in his chest as he desperately tried to think of a way that he could fashion a weapon from the scrap electronics strewn about. If he could just find a small-sized power core, with some way to direct its energy... Axel was also painfully aware of the dangerous situation Lily was getting herself into. *I'll die before I let anything happen to her*.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 23, 2013, 08:29:00 PM**

Aaron arrived in his apartment and locked the door. Taking the name tag, he held his lighter to it. He smiled as the fabric caught fire, falling into the sink.

"You could have kept me, but no, you had to hire a gleamer. Yeah f--- ou," he muttered as he flushed the burnt remains of the name tag down the sink.

Grabbing some clothing, he tossed his uniform into the hamper and stepped into the shower.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 23, 2013, 08:43:21 PM**

marie yawned as she snuggle into bed, along with marita on her right and rose on her left ' night girls she yawned. rose leaned in and kissed her on the lips, then did the same to marita . marita kissed rose back then kissed marie. night girs marita yawned and soon turned to face the wall, sleep quickly taking her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 24, 2013, 06:08:57 AM**

Emilena cautiously glanced into the attic and saw the remains of the sniper. "No need to worry about somebody who can take care of themselves," she grinned. "Now we need a protective perimeter. This floor is ours. Keep the useless ones in the center."

Lily didn't even take it as an insult. She was walking to the middle when suddenly...

She was shaking as she observed the intruders standing around the room. In the corner, the remains of her husband lay splattered against the wall.

Fumbling, she grasped and loaded her emergency pistol. The chrome of a nearby toilet gleamed in the moonlight of an otherwise unlit bathroom.

"Oh god...oh god, oh god..." she whispered to herself. "I don't wanna die..."

She stared at the door. A thin trickle of blood ran under it. Blood from the man that used to keep her warm at night...

Once her gun was ready, she gritted her teeth and prepared to kick the door down. "This is for Saul you bastards..." she muttered, masking her fear.

Lily grabbed Emilena. "There's someone up here!" she whispered frantically. "With a gun! In a bathroom!"

Emilena whirled her eyes about. "Dammit, anyone know where the bathroom is?"'

Then a door masked in shadow flew open, and a woman popped out, blasting dual rounds at everyone. The first shots flew at Kojurro and Axel.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 24, 2013, 08:10:37 AM**

As the figure fired, Kojuuro responded near instantly, rolling to the side and snapping of a pair of quick shots into the gun, aiming to disable it or knock it from the assailant's grasp. Adrian, on the other hand, seemed to almost disappear, reappearing in front of Axel and rapidly spinning his new HF sword, using it to deflect the fired round, sending it flying off into a wooden beam with ease...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 24, 2013, 03:38:57 PM**

Axel flinched when he saw the figure step out, and at the sudden explosion of gunfire he closed his eyes, waiting for the impact of the bullet that would end it all... but it never came. When he opened them, Axel saw Adrian crouched in front of him, sword poised and a bullet hole smoking in a beam above them.

He let his breath out. "Thanks Adrian," he said shakily, moving to the middle like Emilena had instructed. "What do we do with *her*?" Axel asked, looking at the disarmed assailant, still not quite over the shock of his close death.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 24, 2013, 04:00:02 PM**

Emilena stepped forward, sword drawn. "Where is Mr. Almaya?" she demanded.

"I don't know--," started the woman, when Emilena slashed her across the thigh.

"Like hell you don't know!" Emilena snapped. "You're part of a small and organized attack group, they don't keep secrets from each other!"

"I've been stuck up here! How would I know what's happened since?" stammered the woman, clutching her thigh. Then she cried out as Emilena slashed her horizontally across the breasts.

"If you have nothing useful to say, then I'm just going to kill you!" Emilena glared, pressing the bloodied katana an inch into the woman's chest.

The woman glared back, still clutching her new wounds. "...Fine, kill me! At least I'll be able to see Saul again!"

Emilena glanced at the bloodied body in the corner. "Really? You'd die just in memory of a man? Pathetic. You're not even worth killing," she spat, smacking her upside the head with the blunt of the blade.

As the body slumped to the floor, Lily stammered, "Wh-was all that really necessary?..."

Emilena glanced at the doors, not bothering to answer. "The others will have heard the gunfire. People with weapons, pick an entrance; I'd prefer to keep the defensive advantage. People without weapons, find somewhere to hide. Psychic woman, you make sure to tell me about any other surprise visitors who feel like showing up."

Lily moved to hide in the bathroom, then hesitated. The possibly dead woman was in her way, and Lily couldn't even bear to look at her...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 24, 2013, 05:29:13 PM**

Kojuuro stood near the body, looking at it intently before looking up.
"Everyone, get down! There's a second shooter out there!"
He uttered, moving to get Emilena out of the way of the window as Adrian pushed Axel and Lily out of the way, just in time as a massive crack split the air, a massive chunk of the floor shredding out from the force of the shot fired at them...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 24, 2013, 06:04:25 PM**

Axel hit the floor with a grunt, skidding along on his chest and coming to rest by the unconscious woman. She'd dropped her pistol nearby, and Axel snatched it up hastily, hoping it was ready to fire. Raising himself into a crouch, he moved closer to Lily, raising the pistol up to the window where the shot had burst through. As he did so, he could make out raised voices coming from somewhere outside. The workshop?

"I think I know where they've got Soren," he whispered to the group. "Maybe we should split into two groups; one to keep their attention here, and the other to help him? If we don't hurry, they might decide he's not worth it..." As he finished speaking, a second bullet smashed through the window and tore a chunk out of the wall.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 24, 2013, 11:27:30 PM**

"Hey give that back!" Soren shouted as one of the thugs swiped the keys from his pocket. He was rewarded with a crowbar to the chest from the other thug. Even through the protective clothing he wore, the blow was still enough to wind him -- but luckily, not break his ribs.

"Shut up, we hold all the cards here!" the other thug said, kicking him in the groin -- hard with his steel-toed boot.

Soren screamed multiple profanities -- even with the protective clothing, a groin kick of that power from a steel-toe boot was incredibly painful.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2013, 08:44:14 AM**

Two gunmen had approached the door, but weren't showing themselves. One peeked his head around and got bifurcated by Emilena's katana.

"We've got this under control!" she said to the group. "They can't enter without--"

Suddenly a gunshot punched through the floor inches away from Lily, who shrieked.

Emilena hadn't calculated for that. "Change of plans, we take the fight to them,"she corrected grimly. "Kujurro, if you've got a grenade, make Mr. Almaya a new entrance to his first floor..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 28, 2013, 12:12:03 PM**

Kojuuro smirked, drawing his broadsword from his back.
"Unfortunately, I don't have any grenades. Pretty sure this will suffice, though."
He chuckled, stabbing his blade into the floor beneath himself, spinning quickly to cut a holed around himself, dropping through to neatly bifurcate the gunman who had fired on them.
Adrian was directly behind him, dropping through to cut down another two assailants.
"First floor clear. You can join us now."
He joked...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 28, 2013, 03:26:29 PM**

Axel knelt down and poked his head cautiously through the hole in the floor when he heard Kojuuro speak. When he saw it really was clear, he dropped down after them, his trainers skidding in the blood pooling around the bodies. Axel shuddered and gripped the pistol tighter, then forced himself to look around at the room. They were standing in the kitchen, which meant that just down the corridor was the door that to the outside... to the workshop and, hopefully, Soren.

"Come on, let's keep moving!" he urged, stepping gingerly back to make room for Lily and Emilena to drop through.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 01, 2013, 07:35:44 AM**

Emilena dropped down silently, katana drawn. Lily tried to emulate her but fudged the landing and went tumbling into a wardrobe with a crash.

"Wonderful..." Emilena sighed. "Now, we've got to find Mr. Almaya before they kill him. We can do this stealthily, or quickly. I'm open to suggestions. Has anyone ever even been in this house before?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 01, 2013, 10:16:26 AM**

Adrian shook his head, looking around the room.
"Never been in here. But I think we need to be stealthy. We make too much noise, and Soren

is as good as done for."
He said gently, tail touching Emilena's. Kojuuro chuckled, flicking the blood off of his blade...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 01, 2013, 02:27:02 PM**

"Yeah, we were both here this morning," Axel said as he gently helped Lily up to her feet. "I think they're keeping him in the workshop, and that's just outside, around the back. We have to cross the courtyard to get there, though."

He swallowed. "I think we need to go at them quiet but fast. If they see us crossing the yard, they'll kill him."

(**OOC: Is this taking place at night or daytime?**)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 06, 2013, 02:59:05 PM**

(OOC - I'll say it's taking place at early evening.)

Soren watched as the sun sank beneath the smoggy horizon amd the automated streetlights began to come on.

The pain from the groin kick ó and the distressingly happy expression on the faces of the two thugs ó reminded him that if Emilena and the others didn't get to him soon, he was dead.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 06, 2013, 10:41:16 PM**

Emilena nodded. "Right. Then let's make this tactical. Kojurro, I want you on sniper duty. Sneaker boy and Nostradamus, get that unconscious woman from upstairs, then bring her after us. Adrian, you and me are going ahead. We're doing this like in the Electric Sheep, only this time we can kill people from the beginning."

Sheathing her katana, she began slinking across the courtyard. She was never one to waste too much time.

"Who made her leader?" muttered Lily to Axel, making sure Emilena couldn't hear her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 07, 2013, 12:05:07 AM**

Adrian smiled back at the pair, ears twitching.
"She's the most experienced at team tactics. Kojuuro and I have a little knowledge of small units, but we're both used to working with full combat squads. So we'll play this her way, since she should be the best at this."
He chuckled, sheathing his blades and running off after Emilena. Kojuuro nodded, unslinging a large rifle from his back and checking the ammunition.
"That's correct. Were you two military or contractors, then perhaps I could be more valuable tactically, but as it stands, she will be the best suited to running this. Plus, she's doing you two a favor, making sure that you guys aren't in combat. Her and her brother, they can handle themselves. Let's go."
He said softly, moving towards the stairs with a terse, focused expression...

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 07, 2013, 03:16:35 AM**

Axel blinked as Kojuuro moved past him, then turned to Lily with a shrug. "I guess that's why. Come on, we don't want to keep Grandpa Rambo waiting," he said with a small smile, starting to make his own way to the stairs.

Once they reached upstairs, Axel tucked the pistol into the back of his jeans and stared down nervously at the crumpled figure in the doorway. "Holy crap, Emilena really messed her up." He glanced at Lily and Kojuuro. "Do we... tie her up?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 07, 2013, 04:07:40 AM**

Lily tried not to look at the body too much. "I don't know if she could put up much of a fight even if she were awake..." she muttered. Regardless she searched around and found some rope. "Lets not keep them waiting...brother and sister, you said?"

A lone thug guarded the back entrance to the workshop. Emilena slinked as close as she could, then dove forward in a combat. In less than a second she leapt to her feet and swung the blade at the man's neck.

All of a sudden she felt powerful volts of electricity course through her body, some sort of defensive mechanism in his skin. She grunted and began involuntarily spasming. Luckily her cybernetic hands weren't so easily incapacitated, and the blade drove into the man's neck, decapitating him.

She hit the ground with a wince. "Dammit, they're gonna have heard that, dammit dammit dammit..." she tried to stagger to her feet but her body was still shaking.

The thuds guarding both other entrances to the workshop came rushing, wielding high-powered rifles. In seconds, they'd see her, and their orders were to shoot intruders on sight.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 07, 2013, 08:35:39 AM**

As one of the guards rounded the corner, a sharp report sounded as Kojuuro fired off a single round into the first guard's throat, silencing him as Adrian stepped in front of Emilena, wrapping an arm around her waist and pulling her to her feet as he grabbed a throwing knife from his coat and throwing it at the other guard.
"C'mon, Emilena. Let's get you up. We can't just lay around here all day. As much as I'd love to lay around with you."
He chuckled, kissing Emilena's cheek lightly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 07, 2013, 12:02:59 PM**

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marita and the other girls had woken up around 5, and were getting ready to go out to search for the others. it was abot 630 now, the girls had showered and dressed, and wee doing one last check to make sure they hadnt forgotten anything.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 07, 2013, 12:17:02 PM**

Emilena took a few deep breaths to calm herself. "Thanks..." she muttered, not something she said often.

Creeping into the house, she peered through a crack in the door and saw that the two thugs holding Almaya were already aware of their presence.

"Not another move," one growled, holding a knife up to Almaya's throat. "Or he dies."

"I'll offer you the same deal," Emilena replied coolly. "We've killed the rest of your team, bar one. A female, we're bringing her here now. I propose a simple hostage exchange. We can all get out of this alive."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 07, 2013, 02:18:04 PM**

Axel dragged the now thoroughly trussed woman down the stairs, huffing as he tried to hold her under the arms. She was much heavier than she looked. As they reached the bottom of the stairway, he looked curiously at Lily. "So how long have you been able to do that... super power thing?" Grinning, he added, "I'm not complaining, you did basically save my life twice today because of it."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 07, 2013, 03:08:50 PM**

Adrian smirked, hand tensing on his sword.
"You won't let him go. I know that. After all, you bastards hired a sweeper to take down your sniper. Hell, I'd be surprised if your bosses intend to let you leave alive."
He taunted, drawing the two thugs attention as Kojuuro moved to another vantage point with a view on Soren and the thugs...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 07, 2013, 04:16:58 PM**

Emilena glanced sideways at Adrian for a split-second, then decided good cop/bad cop was as good a strategy as any. She wasn't used to being the good cop though.

"However, we may be able to help you with that. We have an excellent witness protection program." She flashed her police badge. "If you hand Mr. Almaya over alive, your worst verifiable crime is breaking-and-entering...with my help."

"I've never been able to do that," Lily shook her head. "I don't understand it. I don't know why it happens..."

She stumbled as they dragged the body across the courtyard, and the body's hand got hooked on her shirt. For a second, her tattoo was revealed to Axel...and it was now a seven.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 07, 2013, 04:29:12 PM**

Adrian smirked.
"You see, if you drop the knife and walk away, then you'll live. Otherwise, you'll end up getting betrayed by your own so-called allies, left to take the fall for this. They'll have one of their snipers drop you before they leave. They get away scot-free, and you'll end up dead."
He said calmly, tensing up on his sword. Kojuuro had moved to a spot with a clear view of the area, steadying his rifle with a calm smirk...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 07, 2013, 04:58:56 PM**

"Well, "Axel grunted as they pulled the limp body along, his ears creasing as he pciked up the raised voices from the workshop. "I'm glad it happened when it did." As Lily suddenly stumbled, he quickly tightened his grip so the woman didn't crash to the floor. "Hey, are you alright..." His breath hitched in his chest when her shirt caught and the tattoo was exposed.

Axel stopped in his tracks. "Lily, it's... it changed again." His eyes widened as he tried to understand what was going on.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 08, 2013, 12:35:35 AM**

The thug looked at Emelina and Adrian and then at Soren. He scowled.

"Fine, take him." He threw Soren at Emelina and Adrian. "Just so you know, we're not through with you, Almaya."

Soren grunted as he landed roughly on a piece of rubble.

The other thug spoke up as he glared at Adrian. "This isn't the last of us, Cyhead. We're coming for you and your Gleamer buddies!"

One of the thugs none too gently grabbes the injured woman and with his companion in tow, quickly ran off into the rapidly darkening streets.

(OOC - Cyhead --> "Cyberhead" --> an insulting term for someone who works on augmentations.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 09, 2013, 10:11:44 AM**

Lily, who was silently freaking out about the tattoo thing, swallowed deeply and focused on Soren. "Are you all right?" She asked, kneeling over him.

"All things considered, that went comparatively well," muttered Emilena. She glanced at Adrian. "Good thinking on the routine. I think that was what got them. Hopefully they haven't bugged Mr. Almaya. With your permission Soren, I'm trained in full body cavity searches..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 09, 2013, 02:12:12 PM**

Axel was still shaken by Lily's changing tattoo, but nonetheless grinned when he saw that Soren appeared unharmed. "I'm glad you're okay Soren," he said, making his way over. He winced when he heard Emilena's offer. "Well? Are you tempted?" he said as he extended a helping hand down to him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 09, 2013, 03:30:31 PM**

Soren's eye twitched as he heard Emilena mention "cavity search".

"No," he said. "All those two did to me was simply beat me up ó or try to. Luckilyó" he gave an experimental punch to his shirt, causing a short wave to ripple across its surface as it hardened "ómy clothing stopped them."

He then turned to Axel and Lily. "I'm fine but everything's gone." He sighed. "Well, I'm gonna see if there's anything those punks haven't taken."

He got up and headed towards the ruins of his house.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 09, 2013, 05:43:50 PM**

Kojuuro lowered his rifle, sighing a little and relaxing.
"Heh. That was some smooth talking, you two. Good job."
He sighed, then slung his rifle across his back, making his way towards the others. In the courtyard, Adrian smirked a little, standing next to Emilena.
"Wasn't a routine, actually. I...know how operations like this work. Any time there's someone hired to dispose of one of them, there's no intention of letting any of them leave."
He said, smiling at her and blushing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 09, 2013, 11:17:15 PM**

"Crime doesn't pay," agreed Emilena, who could think of at least dozen examples where it paid extremely well.

Lily pulled her shirt down and examined her tattoo. "It's counting down," she whispered. "...Counting down to what?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 10, 2013, 02:48:56 AM**

Axel looked at Lily. *How the hell does a tattoo change like that?* He put an arm around her. "It's alright. Whatever it is, we'll deal with it. You'll be fine."

The sound of raised voices carried over the now still evening air, causing his ears to prick up. "Sounds like Soren's neighbors heard the gunfire," he said, glancing around at the others. "Maybe we shouldn't hang around too long. If they decide to call the police..."

A ringing stirred Marcus, and he sat up. He'd been lying in the back seat of his car, trying to catch up on some sleep while he had the chance. There was another ring, and he realised it was his cell phone. Reaching into his coat, he pulled it out and snapped it open. "Yes."

Zeroth's voice came through. "We've successfully activated the live tracker. It seems she managed to successfully escape the police - given the amount of police activity in the area, she and Kibagami must have had help. But it's where they are now that has us interested. Soren Almaya's residence."

Marcus frowned. "Soren... he's another of our targets."

"For intimidation, not elimination. But if they're working together the situation may have to change. In any case, we're still in the dark as to what they're working towards - we need to retrieve the female and... ask her what she knows."

"It'd be my pleasure," Marcus grunted.

"Good to hear. But you won't be alone - we don't want to risk failure. You'll be part of a small team. Here are the details..."

The phone in Aaron's apartment began to ring.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 10, 2013, 08:52:52 AM**

Adrian froze for a moment, eyecover glowing a little as he looked at Emilena.
"Emi...we have a problem. I think that you got a tracker put in you at that hospital. It just went active, so now the Purifiers have a bead on us..."
He said nervously as Kojuuro walked over to the rest of the group...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 10, 2013, 10:28:07 AM**

"Do they...?" Emilena muttered. After a few seconds her eyes lit up. "Don't remove it! This could be turned into an opportunity."

Lily glanced at her. She was beginning to think the fox was slightly crazy.

"Anyone who's interested can follow me to a remote location," Emilena continued. "Somewhere they'll think I'm alone. They'll try to capture me, but they won't be expecting my team of allies. We can ambush them, hopefully capture one for information." Her eyes flashed with excitement.

"I don't know if I like this plan..." muttered Lily.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 10, 2013, 12:34:46 PM**

Aaron finished his meal of catfish filet.

He picked up his cellphone.

"Aaron speaking, what do you want?"

Soren exited the house with his shotgun and battered exoskeleton with its charger.

"F---ers stole everything except my gun and my exoskeleton."

He then suited up in the exoskeleton, setting its power to low to conserve battery life.

Soren then looked around. "So what's the plan?"

He then heard the distant sound of sirens. "On second thought, let's scram!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 10, 2013, 02:46:48 PM**

"Hello, Aaron Geasbrecht. It's good to talk to you." Zeroth's garbled voice issued from Aaron's cellphone, calm as always. "My contact told me you seemed promising, and after doing some digging of my own, I have to agree. I think you could be quite valuable to our cause."

"I'm sure that by now you know what I represent," he continued, "So you'll understand if I don't stay for long on a line I don't trust. You'll have a chance to prove yourself to us tonight.

Call it an initiation. I have a small number of my agents working to retrieve a female that we believe could be a threat to us. You have the opportunity to accompany them - it should go smoothly, but she's proven herself to be dangerous and it can't hurt to be sure. My agents will be waiting for you on Richardson street in four hours - they already know what you look like. I'll be very disappointed if you don't show up, Mr. Geasbrecht."

"And I don't need to tell you what happens if you go to the police, do I?" There was a short pause, then a dialing tone as Zeroth hung up.

Axel nodded at Soren. "Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. But where are we going to go? And even if we go along with Emilena's plan, which doesn't sound too smart to me," he said glancing at her, "We still need a car or something."

Axel paused. "If we find an electric car, I could hotwire it pretty easily. I doubt the cops'll care too much if I add grand theft auto to my list of activities today."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 10, 2013, 05:57:41 PM**

Adrian smirked, rolling his neck with a chuckle as he let his tail brush against Emilena's butt.
"Good plan, Emi. Just understand that I won't be too far away from you. I don't want anything to happen to you."
He said softly, smiling a little as Kojuuro dusted off his jacket...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 10, 2013, 06:32:55 PM**

"Good idea," nodded Emilena, sheathing her sword. "And until we find an unattended car, we're legging it. I have just the place, I used to use it for stings. Old abandoned robotics factory off the bluffs."

She walked away from the others glancing at Adrian. "Fan of public displays of affection, are we?" she muttered. "Keep it in your pants, will you? You'll get everything you want tonight; I'm going to need your help again..."

Lily's heart panged at the mention of the abandoned factory; she remembered that place...it was near the forest. She'd seen it when on the run from the police, but bypassed it due to the plethora of dead ends.

"We might not need a car," she said quietly. "It's less than...a day's run from here..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 10, 2013, 06:59:16 PM**

Adrian smiled and placed a hand on Emilena's arm.
"Well...sorry...It's just...y'know...I really like you and all..."
He said shyly, quiet enough that the others couldn't hear. At hearing Lily's suggestion, Kojuuro nodded, tapping his chin.
"You're right. Plus, there's a chance that any vehicle would contain a GPS locator. That could lead to more trouble than any of us want to deal with."
He said, smiling at Lily...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 12, 2013, 01:51:40 AM**

Aaron smiled as he finished his meal. Now was the chance to prove himself. Yet at the same time, he had nagging feeling that he wasn't being told everything.

He quickly shook it off as he washed his dishes and put them away. If his hunch was wrong and he didn't show up, then the Augments could take over.

"Well, time to see what's going on." He quickly punched in a code to a hidden safe under the counter. A gentle click and a drawer containing his pistol and two fully loaded magazines ó and some additional ammo ó popped out.

He pocketed one of the magazines and loaded his pistol. He smiled as he heard the *click* of a round being chambered. The German Shepherd donned a shoulder holster and placed his pistol in it.

"Well, let's do this!" He grabbed his jacket from the hook on the door and threw it over the pistol. After checking to see if he had everything, he exited his apartment. And nearly tripped over a bum.

Getting into the elevator ó which always stank of urine for some reason ó he looked at his watch. He'd have plenty of time to make it to Richardson Street.

Soren shook his armored head. "I'd love to go with Emilena and Kojuuro but I have some information I'd like to get from a certain Mr. Altyn and he works in the heart of Lanthae."

He then turned to Axel. "Axel, Lily are you coming with me or Emilena?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 12, 2013, 05:05:43 PM**

"I'll go with you, Soren," Axel said, shrugging apologetically to Emilena. "I'd probably just get in your way if there's a fight." He considered for a moment, then pulled out the pistol he'd snatched from the woman they'd knocked out and threw it to Adrian. "Here. You can't have too many guns, right?"

He walked over to Soren's side, then turned and looked at Lily. "Come on, you've gotta come with us - it'll be dangerous where they're going..."

Gittsun wandered around Marie's kitchen, pulling open her cupboards at random, looking for whiskey, vodka, something *hard*. So far he'd found nothing. "Hey, Marie, you got any of the good stuff? It's not everyday you're in the middle of an attack on the hospital and live to tell about it!" He didn't think it was necessary to mention that's his ward had actually been nowhere near where the action was.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 12, 2013, 05:09:55 PM**

whiskeys on the 3rd shelf to the back ' marie said as she came into the kitchen.
- brownsteet lookee at the timer on his desk, it now read 4:30:17, whuiich meant iof emilena didnt get back with soren tonight, she was fired. ' i want emilena arrested on sight' he said into a communicator. ' shes off the force if she doesnt get back here by midnight with the suspect..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 13, 2013, 03:51:39 AM**

Emilena blinked. "What? You--" she broke off, turning away from Adrian. "You are interested informing a romantic partnership? When the hell did this happen?"

I mean, we're having sex...but that was strictly to curb biological urges...right? She realized wistfully that it should have been rather obvious.

"I...shouldn't have lashed out," she recovered lamely, turning back to Adrian. "I...shall need time to think about this."

Lily meanwhile had been grappling with her own mental dilemma, and at that point gulped and made up her mind.

"I'm going with Emilena and the others," she told Axel.

Emilena cast a glance behind her. "You're what?"

"I need to talk with you," Lily replied. "Sooner rather than later." She looked at Axel. "I'm sorry. We can meet back up afterwards."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 13, 2013, 08:51:03 AM**

Adrian smiled a little, looking aside awkwardly.

"Well...to be honest, I've...though about asking for a while now..."
He said quietly, as he reflexively turned and caught the pistol Axel had tossed to him.

"And it's okay for you to take as much time as you need to think about it."
He added quietly, walking over to Lily and handing her the pistol.

"Here. You'll need this more than I will. I don't do so well with guns."
He chuckled softly, as Kojuuro smirked a little from behind the group...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 13, 2013, 02:55:45 PM**

Soren nodded. "Okay." He turned to Emelina. "Axel and I will be heading to Pelvanida Cybernetics."

hHe then swore as he looked around the ruined lot. "As soon as we can steal a car."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 13, 2013, 04:06:46 PM**

Axel blinked at Lily. "You..." He sighed when he saw that she'd made her mind up. "Just be careful, okay?" He turned his head towards Emilena, Adrian and Kojuuro. "Make sure she doesn't get hurt. Please."

He joined Soren's side. "The cops are still on their way - if we're going to split up, we need to do it fast." He glanced back at the others, his eyes lingering on Lily. "Good luck guys. Stay safe. Come on Soren, the faster we find a car the better." Axel started to head down towards the sidewalk.

Gittsun turned and opened the shelf behind him. Reaching in, he grasped the bottle and pulled it out. "Ah, thanks Marie. You're a life-saver..." He poured himself a generous helping and gulped it down. He sighed. "That's better. So, what's the plan for you girls now?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 13, 2013, 05:11:28 PM**

"I'm sorry Axel...but I have to talk to her." Lily smiled sadly. "I'll be safe. I promise."

"No promises from over here," Emilena set off at a brisk pace. "Keep up. We're not taking water breaks."

With one last look at Axel, Lily ran after Emilena.

Emilena sighed. "Try to keep the civilian out of the line of fire," she muttered to Kojurro.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 13, 2013, 06:35:50 PM**

Adrian nodded as Kojuuro smirked.
"I promise, Axel. Lily, I want you to act as my spotter. I need you to cover me."
He said gently, grinning.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 15, 2013, 01:51:53 PM**

As Emilena's group approached the looming factory, Lily crept up to their leader cautiously. "So...ma'am..." she said timidly.

Emilena spared her a glance. "Ah, yes, you wanted to talk to me about something."

"You're a police officer...right?" Lily asked. "I saw the badge."

"Let's go with 'yes,' I'm a police officer. Why does it matter?" Emilena narrowed her eyes, expecting further probing questions.

Lily played with her hands nervously, staring at her feet. "Well...I don't know what I'm on the run for. I'm not honestly sure what I did. Until a few days ago, I lived a perfectly normal life. I was wondering, if you're able to...that you could use your police powers to figure out why I'm a criminal."

Emilena thought. "Hmm. If the chance presents itself, I can help you with that. But you'll have to do something for me in return."

"Of course!" Lily brightened up. "Anything! Thank you so much!"

This female came with Mr. Almaya... thought Emilena. *I'll have to gauge her loyalty to him before revealing any of my true intentions.* "I'll tell you how you can repay me at a later date. For now, just stay close. None of these deals matter if you die in the coming Purifier ambush."

Lily nodded hastily. "Don't worry. You and your brother are the only friends I have that can hold their own in a fight. I won't get in your way at all."

"Brother?" Emilena wrinkled her nose in confusion. "You are mistaken. We are lovers who happen to share similar physical characteristics. Don't make assumptions in the future."

"But--I--o-okay..." Lily decided to end the conversation there and just stop bothering the police officer.

They'd reached the abandoned robotics factory. Rusted walls and windows whose glass had long since melted away loomed over the shadowy clearing flanked by groves of dark trees. The lapping of water from the cliffs on the other side of the bluff left a scent of salt in the air.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 15, 2013, 04:55:45 PM**

The car sat motionless adjacent to the curb, the shadows drenching it in darkness. It faced along Richardson street - street lights further up gave the occupants of the vehicle a good view of anyone who might be hanging around. The clouds gathering in the darkening sky had broken, and a light rain tapped against the roof of the car.

Marcus shifted in his seat and looked at the clock on the dashboard. It was almost time. "Geasbrecht should be here soon," he muttered to his accomplice sitting in the passenger seat next to him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 15, 2013, 05:32:24 PM**

Anthony "Tony" Stracci sat slumped down in Marcus's passenger seat, one of his footpaws placed irreverently on the car's dashboard. The ferret was picking his claws with a knife in a bored fashion, and nodded at Marcus's words. "Got it." he susurrated, his voice not rising at all.

Tony was the son of Anthony Stracci Sr., head of one of the biggest mob families in the world, along with his brother (Tony's uncle), Mario. They ran a "legitimate" shipping and hauling company whose trucks were also overweight and tore up the roads they traveled on one shipment at a time. Stracci also owned a large construction company which was contracted to repair these damaged roads every so many months, so business was rather lucrative for the family, though Tony had taken a different path from his father.

About a year ago, Tony had up and vanished from the family business, having grown impatient with his father's insistence he only drive delivery trucks until he had "matured" enough to assume more important posts in the family. Growing increasingly alarmed and horrified at all the technological implants going around these days, Tony had enlisted in the Purifiers shortly after vanishing, and had so far kept his head down and had avoided his father's attempts at locating him.

So here the young ferret sat, waiting to trap one of these disgusting cyborgs or whatever they were. The knife dug out some dirt from one of his claws, and he grinned to himself, ready for some action.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 15, 2013, 07:09:21 PM**

Emilena observed the decrepit buildings. "Perfect..." she smiled. It was just as she remembered it. "I know every nook of this place. Follow me."

She led her team into the middle courtyard, where rusted benches and dead grass soaked in afternoon dew. "From here, we can see anyone approach from any angle. Don't enter any building; they are all extensively booby-trapped."

"Are you sure the booby-traps still work?" asked Lily.

"Yes. Don't let the appearance of this place fool you; it's been renovated with state-of-the-art surveillance technology." Emilena crept up to a statue of a robot shaking hands with a scientist. Pressing several scratches on the side of the plaque, she heard a ding and a thin screen revealed itself behind the plaque. All the traps, surveillance equipment, and defense systems throghout the complex were at her command.

"None of you can be within eyeshot of me," she said quickly. "Or else we risk blowing our cover. Kujurro, the staircase in that building over there leads to a shielded surveillance catwalk; do not touch any of the walls on your way up there, and turn doorknobs counter-clockwise slowly and firmly. Adrian, underneath that row of ferns you'll find a network of underground tunnels that allow passage throughout the complex. When the Purifiers show their face, your job is to get behind them for the flank. Lily, stay with Kojurro. I'll be communicating through the intercom system which connects to both of your locations." She grinned. "Let's catch us a Purifier."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 15, 2013, 09:55:15 PM**

Adrian nodded, smiling a little as he leaned in and kissed Emilena on the cheek.
"Right. That was for luck."
He said teasingly, as Kojuuro grabbed his rifle and nodded, assessing the area for clear lines of sight before making his way up the stairs, as Adrian placed a hand on Emilena's.
"Hey...promise me you'll come back alive from this one, okay?"
He whispered to her...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 15, 2013, 11:16:39 PM**

"I should be telling you that," Emilena grumbled. "I have to stand here and be bait while you get to go engage the enemy. I hate being bait; it's like I'm a cadet again..."

Then she realized that he was giving her a sincere gesture, and attempted to return it with a kiss on his cheek. "I'll be safe," she assured him. "Keep an eye out for yourself while you're down there."

Lily had followed Kojurro towards the catwalk, being voerly careful not to touch the walls or anything. When they reached the top of the stairs, there was no sniper perch or lookout of any sort; just a long dark hallway extending in both directions.

"Err, where do we go?" she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 16, 2013, 10:23:02 AM**

Adrian smile a little and murred.
"You know I will. After all. I have something to come back to."
He said softly, as he made his way towards the tunnel. Up above, Kojuuro flicked a light on the rail of his rifle on.
"Looks like this way. And Lily...thanks."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 16, 2013, 09:47:54 PM**

Aaron arrived at Richardson Street. The street was in a fairly grungy part of town. Storefronts with heavy steel shutters lined the street and strung out bums loitered around.

The German Shepard tried to ignore the medley of vile scents that wafted through the air.

"Hey man, creds?" a voice rasped out.

Aaron looked down and saw an emaciated Human holding out his hand. The man wore a scraggly looking set of clothes that appeared to have once been a construction worker's uniform.

"Sure, anything toó" Aaron then noticed a metal port on the man's chest. His muzzle was soon adorned with a bitter scowl.

"No."

"What, please!" The bum grabbed hold of his left leg and refused to let go. A *crack* was heard as the German Shepherd swung his right foot, clad in a steel toed boot into the man's face. The bum groaned slightly and slid onto the filthy sidewalk.

Aaron looked at the bloodstained puddle forming under his head. Faint breathing could be heard from the unconscious man. He looked at his booted feet and briefly debated whether he should finish off the unconscious bum with a quick stomp to the head. In the end , he simply shrugged and made his way to the single functioning lamppost in the area where he was told his contacts would pick him up.

Soren finally located a delivery repulsortruck parked in front of someone's house. The engine was still idling but the doors were locked. Undeterred, Soren put his metal clad fist through the side window and unlocked the door.

"Axel, you drive. I'll be in the back." The Human then climbed into the back of the truck and took a seat amidst the crates and packages. He figured that keeping his armored exoskeleton on for now was a better idea than taking it off and risk having it stolen or worse, being recognized.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 16, 2013, 10:13:53 PM**

"Thanks for what...?" asked Lily, puzzled. She continued staying out of his way, slinking nervously down the hallway behind Kojurro.

Emilena kept an eye on the time. They'd been waiting for a little under an hour. She calculated that she'd start feeling the chill of night in two more hours.

Her teammates were still in position, and the enemy had not showed their head...yet.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 16, 2013, 10:19:51 PM**

Adrian made his way through the tunnels, finding a vantage point from which he could see Emilena, and had easy access to a way out for when he was needed. As he stood, watching for the coming purifiers, he found his thoughts drifting to Emilena.
"Did Lily say that I was her brother? That can't be...right? I was alone all my life, according to...Ugh! My head...why's it hurt all of a sudden..."

Kojuuro smiled back at Lily for a moment.
"For being my spotter. I know it may not seem like a lot, but it can be the difference between life and death."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 17, 2013, 04:03:31 AM**

Marcus looked at Tony picking his claws with some distaste when movement further up the street drew his attention. He turned the key and the engine rumbled to life. "He's here." Marcus pulled the car slowly forward until the German Shepard was next to his window, and rolled the glass down. His eyes passed over the beaten body crumpled on the ground, unconcerned, and came to rest on the figure looking at the car.

"Aaron Geasbrecht. You came. Good." He inclined his head towards the back seat. "Get in, we have work to do."

Axel winced as Soren punched out the window, then ran forward to the now open door. He climbed in, brushing aside the glass that covered the seat. He glanced around nervously as Soren climbed into the back.

"*Hey! Stop!*" A shout from the house startled Axel, and he turned to see the delivery boy charging down the driveway towards them.

"Crap!" Axel quickly shifted the repulsortruck into drive, and the vehicle took off. "Sorry!" he called out the window towards the human who was rapidly disappearing behind them. He turned to look in the review mirror at Soren in the back. "So how far away are we? And how're we going to get in?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 17, 2013, 06:10:50 AM**

"Oh, um, you're welcome..." Lily looked everywhere, trying to figure out what she could spot. She suspected he was just trying to make her feel useful.

Emilena wasn't feeling particularly useful either. Two hours had passed, and right on cue she was starting to feel the drafty chill through her fur. She began to worry nobody would show.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 17, 2013, 06:58:57 PM**

Adrian sat quietly in his hidden vantage point, his thoughts straying time and time again to Emilena. How he loved everything about her, from her fiery personality to her unflinching determination, to her beautiful body...to...everything.
Up above, Kojuuro smiled back at Lily, scanning the area below with his rifle every now and again.
"So...you lost your memory, huh?"
He finally said...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 17, 2013, 10:54:09 PM**

Aaron got into the backseat of the car.

"All right, so what's on the agenda?"

Soren called up his HMD which was integrated into his glasses. "It's in the Silica district ó the corporate center of Lanthae. If I can remember correctly, Mr. Altyn should be getting off work now. Or so he says when he went in for the repair. I distinctly remember him saying he just got off work when he arrived at my house at this time. He drives an antique ó 2008 Tesla Roadster if I recall correctly."

Soren leaned back against the vehicle's hull.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 18, 2013, 03:33:48 AM**

"Our agenda is information," Marcus said as he pulled the car away. "Emilena Echo. A police officer. She's been seen in the company of Adrian Kibagami, someone who's been particularly problematic to our group. Earlier this morning, Echo visited the city hospital along with Kibagami for an operation to be *augmented*." Marcus spat the word out as if it were poison. "When she woke up, she attacked several members of staff, including some of our members, then escaped. She then made her way to Soren Almaya's residence, another one of our priority targets. It seems that Echo knows something of a certain... operation we have going on at the hospital and is working to expose it. But what doesn't make sense is that the police force also seemed to be attacking her..." He grunted. "Well, I guess we'll find our answers tonight."

As they joined the main flow of traffic, Marcus pulled out his phone, pressed a button and tossed it in the back to Aaron. It showed a section of a map, with a red dot glowing in a secluded area far from the main roads. "We were able to place a tracker on her. Two hours ago, she made her way to an abandoned factory and hasn't moved ever since. This could be some form of hideout, or she's leading us into an ambush. Either way, we'll be prepared." Reaching into the back seat, he pulled aside a grey blanket next to Aaron to reveal three assault rifles, a large number of ammo clips and 5 flash-bang grenades. "I don't care what happens to anyone she has with her. If you can, kill them. But we need her alive."

"Since you're on our team, you might as well know who you're working with. I'm Marcus. This is Tony," Marcus introduced, indicating towards the Ferret sitting next to him.

Axel nodded. "Silica district is about ten minutes away. Gonna have to gun it if we want to catch him. Hold on!" He pulled into the fast lane and slammed his foot down. The weak engine of the delivery truck puttered unhealthily, and they moved only a little faster. Axel groaned. "Come on!"

Fifteen minutes later, Axel swung the repulsortruck into the parking lot of Pelvanida. He scanned the cars as he drove along. "Roadster... I don't see a Roadster. Crap, I think we missed... Hey, there! Is that him?" A Tesla Roadster was parked a little ahead of them, and a figure was making his way around the vehicle, preparing to get in.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 18, 2013, 08:59:07 AM**

Tony shook his head as Marcus described their target. Another scum who felt the need to augment herself, apparently. Who were these people? Why did they feel compelled to do such things to their bodies? And she had attacked members of the hospital staff after having the procedure completed? This just further convinced the ferret that what he was doing was right. More than anything he'd ever felt working for his pops, he felt like he was truly doing good in the world; that he was stemming back some furious tide that threatened to swamp them all.

He continued picking his claws with his knife, and flicked a finger up to knock the fedora on his head back a tad as way of greeting the newcomer, Aaron. He also gave a slight wave of his paw (more like a sudden jerk really), but didn't fully turn around. "Pleased to meetcha!" he exclaimed. As Marcus hadn't offered any last names (save for Aaron's), Tony didn't offer his either.

One thing he was grateful for was the weapons' cache in the backseat. He had only brought a sidearm (in addition to the knife), but it was nice to know they were packing substantial heat as well. Would make taking this... freak easier. They needed her alive, which was fine. So long as he got a chance to take out some of her friends, he wouldn't complain.

While he had initial reservations upon hearing she was a cop, he threw them all out the window at the news that the police seemed to be hunting her as well. Good... made things considerably easier in terms of questionable legality, and put his mind at ease.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 18, 2013, 10:43:56 AM**

Lily nodded. "Though Axel and Soren have helped pin the pieces together...it looks like I was just a regular housewife who liked to go hiking. Three days ago, something happened to me in the forest while on a hike...and hopefully Emilena will be able to help me find out what."

The air was incredibly cold, but she didn't seem to notice. As a matter of fact, her skin seemed slightly greyer than usual. "I'm so grateful for all the help everyone has been giving me...hopefully I'll get the opportunity to pay you all back someday."

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Three hours now...Emilena hit the intercom, ready to give up and return to Soren. Apparently the Purifiers weren't as efficient as she'd been led to believe.

But then, a faint red light blinked on the edge of the radar. A vehicle had pulled up to the perimeter of the factory. She narrowed her eyes.

"Possible visitors on the southeastern perimeter," she warned her allies. "Hold position for now. Let's see what they do..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 18, 2013, 11:17:59 AM**

Kojuuro smirked, folding his sniper rifle's bipod out and smirking a little.
"Understood. Setting up for the shot."
He chuckled into the radio. In his hiding spot, Adrian nodded, holding his sword and tensing.
"Alright. I'm ready, Emi."
He said softly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 18, 2013, 05:16:56 PM**

Aaron nodded and shook hands with Tony. "You probably already know my name."

He then smiled as he laid eyes on the weapons cache. "Nice."

He took a deep breath, grabbed a rifle, slapped in a magazine and chambered a round. "All right, ready to rock and roll?" he said with a grin.

Soren leapt from the back of the moving vehicle, letting his exoskeleton and shock absorbing clothing take the impact. The pavement wasn't so lucky, small cracks showed where his fists and feet landed. He sprinted over to the Tesla Roadster and blocked off the driver's side entrance.

"W...what do you want?" Mr. Altyn said, gazing at the armored Human.

Soren took off his helmet. "Mr. Altyn, I would like a word with you."

Mr. Altyn gasped. "Soren?" He looked around nervously. "Look, I already paid for the repairs!"

Soren sighed. "It's not about the repairs. I want to know what you did to your hand."

Mr. Altyn revealed his right hand, a black carbon fiber prosthesis. The pointer finger had a visible hinge ó indicating that a small compressed air duster was part of the prosthesis. In addition, all the fingers were very narrow and fine, like tweezers, allowing the technician to easily handle small parts. "Uh, nothing."

Soren shook his head. "I'm not interested in playing games. Tell me what happened to your hand."

"What's with this? Maybe I don't want to tell you! Is it that hard to understand!?" He made a move to reach past Soren.

The cyberneticist reacted, blocking the movement. "Don't bother, I'm *much* stronger than you are in this suit." That was partially true. At the lowest setting, he could easily qualify for the Olympics ó the Baseline Games, at least. At the highest setting, he could lift nearly two and a half tons.

Soren then scowled. "This relates to something that cost me my house and records of my business. If I have to flip your car over or hold you down to get info, I will do it."

Mr. Altyn looked around the parking lot, lit up by streetlights. "Well, I said that I had an accident because I was filling in for a guy at the manufacturing plant." He took a breath. "Well, that's not true. I had an encounter with some thugs ó think they called themselves the 'Purifiers' or something. Anyways, they beat me up, stole all my stuff and one guy cut off all the fingers on my artificial hand with an angle grinder or something."

Soren nodded and waved down Axel.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 18, 2013, 06:16:48 PM**

Marcus looked at Aaron in the mirror. "At least there's nothing wrong with your enthusiasm," he said finally, turning his attention back to the road. Soon, they came to a small turn-off, and after a while the road became increasingly bumpy. The tires kicked up small clouds of dust on either side of the car. "Pass me the phone," Marcus demanded, taking it back from Aaron. He looked at it quickly, then grunted with satisfaction. "Good. She's still in the same position, and we're almost there."

20 minutes later, a dark shape loomed out of the darkness. Marcus quickly dimmed the headlights, and slowed the car to a crawl. He stopped just outside the main entrance and killed the engine. Reaching back, he took the remaining rifles and handed one to Tony, then distributed the rest of the ammo.

"Remember the plan," Marcus said as he loaded a magazine, and clipped a flash-bang to his belt. "The female fox has to be taken alive. Tony, you've seen a plan of this factory. There's a rear entrance on the other side of the building. Go there and flank them. Aaron, you're going in the front with me. It's the most direct route, so expect resistance." He looked at the them and nodded his head. "Alright, let's move." Letting himself out of the car, he started making his way stealthily towards the entrance.

Axel saw Soren signal to him, and he brought the repulsortruck to a stop next to the pair. "Hey," he said, leaning out of the window. He saw Altyn's hands and gasped. "Woah, nice augments! I always wished I could afford something a little more specialised, these are so clumsy..." he said, flexing his fingers which had been designed to resemble normal digits. Axel realised he was rambling. "Anyway... are we good?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 18, 2013, 09:10:25 PM**

Tony nodded at his instructions, and gratefully exited the car, lifting his arms high over his head and standing on tip claw as he splayed his tail out behind him in order to get in a good stretch before moving to the back of the car and retrieving one of the assault rifles.

Smiling as he cradled it, he almost lovingly pulled the slide back, loading a bullet into the chamber. "All right... let's do this. I'll go in the back then, and see you on the other side." The ferret gave a wave, and jogged for the back of the factory now, having committed the general layout to memory on the way over.

Jogging through the night, Tony arrived at the rear entrance, tensing himself now and getting ready for what was to come. Pushing open the door slowly, he made his way inside, creeping forward, weapon at the ready as he began making his way cautiously through the factory. Little did he know, this night would not go as planned...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 18, 2013, 11:40:58 PM**

Emilena flicked her hands and zoomed in on the area with the newcomers. "They're in two groups," she reported. "A lone one by the rear entrance, and a pair...a bit off of that position, coming in. Adrian, you deal with the one at the rear entrance. Kojurro, keep your eyes peeled. The duo are coming this way." She squinted. "They've got something jamming their signal, it's hard to tell where they are..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 18, 2013, 11:57:38 PM**

Adrian nodded a little, making his way through a tunnel towards where Tony would breach the factory. From his vantage point, Kojuuro adjusted his aim, covering the door the two others would be breaching from, pulling the bolt of his rifle to chamber a round.
"I have eyes on the two, Emilena. Be careful. They're packing serious firepower, and one of them is a high-ranking purifier named Marcus. Real piece of work. I'll try to take care of him, you get the other one."
He said coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 12:46:29 AM**

"I can't move yet," Emilena said tersely. "They'll realize something is up. But hold your fire for now; if they keep walking in the same direction, they'll set off a static field that short-curcuits any neuro or electrical shields. Your sniping will be far more effective after that. Adrian, get yours out of the picture quickly!"

Suddenly, Lily jumped beside Kojurro. "I--I thought I saw something!" she stammered, staring nervously at the blackness of the room. "It was...but now I can't...I'm sure..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 09:23:42 AM**

Tony emerged from the first building and into one of the inner yards of the plant. His assault rifle was at the ready though slightly lowered, the butt resting against his shoulder as he scanned the open area. He couldn't see anything just yet... but he wasn't at the center of the factory either, if he recalled correctly.

Darting out from the doorway, he made his way over to one of the walls to keep his back to it and move along it to the next building. He kept his eyes on the open ground to his left though, his adrenaline coursing through him as he slid along the wall.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 10:29:12 AM**

As Tony stepped into the inner yard, Adrian opened the door behind him, stepping out with a small grin.
"Sorry, but I'm going to have to stop you here, whoever you are."
He said coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 10:35:46 AM**

Tony froze, his eyes widened. Dammit! How could he have been so careless? He didn't turn around however, as he hadn't been ordered to, nor did he drop his weapon. He remained stiff, swallowing hard as he tried to think of what he could do. The voice sounded close but he couldn't tell exactly how close. Should he try and whip around and hit this guy in the face with his rifle? But he had to assume he was being covered with a gun, and one false move could result in his death.

"Take it easy." he said now, raising his arms slowly, the rifle in one of them. "I don't... know if you're involved with these... these... freaks but... I don't want... you to think I'm some cold-blooded killer." he said now. "I'm just trying to keep the world level... to stop it from moving too fast... this wasn't anything personal." he said, hoping his pleas would prevent him from getting shot. He closed his eyes, and resigned himself to whatever fate awaited him. Adrian could see the ferret visibly start to tremble now, as if he feared his next breath would be his last.

When it boiled down to it, Tony was just a kid... he wasn't used to the rough life the rest of the Purifiers lived, and it showed in the way he shook. He wasn't a hardened combatant... not really.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 10:58:57 AM**

Adrian stepped in, quickly relieving Tony of his rifle and tossing it aside after removing the magazine and emptying the chamber.
"Look, I have no intention of killing you, but I can't allow you to help those two you were with. Y'see, the one that they're after is someone very important to me, so you're gonna have to stay here for a while."
He said, procuring a set of light polymer handcuffs and cuffing Tony's hands behind is back...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 11:10:56 AM**

Tony offered no resistance to the rifle being taken from his paws, almost breaking out in tears as Adrian said he wasn't going to kill him. This guy was a professional, unlike Tony, as the gun's chamber was emptied, the clip was tossed, and the rifle was placed aside. Tony's arms were soon cuffed behind his back, and he continued to shake, though felt relief he wasn't going to be shot.

A sob actually escaped his throat, his previous "tough-guy" veneer having melted like snow under the sun. "Oh god..." he said, jaw shaking. Why had he ever run away from home? What had he gotten himself into? Was this what it was like? Was the dirty side of his father's business like this? Was this what his father had meant when he said he wasn't "mature" enough? He had so far never killed anyone in his life, but cuffed as he was, he realized this was no longer a game.

He tried to stop the tears, but his reality had completely caved in now. He wasn't in some game... what had he been thinking!? Confused thoughts whirled around his head. He started almost babbling nonsense. "Look... if you just let me go... I'll turn around and never look back. I promise I won't tell the others." he said now, his voice cracking. "I just wanna go home..." he said softly, his shoulders slumping. "I just wanna go home..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 11:21:28 AM**

Adrian sighed, placing a hand on the kid's shoulder.
"Look, if you run now...there will be a world of trouble. Purifiers aren't exactly known for letting associates of theirs off the hook. Especially not that dog Marcus. What were you thinking, joining up with those guys in the first place?"
He finally asked, shaking his head a little.
"Look, we'll stay here until the other two are taken care of, and then we'll see what happens from there, okay?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 11:42:32 AM**

Tony almost jumped out of his pelt when he felt Adrian's hand on his shoulder. He settled back down, trying to get his nervous tremors under control. *Come on Tony... stop acting like a kid who's never done this before!* he inwardly pleaded with himself. *Your pops would want you to be strong... stiff-lipped. You can't cry like this.*

He opened his eyes, unable to wipe the tears from his cheek fur, but he'd stopped sobbing at least. Blinking his eyes to clear those salty droplets out, he sniffed. "I... just... I just was so tired... tired of my father saying I wasn't ready for 'serious work.' That I wasn't ready to be an adult yet. I'm 24, you know. I'm not a kid anymore..." he said, though he didn't sound too convincing. "I just... I don't like what's happening to this world. All this technology they CLAIM is enhancing our lives but... is it really? Is it REALLY doing us any good?" he asked, leaning his right side against the wall now. "I feel like we're going too fast... like we're changing ourselves in ways that can't ever be undone. I was nervous... I wanted to stop it... I don't even know what I'm doing." he said now, trailing off in a soft tone and adding a heavy sigh at the very end.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 12:18:22 PM**

The sound of footsteps reverberated as Marcus and Aaron made their way cautiously down the corridor that snaked around to the main courtyard of the factory. The air smelled of damp, and moonlight leaking through broken sections of ceiling revealed weeds pushing their way through the cracked floor. Marcus held his rifle up at the ready, flicking the sight between patches of shadow where someone could be hiding.

"Keep your eyes peeled for Kibagami," he told Aaron, keeping his voice low. "The fox with the sword. It's easy to underestimate him when you have a gun, but he's quick. If you manage to hit him, keep shooting until you're sure he isn't getting back up." The corridor split to the left and right ahead of them. A sign hanging loosely down read **Courtyard <-**. They had almost arrived.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 01:53:43 PM**

Emilena searched the zoomed-in area for the figures. "They, uh, I guess they didn't hit the field..." she muttered. "Where are they?"

More importantly, why isn't Kojurro standing on the right side of the room? Unless he's sniping through the far window, he's not even facing the right way...

Something is off... she realized. She zoomed out to view the full factory and saw a completely different pair of dots moving in on her position. Whoever the two were somewhere near Kojurro, it was a separate group.

Suddenly Lily saw a flicker again. "There's something is the room with us! I saw it again!" she cried.

At that moment a silenced tranquilizer dart shot out of the inky blackness, aimed right for Kojurro.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 02:17:05 PM**

Adrian nodded a little, sighing.
"I know what you mean. Right now, people are still trying to adapt to the changes that have come about. But progress is being made. It won't be easy, but I know that there are politicians working on laws that will integrate augments and non-augments into forces equally. Look at it this way. If a building went down, then having a group of augs able to lift and clear the rubble away would be a lifesaver. Same for police, or emergency responders. In a way, what Augmentation is is just a new tool. And just like any tool through history, it will take some time to be accepted and put to the right use."
He said reassuringly, smiling softly.

In a heartbeat, Kojuuro dodged to the side, the dart embedding itself in the wall where he had just recently been.
"Damnit, we're being flanked. Adrian! Report in! We've got more company! If you can, you need to go cover Emilena!"
He yelled into the comlink...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 02:41:32 PM**

Something invisible and heavy smashed into Lily, who hit the wall with a strangled cry. Both she and her assailant screamed as lethal electrical shocks coursed through their body; Emilena had warned not to touch the walls for a reason.

The shocks disrupted the invisibility field, revealing the Rhino agent that had attacked Soren's house yesterday. Stumbling backwards, he tore haywire electrical devices off his body.

"Exstasis..." sighed the second figure, who remained invisible. "I thought we said this was going to be a *quiet* extraction..."

A smoke grenade rolled out of the shadows and exploded, removing all remaining light from the room. The rhino ran into a wall and was electrocuted again. Lily, meanwhile, was coughing up what tasted like blood and shaking uncontrollably.

"I don't know who you are," the smooth-voiced agent said to Kojurro, "but I've no quarrel with you. Give us Ms. North and we'll cause you and your fox friends no further trouble."

Emilena drew her sword. The other pair had bypassed all their traps since Emilena wasn't watching them and didn't set any off. Her only hope now was the element of surprise.

Sprinting silently at the door they were soon to come through, she sprung forward, timing her strike so it would occur as they walked in. If possible, she'd kill the one that wasn't Marcus in a single swing, and make this a proper 1-on-1.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 02:47:38 PM**

Tony looked down to the side, at the wall he was leaning against. "I KNOW it has its uses but... what about jobs that could vanish because of it? What if we live in a world where everything is automated? Nobody would have to work anymore... and people like my dad would be out of business." he muttered. He didn't mention that his father actually had started using some augs in his business as of late, but the ferret figured it was best left unsaid for now.

He heard Adrian's comlink hum, and he looked up now. "Trouble?" he asked, swiveling his head in Adrian's direction for the first time now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 03:07:56 PM**

A girl's scream echoed down towards Marcus and Aaron, followed by the faint sounds of a scuffle. Marcus inclined his head. "Sounds like they've got problems of their own. Hurry up." He moved forward faster now, not caring about masking his footsteps - whatever was going on in the courtyard should drown out the worst of it. Rounding the corner, he saw a set of wooden doors, rotten, hanging off their hinges. Beyond, open air. The sound of shouting was louder now, clearer.

As they passed the doorway, something shone in the corner of Marcus' vision. He spun sideways even as he continued running forwards, not registering that the glint was moonlight shining off Emilena's sword, not even registering that it was Emilena herself who was wielding it. Acting purely on reflexes, he dodged the razor-sharp metal's path and twisted, slamming the butt of his rifle against the side of the assailant's head. Feeling the impact run up his arm, he hit the floor with a grunt and rolled, turning to face her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:10:41 PM**

Emilena went tumbling with a grunt. Her sword skittered out of her hand.

She tried to get to her feet, but she felt concussed. She barely managed to get to her elbows and knees. She registered blood dripping from her head and nostrils.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 03:12:20 PM**

Adrian thought for a moment, then shook his head.
"If they do it right, then there won't be any need to lose jobs. Right now, the big issue is people's greed and desire for the easy way out."
He said, freezing as he heard Kojuuro over his comlink.
"How many people were with you in the car?"
He asked, turning back towards Tony...

Upstairs, Kojuuro smirked, reaching behind himself and drawing his sword with a small chuckle.
"I'm afraid I can't let you do that, whoever you are. You see, I made someone a promise that I would protect her. And seeing as that oaf that's with you just hurt her...Well, I'm afraid I'm going to have to take you both out."
He said coldly, eyes gleaming in the low light...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 03:14:06 PM**

Aaron's ears pricked up as he heard the sound of fighting coming from one of the rooms. His heart pounded furiously. Sure, he had been in a few scraps before ó his construction company tended to work in some really bad areas but a full-out gun fight? That was new.

Taking a deep breath of the musty air, he got his rifle ready.

He was confronted by a door. He was about to open when a chill ran up his spine. He could smell something behind the door ó and it wasn't friendly.

Raising his rifle, he sent a quick six round burst through the door and gave it a hard kick.

Soren nodded as Mr. Altyn hopped into his car and drove off. "Yeah, the Purifiers got to him. Cut off his fingers."

He opened the back of the repulsortruck and spotted a Shetland Pony "unicorn" digging through the boxes. He facepalmed. "Anne! What the f--- are you doing this time!?"

Anne turned to Soren, her arms clutching several new pieces of electronics she pilfered from the truck's cargo. "Uh, this your truck?"

"No. But we need it!"

Soren shook his head and sighed. "Ugh, just...stay out of the way." He poked his head through the divider into the driver's seat. "Hey, Axel, do you think we should see what Lily and the others are up to now?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:15:12 PM**

The rhino roared and searched the room through bloodshot eyes. "Where is he???" he demanded angrily.

"If you hadn't destroyed all of your gadgets, you could turn on your infrared sights..." muttered the as-yet-unseen agent. "But there, I've tagged him for you."

An invisible laser point was now trained on Kojurro. A chip in the Rhino's head told him where it was, and the Rhino charged Kojurro, snarling.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 03:16:11 PM**

As Marcus raised his eyes, he saw the attacker was none other than his target. Snarling, he yelled to Aaron as he burst through the door. "Get the sword!" At the same time, he unclipped the flash-bang on his belt and pulled the pin. Leaping to his feet, he took aim and tossed it directly at her, even as she lay stunned on the floor. *Better safe than sorry.*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:18:53 PM**

Emilena tried to focus on what he rolled to her. She had just succeeded in identifying the flash grenade when it went off and sparks erupted in her vision. "Auuugh!" she cried, clutching her hands to her eyes.

The sword, meanwhile, had carved a hold through the dirt before the vibro-function deactivated itself. The sword fell through the sword-shaped hole and clattered into the underground passageways.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 03:19:46 PM**

"Two..." Tony said now without hesitation, his eyes wide. "Only two." he said, unsure why it had come out of his mouth so quickly. He was certainly not short on selling his comrades out, but he didn't see the point in protecting them now. Whatever was happening was happening... and he wasn't a part of it anymore.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 03:24:58 PM**

Adrian swore under his breath.
"Damnit. Alright, I'm giving you two choices here. Either you stay here, and I ensure that you do that, or you come with me. Your friends are going after someone dearly important to me, and I have no intention of letting them hurt her. What'll it be?"
He asked, immediately shifting to a calm, cool focus as he drew one of the two swords on his hip...

Kojuuro smirked, stepping nimbly around the Rhino's blind charge and sweeping his legs out from under him in one flowing movement, sending him sprawling into the wall yet again.
"Now, now. I suppose there's no way we can be reasonable about this, is there?"
He chuckled coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 03:25:06 PM**

Aaron made to grab the sword but it feel into the underground passages. "It fell below us!" he shouted.

Scanning around the room, he looked for any other threats. The Vixen on the ground seemed neutralized but he was aware that other hostiles may come out of nowhere.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 03:32:21 PM**

Tony stared at the drawn sword with saucer shaped eyes, bulging at its deadly and sleek look. He gulped, trying to think on the options. "Would I have to help you against the Purifiers?" he asked, shaking a little. He then pushed through the muck of his brain and got his thoughts in order. "If I come with you, you'll have to do something for me." he said quickly, gaze shooting to look Adrian directly in his eyes now. He wasn't sure if betraying the Purifiers was a good idea... and the only way out... the ONLY way out... was to seek his father's protection. Even the Purifiers wouldn't mess with Don Anthony Stracci, and Tony knew that. But perhaps... he could just tag along... not openly help his captors either; avoid becoming a marked ferret for as long as he could.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:35:51 PM**

Emilena tried to get to her feet. Like hell they were getting her without a fight.

She shook her head and squinted, but her vision was still completely filled with supernova. Hearing Aaron's voice was close, she charged him and attempted to grapple, maybe even remove some flesh with her teeth.

The rhino screamed as he hit the electric wall for the third time.

"We can be civilized, but unfortunately my employer does not permit compromise. I'm sure you understand," the voice replied. "Exstasis, the backup plan."

"No, I can do this--!" the rhino's bloodshot eyes went wide, and there was a tinge of fear in his voice. "Don't make me--please--"

Another tranquilizer dart flew out of the smoke, only this time it hit a trigger on the Rhino's suit. Immediately the Rhino vaporized with a scream, sending out a shockwave and stun wave in a large sphere, enveloping the whole room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 03:37:26 PM**

Adrian nodded.
"Fine. I have an idea. There's a stairway not too far from here. I need you to get that gun of yours, go up there, and back up a wolf named Kojuuro. If what you said is true, then whoever's up there isn't with the Purifiers, and we can get out of this intact. However, just to be sure..."
He took his blade, nicking a small cut into Tony's arm before placing a small tracker.
"That will make sure you don't run off, and give us a cover story for you."
He said, then turned and ran off into the underground tunnels...

____

As the stun wave hit him, Kojuuro staggered, but remained upright, chuckling a little as he bared his teeth.
"Fine then. I suppose that means that the girl and I will be the only ones leaving this room alive then."
He growled, lunging the voice, smoke barely affecting his perception at all...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 03:38:54 PM**

Marcus shook his head. "Forget the sword. As long as she can't use it." Striding to Emilena, who was attempting to rise, he seized her by the back of her clothing and hauled her up one-handed, slamming her heavily against the wall. He threw her across to Aaron. "Get her back to the car! I'll cover you!" He turned around and aimed his rifle across the courtyard. From the sounds carrying across, it sounded like the rest of the target's group was preoccupied. *Is that Tony?* Thoughts of attempting to rescue his teammate crossed his mind for a second, before he dismissed them. The mission came first.

Axel nodded at Soren's suggestion. "Yeah, I think that would be good. I'm sure everything's fine but... I'd feel better if I was back with her. Uh, them! I mean, the group. You know." Red-faced, he started up the engine, heading back.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:48:59 PM**

The voice has moved since it last spoke. While Kojurro was in the smoke, Lily felt gloved hands grab her. "Come along now..." it whispered soothingly, which was somehow even more frightening.

Lily was wide-eyed and still shaking uncontrollably. Unclipping the pistol Kojuro had given her, she fired an entire clip at the area where the hands were. She heard a series of grunts as the shots hit their mark and the hands released her. "Kojurro!" she screamed, dropping the empty gun; she had no idea how to reload.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 03:54:48 PM**

Aaron slung his rifle over his shoulder and drew his pistol. With his free hand, he grabbed Emilena in a chokehold. He pressed the pistol against her back.

"Move," he growled as he half dragged, half walked Emilena down the decrepit stairs.

Soren smiled at Axel's slip up. Axel didn't know that Anne was in the truck but the Human figured out that he'd eventually find out.

He turned to Anne. "Now, don't go doing stupid s--- when we arrive."

Anne nodded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 03:54:57 PM**

"Mmph!" Tony grunted as his arm was sliced for the positioning of a tracker. Great... now he had a machine inside him... but his cuffs were off as well, and Adrian was rapidly vanishing. Looking about him, the ferret shakily ran to his rifle, picking it up, and grabbing the clip as well. Trembling paws clumsily shoved the clip into place, slapping it in as he looked around. Staircase... staircase... the Purifiers WEREN'T here then? Well they were but... someone else was here? That made it... easier... somewhat.

Seeing the staircase, Tony charged towards it now, wondering to what extent "backing up" would go. Did that mean... he'd have to shoot someone? Well... he'd come here to kill people initially so... no time like the present, right?

Bounding up the stairs, he suddenly slowed towards the top, listening for sounds of conflict, and sure enough, he could hear gunshots ring out from inside. Pulling the slide back to chamber the first round, Tony once again gulped, and began inching his way towards the room, wondering if he could get the drop on the fight... and hope he'd shoot the right people.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 03:57:39 PM**

"You're gonna have to kill me you son of a bitch!" Emilena wrestled with all her might, which at the moment wasn't much, considering she was blind, concussed, and disoriented.

The smoke finally cleared, to reveal blood-stained pawprints to Kojurro and Lily; the wounded agent had retreated out the door.

The bloodied pawprints led right to the door Tony was now entering...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 04:02:14 PM**

Kojuuro swore, making his way to Lily's side, picking her up easily after sheathing his sword.
"C'mon. We gotta move. That agent could still be around here..."
He said calmly, as he looked her over for major injury...

Adrian had reached the tunnel underneath Emilena's location, and, having grabbed her sword, braced himself as he crouched low and jumped, propelling himself upward enough to shear through the dirt above and burst out of the ground, landing right in front of Aaron. Aiming his sword at him, the augment over his right eye flared an eerie red, as he bared his teeth.
"Alright, let go of her, whoever the hell you are..."
He growled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 04:04:54 PM**

Tony froze the second he saw bloody paw prints appearing in the doorway he was approaching. Wait... that wasn't Purifiers! Purifiers wouldn't use such tech! Steeling himself, he raised his rifle, trying to calm his mind as time seemed to slow down... he remembered the firing range... remembered seeing his father's men shoot... just relax...

Before he could think any further, he had squeezed the trigger, the firing pin striking the first bullet and then *whack, whack, whack* as the pin struck multiple bullets in rapid succession, propelling them out of the chamber and right into the retreating agent. Tony's body was completely tensed, and as if entranced, he kept firing, not letting up as he suddenly cried out. "Aaggggggggh!" he shouted, hammering the target with slugs again and again...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 04:07:14 PM**

Marcus felt the ground shake beneath, and heard the floor break apart. *Behind?!* Whirling, he brought his assault rifle up and registered it was Adrian - who hadn't noticed him. "Aaron, keep moving!" he yelled as he opened fire.

Axel frowned. "Hey! Why would I do something stupid?" He turned to Soren, and jumped when he saw there was an extra passenger in the back. "Gah!" he cried, jerking the steering wheel in his shock and almost swerving into a signpost. He straightened the truck to get in line behind the rest of the traffic. "Uh... who's she?" he questioned Soren, trying to get over his scare.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 04:10:39 PM**

Adrian ducked, moments before Marcus's shots tore through the air where he had been, two of them clipping his ear and tearing large, bloody chunks out of it. He swore as he turned, flinging a set of knives to pin Aaron down before firing a blind stun charge where he had seen Aaron, hoping to get him to drop Emilena.
Damnit damnit damnit...Marcus, again? Okay, whatever is up there. I get it. It's him...or me.
He thought to himself as he stood up, drawing his second sword...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 04:16:44 PM**

Soren sighed. "It's Anne Phoe. She's that woman who tried selling me that stolen neurotester."

"Hey! I didn't know it was stolen!" Anne countered.

"Liar."

Anne sighed. "Look, wherever you're going, I'll try to help."

Soren facepalmed. "Axel, can you pull over?"

Aaron laughed. "Of course I'm a 'son of a bitch'! And so's my father and my grandfather. 'Course, that's expected when your parents are canines. But enough talk!" He shoved Emilena into a nearby steel girder as hard as possible.

As soon as she left his grasp, a hiss of pain followed as one of the knives sliced his ear. *That's what I get for not pinning them in a fight*, he thought.

Two other knives lodged in his clothing but since he was still wearing the protective gear from his job, they couldn't penetrate.

A flash of heat made him flinch as a stun bolt narrowly missed him. His heart raced as he got his pistol ready.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 04:17:16 PM**

Since she couldn't see the girder, Emilena had no way to prepare herself, and so she hit it at full force and slipped into unconsciousness.

The bullets tore through the invisible agent, sending him falling to the ground. The invisible field finally lifted, to reveal...a dummy.

The real agent suddenly pressed his knife against Tony's throat. "Not another twitch from any of you," he warned his hostage, Kojurro, and Lily who were at the top of the stairs, "Or your friend dies."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 04:25:09 PM**

Aaron picked up the unconscious Emilena in a firefighter's carry and moved as fast as possible towards the stairwell. As he did so, he fired a few shots from his pistol to discourage pursuers.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 04:29:30 PM**

Adrian saw Emilena hit the girder, and, as she fell unconscious, something inside him seemed to...snap. He growled, plates along his augmented arm sliding apart, revealing a glowing energy core inside it, as his eyecover flared entirely blood-crimson. In a heartbeat, he had closed the distance between himself and Aaron, grabbing him and flinging him towards Marcus with a demonic-sounding roaring growl...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 04:36:33 PM**

Marcus jammed in another clip, then squeezed the trigger, emptying it at Adrian. He just had to keep him occupied long enough for Aaron to get to the car... He swore as he saw Adrian catch up to Aaron and throw him back towards him. He swerved out of the way, throwing out an arm to catch the German Shepard. While Aaron hit the ground with a *thump* next to him, he squeezed the trigger again, and the gun clicked. Swearing, Marcus threw the rifle aside and sprinted at Adrian.

Just as they were going to collide, he dropped to the ground and slid along, jerking out a leg to deal a savage kick. He'd been aiming for Adrian's knee, aiming to break it and disable the fox, but Adrian moved at the last second and he caught his shin instead, bringing him down on top of him.

"Uh... sure." Axel pulled the truck over to the side of the road. "What's going on? Is she coming with us?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 04:37:01 PM**

Tony remained tensed, even as the knife slid under his throat. He was no longer trembling though, and even his paws remained steady as he stared up at the top of the stairs. It was a damned dummy! But certainly not Purifier!

"Right..." Tony said in a hoarse voice. "But you kill me... you kill the son of one of the most powerful dons in the world. You really want to risk his wrath?" he asked, looking to either side of him. "Believe me... he will hunt you down... he won't stop... he won't care who you are... I'll play along... but think twice before you drag that blade across my throat." he said in a gravelly whisper.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 04:39:41 PM**

"I'll make you a deal," the wolf agent whispered back. "You come with me to the perimeter of this factory, and I won't hurt you. Hell, that'll give you a chance to run too," he added, glancing at his Purifier outift. "I'm mainly trying to escape myself, and I'm a man of my word."

He began inching backwards, trusting that Tony would follow along.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 04:46:45 PM**

Tony only considered this for a second, and reminded himself not to nod. "Fine!" he said. "But not a scratch on me... and he won't hear about any of this." he responded. Maybe he could use this to get away as well... maybe rejoin the Purifiers... he wasn't sure. He felt like running straight home... throwing himself at his father's mercy and protection. Either way, his threat had worked. It was all he had, but it had worked. Being son to a powerful don did have its benefits, even though this was one of the first times Tony had actually used them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 04:48:42 PM**

Adrian swore as he felt Marcus's tackle hit his shins, sending him end over end, landing in a controlled roll to his feet.
"Sorry, mutt. But I don't have time to play."
He taunted, vaulting over Marcus and sprinting after Aaron...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 04:50:31 PM**

Aaron grunted. Even with the construction worker's uniform ó designed to absorb and disperse high impact, it still hurt.

He saw the look on Marcus's face and nodded. He scooped up his quarry and continued running down the stairwell.

Luckily, there was some light filtering in from the busted roof, so he could still see. What he didn't count on was a rusted out step giving way, causing him to lose his footing.

He swore profusely as his body pinballed around the metal stairwell. Emilena wasn't faring any better ó not that he cared. Even with his arms protecting his head, he was still going to be in a *lot* of pain later on.

"She's nothing but trouble," Soren replied. He turned to Anne and pointed down the neon soaked streets. A street vendor selling catfish burgers was near them.

"Get out," he said to Anne.

Anne's ears splayed to the side. "No, wait! I can help you!"

Soren scowled. "How so?"

The mare smiled. "Any of you need something broken into, I'm your mare."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 04:50:39 PM**

(OOC: Aaron is holding Emilena, Adrian cant really grab her)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 05:01:02 PM**

The moment the stair under Aaron gave way, Adrian was in action, vaulting over a railing and landing on the next flight down, where Aaron and Emilena were rolling towards...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 05:08:40 PM**

Marcus jerked to his feet and tore down the stairs after the others, the rusted metal screeching in protest. With anger, he saw Adrian was catching up again. Without registering that Aaron had started falling down the staircase, he launched himself down and grabbed a hold of Adrian. The pair careered sideways, hitting the weak railing and tearing through. As they fell through the air, Marcus reached out a hand and snatched the edge of the stairs, twisting his arm but preventing himself from falling.

Adrian, on the other hand, had nothing to hold onto. He fell down into the darkness of the factory's basement. Unfortunately, his body armour would prevent any damage from the fall, but at least he was off their back... for now.

Marcus hauled himself up and reached Aaron. Helping him up, he pointed at the limp body of Emilena. "Get her up, and let's get out of here..."

Axel glanced down the gloomy street that Soren was pointing down. "Is she going to be safe on her own here? And if she really can be useful to us..." As grubby as Anne looked, he still felt guilty about leaving a female on her own in this part of the city late at night.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2013, 05:16:45 PM**

Aaron groaned as his body protested at the exertion and abuse it went through today. He hauled Emilena into a firefighter's carry and followed Marcus.

Soren pondered. The way things were going, they were going to need to break into a building eventually. Better to have someone who can do that with them now and not later.

"All right, Anne. You're coming with us. Just don't make me regret letting you aboard."

He gestured for Axel to take off and head into the sky.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 05:20:44 PM**

Once he and Tony reached the perimeter, the wolf honored his word and removed the knife. "You were a good sport," the wolf smiled, handing Tony a business card. "And the government likes to reward people who are cooperative. If you're ever in a bind, ask for Agent Lupis." Without another word the agent scurried into the darkness.

His business card appeared to be completely blank.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 19, 2013, 05:35:02 PM**

Soon, Marcus felt fresh air blowing against his fur. "We're almost out." Turning the corner, the exit opened up in front of them, pale moonlight illuminating the overgrown path that lead to their car. Marcus lead the way, pushing aside the shrubs that obstructed them to provide a clear path for Aaron. Crickets chirped as he opened the trunk and turned to the German Shepard, taking hold of Emilena and lowering her into it. "You did well," he grunted as he tied Emilena's hands behind her back with plastic strapping. "Especially for a first job. With more members like you, the augmented won't last long."

Marcus slammed the trunk shut, and walked across the the driver's door. "We don't have time to find Tony - we have to get away. But if he's hurt, or he's been captured, we'll find him. The Purifiers don't leave their own."

Axel nodded, and rejoined the traffic. "Uh... good to meet you. I'm Axel," he called back to Anne as the truck picked up speed, following the signs to the old factory Lily had mentioned.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 05:35:57 PM**

Adrian fell, attempting to grab onto a railing as he passed. His hand made contact, but he found no safety from it. Instead, there was a sickening crack as his organic arm tore loose of it's sockets, each joint dislocating from the attempt. All that he had accomplished by doing so was to put his fall at an angle, causing him to land on the already-mangled arm, then roll onto his back. When he had landed, he had impacted not only the ground, but a set of rusted, broken barrels, which had, in turn, nearly severed his one remaining arm. Looking up, he saw the broken railings from his fall, ends towards him.
There was a sickening crunch, and then blackness...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 05:55:10 PM**

Tony glanced down at the business card. It was blank... but maybe there was a trick to it. Absent mindedly pocketing it, he looked around. OK... what next? He still had his assault rifle (he hadn't dropped it even with the knife to his throat), and he quickly moved that under his overcoat. He had to get this damn tracker out of him!

But... did he really want to leave? He stopped to think and catch his breath. Probably... but where would he go? Back to his father's? Probably again. But first things first. He needed to find a hospital and get this tracker removed.

He started walking the perimeter, looking from left to right and hoping a car would pass by, so he could flag it down and have it take him to the nearest hospital. But cars didn't really seem to drive out to this place... the streets were black and deserted, and while the neon lights of the city burned as a backdrop, the ferret realized he was alone for the moment.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 05:58:42 PM**

Lily stumbled out into the courtyard. "Where are the others?" she asked Kojurro.

The air was silent, though signs of a violent skirmish were everywhere. Lily put her hands to her mouth in horror. "We've got to search...got to find them..."

She staggered, then dropped to her knees. She realized she hadn't fully recovered from her assault in the sniper room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2013, 06:03:44 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2013, 06:37:28 PM**

"Kojurro, I..." she trailed off. "I took a lethal dose of electricity in that room. That's what Emilena said. Why aren't I dead...?"

She didn't like to admit it to herself, but she had to be honest. She couldn't afford to lie to herself.

The battered and bruised body of Emilena Echo lay crumpled in the trunk of Marcus' car. She was still out cold.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 19, 2013, 10:18:59 PM**

Tony sighed as he noted the specific lack of traffic on the streets surrounding the factory. He certainly didn't want to go walking around this neighborhood, even with his assault rifle. He wondered how the others were fairing inside... it seemed really quiet now...

Plus... he HAD made a bargain with his captor, and planned to hold him to it. He just hoped ONE of these guys had a cell phone on them. He doubted any phones in the factory would be working.

Heading back inside, he began searching for the others, wondering if anyone was still alive... he knew the two he'd found in that room with Agent Lupis were still alive. But as for his captor, he had no idea on. Walking about, he began making his way back to that room, hoping he'd run into someone somewhere along the way.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 20, 2013, 12:34:22 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 20, 2013, 04:15:29 AM**

Marcus only switched the headlights back on once they'd reached the main road. He took a left, heading back towards the city. "Stash your gun under the seat," he told Aaron. "It'd be stupid to be stopped by the police now." They sped past a delivery truck heading the opposite way, but Marcus didn't pay it any attention.

"Woah, they're in a hurry," Axel said as the car sped sped past them, fast enough to shake the truck. Turning his attention away, he scanned the road left and right. "I wish the signs for it didn't stop a couple of miles back... I don't think we missed the turn off though." He caught sight of an old beaten track leading off to the right. "Hey, I think this is it!" He brought the truck further up and saw a huge dark shape in the distance. "Yeah, we're here," Axel confirmed to his two passengers.

He continued over the trees, and after a while came to a clear patch of ground surrounding the factory. Heading down, Axel brought the truck to a stop on the overgrown grass, facing the dilapidated building. "Well... cheery place isn't it?"

Suddenly, Kojuuro's shout echoed through the silent night air: "*ADRIAN!*"

Axel frowned. "He doesn't sound too happy... HELLO?" he shouted back.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 20, 2013, 10:12:00 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2013, 03:49:57 PM**

Lily perked up when she heard Axel's voice. "Axel!" she cried back, staggering to her feet and limping towards him.

Once they'd reached each other she threw herself in his arms. "It was horrible!" she cried, getting blood all over his shirt, "Those agents, they came back and everything went wrong...Kojurro and I can't find the others...I got electrified..."

Other than her injuries, both of her irises were now red, and there was a gray tinge to her skin that wasn't present last time she and Axel had seen each other.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 20, 2013, 04:42:23 PM**

Axel hugged Lily tightly, pressing her against him. "It's okay... it's over, you're safe now..." he murmured, trying to calm her down. His stomach was tying itself in knots. *What the hell happened here? Where's everyone else?* Emilena and the others had been so confident!

Axel's eyes narrowed. *That wolf in the suit... he came back. That son of a bitch.* "You got electrocuted? How, how badly are you hurt?" As he looked down at her, Axel noticed for the first time how ashen her skin looked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2013, 05:38:49 PM**

"That's one of the things..." Lily broke off. Part of her wanted to lie about it, or not bring it up for fear that Axel may stop wanting to help her, but she had to tell someone. "I was pushed into a booby trap. Emilena said the trap used lethal amounts of electricity, enough to kill an unprotected human. I have bad burns and I'm coughing up blood but... I should be dead..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 20, 2013, 05:53:05 PM**

Soren dashed into the building with his shotgun at the ready.

He rasied his gun but stopped when he saw it was Kojurro. "What's going on?" he asked.

Anne sat in the truck and sighed. All this time, she was wondering what the hell was going on with so much noise and excitement.

Oh well, time foróHer hand-rolled marijuana cigarette was gone! She swore as she frantically crawled about the rear compartment, looking for the precious spliff.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 20, 2013, 06:02:38 PM**

Axel felt sick on hearing her condition. He looked down at her face, and was shocked when he saw how nervous she looked. "Hey, come on," he said, looking into her eyes (which, he noted with some alarm, had both changed to red). "Remember when I said I was with you until the end? I meant it. You don't have to be afraid of telling me anything."

He looked around. "Right then, let's find the others and get the hell out of here. This place gives me the creeps." Holding Lily to support her, he headed in the direction Soren had gone.

"Kojuuro!" Axel said when they'd caught up to the pair. "Lily said something went wrong... Where's Adrian? Emilena?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 20, 2013, 06:15:43 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2013, 06:47:21 PM**

Lily hugged Axel tighter. "Thank you..." she whispered. "Thank you for everything...I could never tell you how much it means to me..."

When they headed to the bottom of the stairwell, Lily gasped at the sight of Adrian. "Oh my god...is he...?"

She looked around and noticed a cell phone, presumably dropped by Adrian. She scanned the names, and noticed Marita's. *Emilena mentioned her being at the hospital...*

Taking a chance, she dialed the number. Adrian needed all the help he could get.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 20, 2013, 07:19:08 PM**

Soren slung his shotgun over his back. "I'll go retrieve his body."

He shook his head. "F---, if only Axel and I had gotten here sooner!"

He clicked on his exoskeleton's worklights and headed down the stairs, the light soon getting swallowed by the darkness.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 20, 2013, 08:03:05 PM**

Tony stumbled across the newcomers and the pair he was familiar with, but he still didn't see his captor. He noticed a big exoskeleton, descending towards a hole. Looking from one person to another, he noticed the cellphone being used. He'd need to make use of that at some point. "Um... is there anything I can do to help?" he asked, partly out of concern (it was clear to him someone was injured, and he feared the worst on that now), and partly because he wanted to use that phone.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 20, 2013, 09:51:54 PM**

marita answered the phone' Hello?' she replied ' who is this?' she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2013, 10:04:08 PM**

"You don't know who I am but you have to trust I'm a friend of Adrian's," Lily stammered. "He needs your help!" she read off the address of the robot factory. "Bring whatever medical supplies you've got!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 20, 2013, 10:08:06 PM**

we'll get there as soon as we can ' Marita replied" what happened?" she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 20, 2013, 10:17:59 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2013, 11:32:51 PM**

Lily started to tell the story, then stopped. "Oh, what's the use?" she hung the phone up in frustration. "Look at him. He's already dead!"

She dropped to her knees and let the phone clatter back to the floor. "What are we doing out here...?" she asked nobody in particular, burying her head in her hands and squeezing her eyes shut. "We're all going to die, just like Adrian and Emilena. If they can't survive, how are we supposed to?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 20, 2013, 11:37:59 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 20, 2013, 11:50:32 PM**

Adrian was indeed alive but trapped under a rather large piece of rubble.

Soren turned to Kojuuro. "Kojurro, I need you to carefully pull Adrian away from the rubble once I lift it."

He turned the his exoskeleton to the highest setting and bent into a squat. He placed his hands under the piece of rubble and began lifting it. The suit's artificial muscles strained as it slowly began to budge the nearly three ton piece of rubble. "Now!" Soren shouted.

Anne turned to Axel. A lit marijuana joint dangled from her mouth. "So, how do you know Soren?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 21, 2013, 12:54:29 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 21, 2013, 02:52:23 AM**

Axel looked at Anne, shifting uneasily. "We live in the same neigbourhood. Sometimes I'd help him fix augments, stuff like that..." A puff of the spliff's smoke flew towards his face and he coughed, suddenly feeling a little light headed.

He heard Adrian being dragged out, and recoiled when he saw how bad he looked. "We... we can't just wait for the person on the phone to arrive - we at least need to stop the bleeding, he's losing too much."

Axel glanced at the ferret who was hanging around. "Do you have anything we could use to hold against his wounds?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 21, 2013, 09:46:25 AM**

Tony suddenly sprang to life at the addressing of his name. "Uh... sure!" he said now, fumbling in his pockets. "I have a pawkerchief, and well... my jacket..." the ferret suggested as he yanked the pawkerchief out and also began to undo his heavy overcoat. "I don't mind... I can just get another one... I'm gonna have to borrow somebody's phone at some point too." he stated, holding his coat out with the cloth. "But let's focus on getting this Adrian stabilized first." he concluded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 21, 2013, 02:25:38 PM**

Adrian's phone was still sitting on the ground where Lily had dropped it.

"I can go check and see if this factory had an infirmary or something..." started Lily, but swayed and fell back to her knees when she stood up too quickly. "On second thought...maybe I should get something to drink first..." she concluded weakly, lying down on the ground.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 21, 2013, 03:53:55 PM**

"Alright," Axel nodded, "It's not ideal, but the coat should be thick enough to do some good." He took it off the ferret, deciding that introductions could wait for later, and bent down next to Adrian. He scrunched the coat and pressed it as hard as he could against the gaping wound - it started turning red as the blood soaked in. "Ah..." he muttered through gritted teeth.

He looked at Lily. "An infirmary... it's worth a try. Uh... Anne? Could you go see if there's anything to drink in the back of the truck and bring it back for Lily? It might do some good for Adrian as well if he wakes up. I mean, when he wakes up!" Axel said quickly as he saw Kojuuro's expression.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 21, 2013, 06:12:27 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 21, 2013, 10:35:25 PM**

Noting the phone was lying there, tempting him to pick it up, Tony did so, apologetically glancing at Lily. "Sorry... I'll give this back... I just need to make a phone call." he said, beginning to dial the direct line to his father's residence. He still remembered it after all this time, and felt his heart start to race as he pushed the call button. What was he doing? Was he crazy? How would his father react? He shut his eyes, almost yanking the phone down from his ear and hanging up, but then the line on the other end was answered, and he swallowed hard.

"Stracci residence." came the smooth voice on the other end. It wasn't his father... his father

NEVER answered the phone if it was an unknown number. Instead, Tony immediately recognized it as Max Fontana, his father's consigliere. That was what he'd been expecting. Fontana typically answered the phone if it was an unknown number for legal reasons, as he had extensive legal training and could parry any attempts by the law to probe the residence via phone.

"Max... it's... it's... Tony." the ferret said slowly, his voice thick.

"Tony? Good god, boy! Where have you been?" Fontana asked, sounding incredulous.

"It's a long story... is my pops there?" he asked hesitantly.

"Sure! Let me put him on!" There was the customary pause as the call was directed to either his father's room or his office (depending on if he was in bed at this hour or not), and then, the warm yet aged voice of his father came on.

"Tony?" was the question posed.

"Hey... pops." Tony said, turning away from the group. Then... nothing. His father wasn't speaking, and Tony waited a few anxious moments as he wondered what his father was doing. He knew his father had this weird sort of squinting expression to his face, and might even puffing on those thick cigars he loved.

"What do you have to say for yourself?" came his father's voice after what seemed like ages.

"I... I'm sorry pops." Tony said, face falling.

"Don't you 'pops', me." Gruffness now.

"Yes, sir." Tony said, more respectfully now. His father typically wouldn't insist on his son calling him "sir", but when he was in trouble... then it came out. "Dad... I'm sorry..." he whispered, blinking back a few tears. "I'm sorry. I think I'm ready to come home..." he said softly.

"You'd better be... I had half the city looking for you. I've also heard the most disturbing rumors... rumors about what you've been doing with yourself recently." No surprise there. His pops was always well informed.

"Dad... I want to see you soon. But there's something I have to take care of first. Some people need my help..." Tony began explaining.

"What people? Not family, are they?"

"No, sir. Not family."

"You're helping outsiders before family?"

"Dad... hold on. You said I needed to learn responsibility for my actions. Because of my actions... some people got hurt tonight. I want to help. We might be going to a hospital." Tony continued.

"Which hospital? I'll send Max out to meet you. Take you home." Sending "Max" out meant Max and his squad, as the consigliere never traveled without protection.

"Dad... I can manage. I'll let you know when I know which hospital.... or wherever I'm going next." The ferret held his forehead with his paw now, rubbing it in a massage as he closed his eyes.

"Can I reach you at this number?"

"I don't know... probably not. It's someone else's phone. I'll call you... I promise. I'm not gonna disappear again. I..." Tony sniffled here, opening his eyes again. "I love you dad." he said, his voice cracking. "I just wanted you to know that, OK? I want to see you soon... I want to come back. Just... give me some time. I will be there... I promise."

A pause again... and like before, hefty in length. "I'll let you know where I'll be as soon as I know, dad. Please... just let me do this. Then you can send whoever you want."

Finally, after another interminable pause, "All right. But I'm holding you to that. Your mother's worried sick after all."

Tony sighed. "I know... I'll call you as soon as I can, I promise. I have to give the phone back now... but I'm sorry again. I'll talk to you soon." Tony brought it down, and hung up. No "I love you too, son" or "I'm glad you're safe." But he'd been expecting that. His father was a hardened don after all... but Tony knew his father loved him. The fact he hadn't hung up on him or exploded in anger indicated that.

He promptly erased the number from the phone's call history with a flick of his claw, and began walking back over to Lily. Tony placed a paw on her shoulder comfortingly, noticing how shaken up she seemed, and held the phone in front of her. "Thank you... I needed to do that." he said in soft tones.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 21, 2013, 11:17:02 PM**

Soren let the piece of rubble fall back with a loud crash. He looked around the ravaged factory.

"What went on here?" he asked.

Anne nodded and ripped open one of the boxes. A few bottles of water rolled out. She picked up a bottle and headed over to Lily.

"Axel told me to give this to you," she tossed the bottle to Lily. "Anyways, I'm going to go look for an infirmary here."

Granted, she wanted to go see if there was an infirmary for two reasons: steal whatever electronics were left; steal whatever drugs were left.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 21, 2013, 11:32:23 PM**

Lily took the phone back and spared a short smile for him. "We can't take him to a hospital..." she said. "Remember what happened last time? A hospital is the reason we're in this mess. How can we trust any organization, they could all be working with the Purifiers...or the police."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 22, 2013, 03:08:44 AM**

"It's true," Axel agreed, getting up from the floor now that Adrian seemed stable enough. *For now. I hope whoever's on their way gets here quickly.* "We met these three when they were escaping from the hospital, and Lily... well, her and the police aren't exactly buddies right now."

He wiped his bloody robotic hands on his T-Shirt with a grimace and offered a hand to the ferret. "I'm Axel." *Where did this guy come from?* "So what did happen here? If me and Soren knew things were going this badly..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2013, 09:31:15 AM**

Tony nodded reluctantly, glancing at Adrian's heavily injured body. Damn... he really looked like he could use medical attention though. If only there was some way... but Tony knew there was. He just wasn't sure if he should pursue this avenue.

Tony stared conspicuously at the metallic hands Axel was sporting. They were so... unnatural. But he shook his thoughts off, and forced a smile, taking the hand and shaking it. "Tony." he offered, not giving his last name for the moment. "As for what happened..." here he became more hesitant. "I uh... I... was part of a group that was supposed to capture one of your own." he admitted slowly. "Emelina her name was. I didn't... really get very far though before he captured me." he pointed in Adrian's direction.

"We soon realized though that it was more than my group... the government was attacking as well. I made a split second decision to help out, because I saw no problem in attacking government agents that heavily utilized technology. I wasn't able to help much though... but we did get rid of the agents. My group... I can only assume, got Emelina however, and apparently abandoned me as well." he explained. He didn't state Purifiers... but he didn't see the need. This Axel could probably connect the dots. He also neglected to mention Agent Lupis's card in his pocket, but figured he'd keep that under wraps for now until he could determine who exactly Lupis worked for. Besides, the card was blank. He'd need to learn its secret first.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 22, 2013, 11:27:05 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2013, 12:04:43 PM**

"Don't kill him!" Lily burst out quickly. "Please, no more bloodshed tonight. He said he's sorry, and I believe him. We all make mistakes...even if some of us can't remember what they were."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2013, 12:04:48 PM**

(Ooc: still getting the hang of this new phone, sorry)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 22, 2013, 01:40:12 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2013, 02:21:50 PM**

Tony froze at the sight of the gun aimed directly at him, and he raised his paws. "Please..." he said, but relaxed upon Kojuuro lowering his weapon. Lily pleaded with him not to kill Tony, and Tony was with her on that.

"I'm not JUST a Purifier." Tony said calmly as he dropped his paws. "I have a family... I'm not married but I come from a prominent family... and I love them. I want to see them again. I won't do anything to betray your trust. I just... want to make up for what happened." he said now, lowering his gaze. "I don't mean any harm." His assault rifle was on the ground; he'd ditched it when he'd surrendered his coat.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 22, 2013, 02:40:14 PM**

Axel followed his gaze and saw the assault rifle on the floor. He quickly bent down to pick it up. "The last Purifier I met told me he was going to make sure I died slowly," Axel said as he tossed the gun over to Soren, "So you'll understand if I don't take you at your word." He stepped slightly between Lily and Tony.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2013, 03:08:05 PM**

"I understand." Tony nodded, making no move to stop the confiscation of his weapon. "If you don't want me around, I'll leave as soon as we get back to the city proper. I just need a method of contacting my family when we get there, and I'll be out of your hair." he stated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 23, 2013, 01:38:48 AM**

Soren considered breaking the rifle in half ó an easy feat considering his exoskeleton's great strength, but decided against it, opting to sling the weapon across his back where magnetic plates secured it.

His armored helmet masked his expression as he glared at Tony. The Human was still sore at the Purifiers burning down his livilihood and home. "Look, I don't give a flying f--- who you are or what your connections are but as long as you stay out of our way, we'll leave you alone. Got it?"

Soren then looked around. "Maybe Anne knows some back-alley docs or something."

A loud crash was heard as Anne kicked down the door to the infirmary. She scowled. The room was in as equally bad shape as the rest of the place. Anything electronic had been stolen ó right to monitors and other wall-mounted displays being ripped straight from the walls.

She opened the cabinet where the drugs were usually kept. Nothing. Looks like the looters before her took the best things.

Cursing, she kicked the cabinet, leaving an imprint of her steel-shod hoof against the thin sheet met.

"Well, might as well help Soren out." She grabbed the only thing not stolen, an industrial first aid kit and made her way back to the front of the factory where everyone was located.

(OOC - is Aaron still with Marcus or did he get dropped off at home?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2013, 03:43:58 AM**

Marcus and Aaron reached the designated Purifier dropoff point. Men took Emilena's unconscious body away.

Lily finished her bottled water. Feeling a lot better, she decided to get to her feet and make herself useful.

"I should wait near the entrance and flag down Marita when she arrives," she said, "since Marita spoke with me on the phone. I'll need to apologize for hanging up on her..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 23, 2013, 03:28:30 PM**

Axel joined Lily. "I'll wait with you, if you want," he offered. "If that wolf's still hanging around, it probably isn't too safe for you to be hanging around by yourself." He looked around at the darkness surrounding the factory nervously. "I hope she won't be too long..."

The Purifier compound resembled a large bunker; plain, grey and surrounded by a chainlink fence. As Emilena was taken further in, Marcus climbed out of the car, his shoes kicking small clouds of dust into the cold night air. "You might as well get some rest," he told Aaron. "It'll be a while before we start the questions."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2013, 04:29:32 PM**

Lily smiled. "I'd like that," she said back.

When she and Axel were alone, staring out at the forest and the lonely road, she took his hand. "How are you doing?" she asked. "You've been checking on everyone else, but nobody's really been checking on you."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 23, 2013, 05:26:09 PM**

Axel blushed when she took his hand, his ears turning pink. "Uh, I guess I'm doing alright. Though maybe I could do with a shower and a change of clothes - no matter what people say about us, rats don't like to get this dirty," he joked, looking down at his blood and grime stained clothes.

"None of us exactly look our best right now, do we? Um, I don't mean you look bad though! I meant..." Axel coughed awkwardly. "I'm just glad you're okay. I was really worried."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2013, 06:02:31 PM**

Lily smiled. "You're not dirty at all, you're fine." She hugged him. "You've got give yourself more credit."

She looked him in the eyes. "That guy who claimed to be my husband on the television. Maybe he is. Maybe we were happily married. I don't know. But up in that room tonight, when two people were trying to kill me, I was being electrocuted, and I thought I was going to die, I didn't think of Danny. I thought of you. And how I would never see you again..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 23, 2013, 06:40:00 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 24, 2013, 12:58:04 AM**

Aaron nodded and headed through. He passed by two mean looking Rottweilers clad in a ballistic vest and helmet and carrying military-grade magnetic accelerator rifles.

"What are you looking at?" the leftmost guard growled as he saw the German Shepherd staring a little too intently at a skull and crossbones freeze brand on the guard's arm.

Aaron's ears pinned back and his tail tucked between his legs. "N...nothing!" He quickly followed Marcus into the compound.

Soren turned around and saw Anne with the first aid kit in hand. "Took ya long enough."

Anne rolled her eyes. "Just tell me who to bring this to."

Soren got up and headed into the building. "Adrian! Kojuuro! Anne's got a first aid kit!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 24, 2013, 04:20:33 AM**

"Really?" Axel stared back at her, his heart hammering in his chest. "I thought that when you found out you might have a husband..." He sidled closer to Lily. *Ah, screw it.* "I really like you, Lily. Ever since the first moment we met, all I can think about is you. I know it's only been a few days, but it's true."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2013, 05:57:19 AM**

Lily's eyes lit up when she heard that, and she began blushing. She drew her face closer, closer, half not believing what she was doing...but then who knows how much time they have left?

And she kissed him. Lightly and politely at first, keeping nervously distant, then slowly as she became more bold she wrapped her arms around Axel and graduated to heavier and more personal contact. The pain, the exhaustion, the love, the fear...she channelled every emotion she had into her kiss.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 24, 2013, 06:56:07 AM**

Tony nodded at Soren's words, but pointed out something further. "I'd love to leave you guys alone, but your Adrian friend implanted a tracker in my arm, and rather than try and dig it out with my knife and risk injuring myself further, I'd like to try and get this removed." he said, indicating the cut on his arm with a claw now. He had no knowledge about surgically removing a tracker, and was afraid he'd just lose massive amounts of blood making the attempt... or worse, cut a major artery. "He did it so I wouldn't run but... battle's over now, right?" he asked. He looked at his coat, but he really didn't need it back... he *did* want to stabilize Adrian after all.

"Unless of course, you guys aren't going to follow me. Though of course... I was hoping I could at least catch a ride with you guys back into town seeing as how... not many people tend to drive out this way, and I don't have a phone on me." He'd noticed Lily had walked off with Axel, so it was either hitch a ride with these guys or borrow their phone again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 24, 2013, 12:38:43 PM**

Axel's eyes widened when Lily started kissing him, but after a few moments he closed them as he eased into it. His arms wrapped around her, holding her tightly as he ran his hands up her back, through her hair, feeling her warmth as she pressed up against his body. While it lasted, he forgot about the fear he'd been feeling, the danger, the fact that he could die at any time. There was only the now.

After what felt like a lifetime, he let her lips fall away, resting his forehead on hers. "To hell with these guys and the Purifiers," he said after a while, a dumb grin plastered on his face. "Want to catch a movie? Go for an expensive meal, stay at a high class hotel?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2013, 01:31:50 PM**

"Actually..." smiled Lily. "There is somewhere I'd like to show you...once Marita gets here and we can point her in the right direction."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 24, 2013, 01:50:46 PM**

Marita had traced the call she had got using maries computer and redialed the number and waited for an answer.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2013, 01:52:52 PM**

"How close are you?" Lily asked immediately upon picking up, since she'd given the address last time they spoke.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 24, 2013, 02:01:45 PM**

we're driving in maries car' marita said. 'and headed your way. we should be there in 15 minutes.. so just hang on until we get there'
marie was driving as fast as she dared.. the posted speed limit was 75.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 24, 2013, 02:39:22 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 24, 2013, 02:58:19 PM**

Anne nodded and headed off.

Soren nodded. "Fine. Just no funny business."

He then got up and headed to the delivery truck where Lily and Axel were kissing.

"I see you got a girlfriend," Soren said, leaning on the truck. "Anyways, we *really* need to get out of here."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 24, 2013, 03:26:31 PM**

When Lily hung up, Axel smiled at her. "Oh yeah? I can't wait to see where it is."

He jumped at Soren's voice. "Um... hey Soren," he said as his face reddened, his arms still around Lily. "I, er, think that person's on her way. The one we spoke to on the phone." He blinked awkwardly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2013, 04:11:11 PM**

"Can we even move Adrian?" asked Lily. "Perhaps when Marita gets here we can transfer him to a vehicle and relocate. And if that's the case, then I have somewhere I need to show Axel right now."

She took Axel's hand and led him into the forest. "We'll be back before it's time to leave, don't worry!" she called over her shoulder, tossing the cell phone to Soren.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 24, 2013, 04:37:57 PM**

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marie turned off the exit and headed out towards the site as they drove past, the decay of the area was glaringly obvious..
- marita called again ' ok once we get there be ready to put adrian into the back of the car.. the n you'll have squeeze in somehow..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 24, 2013, 05:22:48 PM**

Axel shrugged at Soren and let Lilly lead him further into the forest. Soon, they were past the treeline; thick, heavy branches overhead blocked the moonlight and cast them into darkness. The smell of pine and wet leaves intensified, and somewhere in the distance an owl hooted.

"Watch where you walk, the ground's pretty uneven," Axel warned, then swore lightly under his breath as he caught his foot on a rogue, unseen tree-root.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2013, 05:35:03 PM**

"I know," said Lily. "I came through here while I was on the run a few days ago. This exact same time, in fact."

After about 5 minutes of walking, she stopped at a patch of trees that seemed like any other. "It was the first night. I'd been running for countless hours when I reached here. I was exhausted, sore, and covered in mud. When I heard police probes coming from both directions. You see how the trees are so sparse here? There was nowhere to run without being seen. So I had to climb."

To demonstrate she leaped up, grabbed a low-hanging branch and swung herself into the tree. Then he held her hand down to him, smiling. "Come on."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 24, 2013, 08:18:10 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 25, 2013, 12:53:20 AM**

Axel grinned. "Well, hello Tarzan..." Jumping up, he took her hand with one arm and grabbed the branch with the other, heaving himself up into the tree. He then rose to an unsteady standing position on the tree limb they'd climbed onto, holding a branch just overhead for support as he reached down to help her to her feet.

"You had to run through these woods by yourself?" He looked around and swallowed. "I can't imagine how scared you were."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 25, 2013, 04:07:07 AM**

Lily smiled and helped him onto a nearby branch, so they were overlooking the nearby city. She then continued her story.

"While I was up in this tree, the police came the closest they ever got to catching me. I could see them; they had flashlights, and were checking the trees. I knew I was pinned, and that my dress would give me away in the light, so I hid it in this hollow..."

To demonstrate, she slid her dress off over her head and pushed into a deep knot that had formed in the tree trunk.

"At least three beams passed right through me as they walked through, but I guess my dark skin blended in with the bark," Lily retold. "Still, I was cramped, exposed, and cold, after that long night. I was about ready to turn myself in or just die right there. When I noticed that, even though they'd left, the area was still lit up..."

Suddenly, before Lily and Axel, the sun peeked its first rays over the horizon of the city. The skyscrapers became silhouetted in a brilliant bloodred wash, highlighting the forest canopy and Lily's red eyes. Her skin glimmered a light gray, oddly reflective and petrous. She definitely looked far different from when they'd first met, though she hadn't yet seemed to notice.

"The morning always comes," Lily whispered softly, stroking Axel's cheek. "That's what I realized then, and what kept me going. The night is long and the darkness everywhere, but you've got to press on until things get better..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 25, 2013, 09:08:54 AM**

Axel held his breath as Lily slipped her dress off, his eyes roaming over her body. As the light of the new day spilled through the trees, washing them in it's glow, he could make out the odd discolouration to her skin - but right now he didn't care. She was beautiful, she was perfect... and she was here.

Moving forwards, he pushed her gently back against the thick trunk and pressed himself against her, kissing the side of her neck. "Are things better now?" he murmured.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2013, 01:55:15 AM**

Lily kissed him back. "Yes..." she smiled, wrapping her arms around him. "Everything's fine."

She ran her hand through his hair and relaxed her body under Axel, surrendering herself to his wishes, whatever they be. She had nothing else to say, just an aching to know that somebody wanted her, when even her own body seemed to want to reject her.

Loud thuds echoed in her mind. There were flashes of light in her eyes, but she suspected those were just concussive phosphenes. Her body felt like it was floating.

Emilena kept her eyes closed and breathed through a tube in her mouth that her unconscious mind had already learned was an air supply. Not interested in anything other than getting her bearings, Emilena chose to give no outward signs she was awake.

She could tell she was naked, floating in some sort of gel. She could see only the blood within her eyelids; there was a light source in her face. She was held in place by loose straps around her waist and the air tube, both of which she was capable of removing if she wanted. Her wounds were completely healed.

She knew where she was; she'd been in one before. This was a growth acceleration pod. As it rapidly ages the subject, it also speeds up the body's natural healing process to the same rate. She had probably aged a few months in a nighttime...or however long she had been unconscious. *Well, no point in losing any more of my glory years...*

Slowly Emilena removed the straps and felt around the pod for the latch; there was always one. When she found it and flicked it, there was a click and the gel drained from the pod before the door opened. Blinking, Emilena stepped out of the pod and into a laboratory.

Immediately the lights shut off, discombobulating her and preventing her from seeing the facility. "Don't move!" a voice shouted. Strong hands from several directions grabbed her and she didn't have the reflexes to resist.

She was carried down several dark hallways, making only token attempts at resisting. She knew she was at the Purifier's mercy by now. No escape will be possible.

She was thrown into an empty padded shower, just big enough to stand in, and drenched in antibacterial suds to remove the gel in her fur. As she spluttered from the jet of water hitting her in the face, she had just enough time to gasp to her captors, "What do you want?"

She didn't receive an answer.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 26, 2013, 03:55:17 AM**

Balancing precariously, Axel reached down and unzipped the front of his jeans urgently. Pressing forwards again, he moaned softly as he entered her, holding onto the sides of the tree trunk to keep them balanced. After several minutes of thrusting, his breaths got quicker, deeper. Finally, he shuddered as he climaxed, groaning, his hands digging into the wood.

Marcus sat on the bed and stared down at the creased, heavily worn photo in his hands, his expression hardened. The room he'd been designated was small, cold and sparse - just four stone walls and a bed that felt as hard as concrete. A bare bulb hanging from the ceiling cast a white, sterile glare to the room.

There was a knock on the heavy metal door, and a heavily muscled guard opened it. Marcus quickly slipped the photo into his jacket pocket, but not before the guard caught a glimpse of a smiling woman and child. "Echo's awake."

Marcus nodded and stood up, his back cracking as he straightened. "Good. I'll be there soon." He followed the guard out and made his way down the long corridor outside, footsteps echoing against the thick walls. There were several doors on either side of him as he walked along. He stopped at one and rapped his fist against it. *Aaron's quarters.*

"She's up," he called through.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2013, 11:01:46 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2013, 01:12:10 PM**

Lily panted heavily as Axel penetrated her, squinting her eyes shut. She kept her arms tightly pressed around him, fingers dug into his back.

And then suddenly, she was Axel.

She could feel herself, her own flesh, the sensations of sex. More frightneingly, she got a glimpse of her own body; the red eyes, the stone grey skin, the unnatural thinness. The creature in front of her horrified her and she wanted only to get away, but she couldn't.

Go back into my body, *she pleaded with herself,* Please! I don't want to have to see this! *But it felt like having sleep paralysis; no matter how hard she tried she couldn't wake up nd she couldn't look away... Finally Axel groaned and closed his eyes during climax, gratefully letting Lily stop seeing what she had become.*

And then she felt herself back on the branch, the roughness of the bark on her backside as Axel lay on top of her. Her breath slowly returned to normal but she continued digging her fingers into Axel's sides.

"Promise you won't leave me," she said desperately, looking straight into his eyes. "Even if I keep changing? I can feel it; something's happening to me. Every time my mind leaves my body, it takes a little longer to come back..."

Abruptly Emilena was torn gasping from the shower and dragged down another hallway. She was carried into a room with an empty desk and a number of closed cupboards and file cabinets; what was inside them she could only guess.

Her holders ran a rope over a pulley in the ceiling, tied her hands over her heads (skillfully enough, she noted with distaste, that she could not use any of her learned methods for escaping bondage), and pulled the rope until she could barely stand on her feet. Without another glance at her, they left and shut the door behind them, leaving her shivering in the inky blackness.

"The prisoner is ready for you," one of the holders radioed Marcus.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2013, 01:29:55 PM**

marie pulled up to the group and marita got out, followed by rose who had a first aid kit in her hands. ' where is he?' Marita asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2013, 03:26:24 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2013, 03:40:19 PM**

well we're not going to give up without a fight ' marita replied as she and rose headed into the factory. adrian lay there dried blood on his face.. and marota grew somber as she saw him...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 26, 2013, 04:34:36 PM**

Axel met Lily's gaze, panting as he recovered his breath. "I won't. You know that I won't. Ever." He leaned over, brushed some hair out of her face and kissed her forehead, feeling his breath reflect off her skin. "I promise." He bowed his head slightly and pulled her into a hug, his breath gradually returning to normal.

After a while, Axel gently released her and raised himself up, zipping his jeans closed. "We should probably get back before the others think something's happened to us," he said, giving her a small, hopeful smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2013, 05:29:36 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2013, 08:12:04 PM**

Lily nodded, smiling, then yelped when an unknown voice shouted up to them. Sitting up abruptly, she slid and accidentally fell out of the tree. Luckily the unknown figure had good reflexes and caught her.

"I don't--I--" Lily blushed and scrambled to her feet, trying to cover herself. "Axel! Grab my dress! Quickly, please!"

Emilena had barely been there five minutes and her arms were growing tired. She tried to stand on her tiptoes to put some of her weight off of her wrists and succeeded only in slipping in the puddle she'd formed from the shower.

This is a discouragement tactic, she recognized grimly, *Sensory deprivation, loneliness, chronic fatigue to the extremities, and an inability to lay down persuades captives to cooperate when the chance at comfort is offered...at a price. Well, they aren't getting me that easily!*

Fifteen minutes later, she found her silent rebellious attitude had weakened somewhat.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2013, 08:19:14 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 26, 2013, 08:44:20 PM**

(Purifier complex)

Aaron bolted out of bed and quickly tossed on his Purifier issued black jumpsuit.

"I'm coming!" he yelled through the door.

With a heavy *thunk*, he unlocked the door and found Marcus standing there.

He cracked his knuckles. "So what's on the agenda now?"

(Abandoned Robotics Factory)

Soren noticed his exoskeleton was running low on power. "I have a bit of a problem, my suit's running low on power and I'd like some help locating a power plug."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2013, 09:59:08 PM**

Lily was hiding behind the tree trunk and did not find the Doctor's assurance to be adequate reason to stop doing so. "Um, hello Doctor..." she replied, still blushing with embarrassment. "I, er...guess we can help you. What do you need? And sorry about that...people aren't normally walking through these woods at night."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2013, 10:10:11 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2013, 10:15:54 PM**

Lily immediately stopped talking. The last time people came looking for Adrian, Lily had been thrown into an electric wall and the rest of her allies had fared little better. She decided to defer to Axel in regards to trusting this newcomer, when he came down from the tree.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 27, 2013, 05:12:05 AM**

Axel jerked in shock when he heard the mechanical voice and he wheeled his arms, feeling his balance slip. He managed to correct himself, but looked up and saw Lily fall from the branch. "Lily!" he cried out, peering down to see if she was okay... and breathing a sigh of relief when he saw her land in the robot's arms. She looked unharmed.

"Hang on, I'm coming down!" Snatching Lily's dress, he quickly clambered down the tree and jumped the last branch, landing with a crackle amongst the dead leaves. Axel handed the dress to Lily and stepped between them so she could dress in modesty, looking up at the robot that loomed above them. "Uh... thanks for catching her," he said cautiously. He frowned, sharing Lily's distrust in what this thing wanted with Adrian. "Who are you?" *If this thing wanted to harm us, it could have snapped us like twigs by now.* "Why are you looking for Adrian?"

Marcus stepped aside so Aaron could leave his room. "Now we get her to talk. Find out what she knows."

A voice crackled in the radio strapped to Marcus' belt. *"The prisoner is ready for you."*

"On our way." He motioned to Aaron to follow and lead the way down to the end of the corridor, making his way through another series of doors. The place was like a maze. Soon, they came to another hallway with a single door at the end. As they made their way towards it, Marcus looked sideways at Aaron. "We want her to talk, but we can't do lasting damage. Well, not long-lasting damage. Our orders are to keep her functional by the time we're finished with our questions."

They arrived at the door. "She's in here. Are you ready?" After a short pause Marcus opened it, the hinges creaking in protest.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2013, 03:04:11 PM**

"We don't mean to insult you," Lily added hastily, slipping her dress on and sheepishly coming out from behind the tree. "We just...haven't had great luck with surprise visitors in the past."

She came up beside Axel. "If you had any sort of proof or something that Adrian knows you and would want to meet with you..."

Emilena regarded her captors, fighting to keep the strain of exhaustion from her face. It was the pair that had captured her the night of the ambush. She kept silent and merely stared at them; anything she said could just give them further information. They clearly want her alive in her current state; the less she says and does, the longer she can keep it that way.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 27, 2013, 03:57:38 PM**

marita grabed wipes to clean the blood off of adrians face, she lifted his eyelid and saw his eyes were very red, most likely from having red blood vessels leak in the eye. 'he suffered a major head injury' she said..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 27, 2013, 04:42:45 PM**

Aaron bared his teeth as he looked at the bound Vixen. He sniffed the air and gave a low growl. "I see or should I say, smell your fear."

He sat on a bland metal chair and put his feet on a table that had been bolted to the floor. "But enough of that, I'm a decent person and I'd be willing to trade, say information?"

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 27, 2013, 05:23:17 PM**

Marcus stepped next to Aaron, his heavy shoes scraping against the concrete floor. The air in the room felt thick, the sound produced by their voices flat and lifeless. He eyed Emilena flatly, as if he were looking at a slab of meat in a slaughterhouse. "He's right. We just want to know what you know. If you tell us, this will be much easier for you."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2013, 05:40:29 PM**

Police training was very clear on this part; answer no questions when a hostage. But Emilena wanted badly to snap back at the small one's comment about her fear.

Her level face turned into a glare, but she gritted her teeth and remained uncharacteristically silent.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 27, 2013, 05:46:55 PM**

marita lifted up aidrians head noting the blood pooled on the ground beneath him.. ' hes in reakl bad shape..'
- will he survive/' rose asked as she wound banadages around aidrians head . ' he'll need a low level transplant, or time in a pod' marita said.. ' and it would have to happen quickly..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 27, 2013, 11:03:20 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2013, 01:41:47 AM**

"If you'll give us a minute..." Lily politely asked, then took Axel behind the tree.

"If he's telling the truth, he might be able to save Adrian," she noted in a whisper, "but if he means harm we're leading him right to our friends. I'm not sure if Adrian can survive without him either way. What should we do?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 28, 2013, 01:54:16 AM**

"I dunno, maybe we *can* trust him," Axel whispered. "It. I mean, it knows about Adrian's condition, and if it wanted him to die all it would need to do is leave him. The way he was looking, I don't think he has much longer left in him... I think this is a risk we need to take. Plus," he raised a finger knowingly, "He's a German using a robot. That's, like, mad scientist or something - not crazy killer."

Marcus waited for a few moments, but it looked like she wasn't going to say anything. Turning, he made his way across the room to the cupboard. Fixed to the doors were a series of knives, hammers and other implements. He reached past them into the main body of the cupboard and pulled out a car battery.

He walked back and placed it on the metal desk with a heavy *CLUNK*, then went back for the cables. Marcus tossed them over to Aaron. "Fix these to her," he grunted. Then he looked over to Emilena. "This is going to hurt."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2013, 02:25:27 AM**

Despite herself, Lily smiled wryly. "All right," she said, "we'll trust him...only beause he's a mad scientist."

She stepped back out. "If you follow us, we'll lead you to him. You're right; he's not doing very well at all. My name is Lily, and this is Axel," she introduced, already starting back at a brisk jog; they didn't have time to lose.

Emilena's heart rate quickened and her mouth went dry, but she maintained her posture. (Not like her current state of bondage permitted her to do anything else.) She was scrambling to come up with a reply, either witty or delaying, but she couldn't think straight since she was still shivering with cold. Like a good soldier, she defaulted to her training and remained silent.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 28, 2013, 12:08:48 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2013, 03:11:36 PM**

Once the cables were attached and the chances of imminent electrocution became higher, Emilena found herself unable to suffer in silence. "Cutting straight to the torture are we?" she spat. "Not even going to bother trying to coax me, bribe me, or threaten my loved ones first? I know I've got living parents, I'd be heartbroken if you found them and killed them."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 28, 2013, 04:54:26 PM**

Axel ran up alongside the mechanical figure with Lily. "We found this guy in the woods while... erm..." he started to explain, then coughed. "Anyway, he seems to know Adrian so we brought him here." As he looked between Soren, Anne and Kojuuro, he noticed there were two new women in the group.

"Oh. Hey," he said, scratching the back of his head and raising a hand in a wave.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 29, 2013, 02:41:37 AM**

(Factory)

Anne slid the medkit over to the figure but said nothing.

Soren cut the power to the exoskeleton he wore to the absolute minimum. At this level, they just drew enough power to allow him to move. "Okay, once everyone's healed up, how are we going to get out of here? We can't squeeze everyone in the truck I stole? And what about Tony? I don't need another organized crime group on my ass."

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron yawned. "We have our own ways of doing things." Without warning, he snapped an electrical cord against Emilena's tail.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 10:45:31 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 29, 2013, 11:17:41 AM**

Tony shook his head here. "They won't come after you provided I at least maintain some form of contact with them. All I really need is transportation back to the city, and then I can have them pick me up when I get there." he explained. "As said, I'm sure you want me out of your hair as much as I want to avoid any trouble with your group, so just leave me at some busy street corner and I'll get in touch with my family." he offered.

He briefly considered getting his family to assist in fixing up Adrian, as his father could easily pull strings so that the law would look the other way while Adrian was worked on, but he wasn't really certain if his father would be too keen on helping a non-family member out. He remained silent on that for now, glancing down at Adrian once more, and then turning away as the... machine prepared to start his procedure on him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 04:16:28 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 04:27:13 PM**

Lily noticed that Kojurro was alone, and turned to Axel. "I have to talk to Kojurro about something," she whispered. "For his privacy I need to be alone, sorry. Be back soon..."

She quietly left the room and walked up to Kojurro. "Before you make that call, can we talk?" whispered Lily softly.

Emilena yelped, then immediately sealed her mouth. Such displays of weakness were not acceptable.

"Look, I know you guys probably get off on doing this to people, but maybe your interrogation would go better if you, I don't know, *told me* what it was you wanted to know?" She shot back, smiling despite herself. She enjoyed opportunities to be snappy at people who supposedly held all the power.

It was then that she felt it; the beginnings of that pressure building up in her abdomen. *Oh, for god's sake, not now...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 04:29:14 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 04:43:02 PM**

"I need you to do something for me..." Lily took a deep breath. "You're not going to want to. But it's important. I need you to promise me that you'll do it before I can tell you what it is."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 04:47:50 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 04:54:41 PM**

"All right, thanks..." Lily glanced behind her to make sure nobody else had followed them outside. "At some point, our group's all going to go to sleep, me included. When that happens...when I am completely asleep...I need you to sneak into my room quietly...and kill me."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 29, 2013, 05:09:53 PM**

Axel nodded to Lily as she left, then turned to Soren. "I know with all this going on with Adrian..." he started, glancing back to where Adrian was lying on the floor. He saw the blade start slicing into his flesh, and blanched, turning back quickly.

"With all this going on, we shouldn't forget that we have nowhere else to go now," he tried again, his tail curling around his leg nervously. "Even if we somehow managed to get everyone out of here, we need somewhere safe. And quiet. Especially with all the attention we're getting." Axel looked at Tony. "I guess being taken in by the mob is off the cards, right?" he said, only half-joking.

Marcus stared at Emilena. "You're not stupid. You know what we want to know. What were you doing with Kibigami? What were you doing at the city hospital?" When Aaron connected the second cable to her, Marcus grunted.

"Not really interested in answers now." The other end of the cable was already connected to the cathode on the battery. Marcus picked up the second cable. "This is just the warm up." He clipped the cable to the anode, and electricity surged through Emilena.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 05:15:43 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 05:36:32 PM**

"Look me in the eyes," Lily said firmly. A single tear was falling down her face, but her gaze was unflinching. "Tell me you'll do it. I'd prefer by sword."

Emilena arched her back and cried out as hundreds of volts of electricity coursed through her body. Every hair on her body stood on end as her skin crackled with sparks.

The pain was everywhere, it was unbearable...or at least it should of been. What started as a cry of pain quickly turned into suspiciously long drawn out moans. Moans that didn't sound like the electricity was having its intended effect.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 05:39:29 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 05:41:11 PM**

"I want to hear it," Lily repeated, when he trailed off. Her eyes regarded him pleadingly. "I need to hear you say you'll do it. Please."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 05:43:11 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 29, 2013, 05:44:31 PM**

Tony suddenly brightened up at Axel's words, an idea forming in his mind. "Hey! Actually..." he said now, raising a claw. "That just MIGHT... be possible! I think I thought of a way to get myself home... and perhaps get you some protection too!" he exclaimed, suddenly growing excited.

"So what if you guys take me to my father's place... but claim that you guys rescued me from... something... maybe the Purifiers, and well... I know for a fact that my father rewards loyalty very well. He'd owe you a favor for safely returning me... so whatever you guys want, just ask!" Tony rattled off the details now, starting to smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 05:44:35 PM**

"Like what?" Lily asked. There was one more caveat to her request, but she waited to hear what Kojurro wanted.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 05:45:59 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 05:50:41 PM**

Lily paused. "I...don't really know what you want. But I'll think about it."

She put her hand on his shoulder. "This means a lot to me that you're willing to do this. I couldn't have asked anyone else."

She turned to leave, and said over her shoulder. "You're only off the hook if I tell you to stop. Otherwise...I'll see you tonight."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 05:58:16 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 06:01:53 PM**

"Unless you give me more specifics on what you'd like that request to be..." Lily glanced down, wondering what had brushed her leg, "I'm going to talk to someone. It may be a posthumous request."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 06:11:52 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 06:18:21 PM**

Lily paused as she digested this, and then her mouth dropped open. "Seriously?" she exclaimed. "*That's* what you--?" She broke off, her face had turned a beet red but she swallowed and put her hand over her mouth. "I...have to think about this. I just can't believe..."

She broke off. She was silent for a few seconds. Finally she just turned and left to be on her own.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 06:20:48 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 29, 2013, 06:47:57 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron looked rather nauseated at Emilena's arousal at the electric torture. "Ugh! Turn it off!" He disconnected the power cable. "I don't need to see some deviant getting off on this!"

He then smiled as he realized he had some leverage over her. "You know what? Emilena, I have a question to ask. What were you doing at Soren Almaya's house? Answer right and we'll let you have some fun." He caressed the battery cable.

He then snapped the piece of broken electrical wire against the floor. "Or would you prefer a flogging instead?"

(Robotics Factory)

Soren nodded. "Okay, I'll do it." He turned to Anne. "What do you say?"

Anne said nothing but lit up another marijauna spliff. The sight of the blade cutting into flesh didn't bother her because she had previously cut off external augments off of dead people to sell.

He turned to Axel. "Well, I guess it's settled. We'll bring Tony back and maybe find a place we can lay low...at least until I can get all my s--- together and then I can go f--- up those Purifier freaks once and for all!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 06:52:04 PM**

Emilena panted, head spinning. *What the hell had just...?* For her first time getting tortured, she thought it would be more...torturous.

She couldn't speak at first; her nerves were still firing off at random and she was hyperventilating something fierce.

"I...had been...trying to...arrest him..." she finally panted, tongue lolling out of her mouth. "He's an augment......I know it...I just had to prove it...flogging, please."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 06:57:18 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 29, 2013, 06:58:50 PM**

Aaron smiled. "Good." He connected the wire back to the battery.

After a thirty second "ride" he disconnected the wire. "Keep going."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 29, 2013, 06:58:54 PM**

Axel nodded. "Alright. That sounds like a plan. Except maybe for the part where you go and, ah, 'f**k up' the Purifiers. The last time you met them, they kicked your ass." He gave Tony a nervous grin. "Not your fault though, I'm sure. Hey, we aren't going to owe your family any favours, are we? I mean, I've seen 'The Godfather'."

Marcus frowned, glancing down at Aaron. This wasn't going how he'd expected. He took Aaron's seat and leaned back, watching the exchange between the two with something bordering on disgust. *At least it's getting results.*

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 07:06:22 PM**

"Ohhhh!!!" Emilena moaned again as the cables went live again, sending her straining at the ropes binding her. She couldn't describe it; the pain was setting her alight in a way she'd never experienced or thought she could. It was holding the pressure in her abdomen at bay and sending her brain scrambling to even comprehend all of it. She was well aware that something was very wrong with this picture, but all she could think about was: *That bitch! I said I wanted flogging!*

And then the electricity stopped.

"This next one better be a flogging or I'm not telling you jack," growled Emilena.

She looked quite strange, with every strand of hair sticking straight out and short sparks crackling down her sides. The parts of her connected to cables were badly singed. "The arrest failed because some idiot typoed on the warrant. Then I lost my badge because I had been on probation. I've been trying to find alone time with him since, so I can knock him out and drag him to the nearest police station."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 29, 2013, 07:11:05 PM**

Tony shook his head rapidly. "Oh no! Not if you explain it like I told you! If anything, he'd owe you!" the ferret exclaimed. "That is, if you sell the story the right way. You performed a service to him, so he'd owe you one. I mean my pops owns a shipping business too, so that might be a convenient way of getting around. He's also wealthy, and has lots of safe houses, so whatever you want, really!" Tony seemed to be getting more comfortable with this idea with each passing minute, and in addition was starting to more visibly relax as well.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 29, 2013, 08:30:05 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 29, 2013, 09:04:19 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron facepalmed. "Great, and we were doing so well too."

A *crack* echoed through the room as he whipped the floor with his electrical cord. "I'm done with this." He then shuddered. "Ugh, I need a cold shower and a stiff drink after this."

He put away the electrical cord and removed all the electrodes from Emilena.

(Robotics Factory)

Soren nodded. "Deal." He wrapped his metal clad hand around Tony's own hand and shook it to seal the deal.

He then turned to Axel. "All right, everyone ready?"

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Pterano** on **December 29, 2013, 09:22:40 PM**

Tony shook Soren's hand firmly, and nodded. "Sure... I'm ready." he said. He'd have to provide directions, but it'd be easy enough. He knew where his father's house was... even after a year or so, he could still get there. He'd just need some more... prominent landmarks that weren't an abandoned factory.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 29, 2013, 09:37:33 PM**

Emilena gasped as the torturing got a bit more personal. Spasming and shaking, she began whimpering and crying with emotion. At that moment, she felt two completely separate parts of her mind connect; *this* is what lovemaking with Adrian was missing.

As it went on, something was building up inside her, peaking like a wave. She remembered it from nights with Adrian, except far more intense... "Oh! Oh god! Unnggghhh..."

Abruptly Aaron disconnected everything, and with a pang she felt the feeling die down, leaving her feeling incredibly bloated and tight. *Goddamit, I was so close...*

Still, the torturing could have gone far worse. Reminding herself that she'd gotten off easy, she regarded Marcus, smiling lazily through heavy ragged breaths. "Is that all you got?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 29, 2013, 09:59:20 PM**

Rose and Marita assisted with treating Adrian, as best they could, while marie taried to make conversation with the others..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 30, 2013, 06:03:14 AM**

"Yeah," Axel agreed, "You bet I'm ready." He looked down and raised his foot as one of the little robots hurried past him to the German's side. "It looks like Adrian's getting treated pretty well, so he should be okay to move soon. Lily went out to speak with Kojuuro, but I think they'll be ready too. They've been gone a while though..."

Glancing out, Axel was about to make his way to where Lily had headed to see if everything was alright when he noticed Marie making her way over. He gave her a grateful smile. "Hey. Thanks for coming to help, I didn't really think he was going to make it for a second there. I'm Axel." He offered her a hand. "This is Soren, and that's Tony. Or *Don* Tony if you don't want to get whacked."

Marcus glared at Emilena. Rising slowly from the chair, he stalked over to her. "Whoever you pray to, thank him that you won't get to see everything we've got." Pulling his knife from the back of his belt, he pressed the blade against her face, just enough to drawn a thin line of blood. "Yet," he growled, as he raised the knife and cut the rope connecting her to the pulley, his mouth twisted in a snarl as he watched her collapse to the floor.

Sheathing the knife, he yanked one of her arms up behind her back and grabbed a fistful of her hair, pulling Emilena up. "We're getting her to the cells," he said lowly to Aaron. "The sooner we're done with her, the sooner I can make her really scream."

Marcus dragged her out of the room, and down the maze of corridors leading to the cells. He stopped outside the one marked C3. Motioning for Aaron to open it, he leaned down to Emilena's ear. "We'll see you later," he growled as he tossed her in and slammed the door behind her. He looked sideways at the German Shepard. "That was a first. But at least you got her to start talking."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 30, 2013, 08:50:33 AM**

Tony chuckled now as he was introduced to Marie. "I'm not a don... not even close." he said, shaking his head and smiling. "You don't have to worry about that. Heck, I'm not even an underboss, though my dad wants me to be someday... after I've grown up a bit, I guess." he stated sheepishly, shrugging here. "So yeah, don't worry... I'm not going to be 'whacking' anyone." he chortled.

Tony had noticed this group didn't seem to be too bad. After their guard was lowered, and they started relaxing, there wasn't much difference between them and others with no augments whatsoever. The ferret still had his reservations about the whole thing, but it seemed this bunch was nice overall, and not a threat to society as he'd initially believed. Were they really OK? Could he trust them? He had precious little choices at this point, so for now, he'd observe them, see what they were all about, and maybe try and learn more about their perspective to see if his own would change any.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 30, 2013, 09:59:02 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 30, 2013, 10:01:44 AM**

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rose and Marits helped lift adrian from the ground and carry him to maries car which was waiting outside ' where to now? Marita asked

---

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2013, 11:08:19 AM**

Lily silently returned from her walk, putting on a smile for the others.

Emilena reflected on the experience as she was dragged to her cell, not really listening to Marcus. Despite her body being charred, bruised, and cut she felt more alive than she ever had before. If she ever escaped, she'd need to talk to Adrian about this.

She grunted as she was thrown onto the stone floor of a jail cell. Sitting up slowly, she glanced around her new abode. Aside from the dirt-streaked stone walls and titanium bars, notable things in the room consisted of a rusted sink, a cracked metal toilet, and a familiar Indian Cobra...

She leapt to her feet. "Sanjay Bhat, you insipid worm!" She cast her eyes around for anything sharp she could use as a shank; she remembered her promise last time they briefly met. Sadly the cell didn't have anything up to that task.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 30, 2013, 01:55:51 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 30, 2013, 04:57:38 PM**

Axel looked back at Kojuuro and grinned. "Awesome. It looks like things are actually working out for a change - these guys just fixed Adrian up, and Tony's going to be able to help us out." He looked at Lily. "Nice to get some good news for once, right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2013, 08:23:59 PM**

Once Lily was filled in on the details, she asked, "So, we're 100% sure we can trust these transporters? Whoever they are?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 30, 2013, 09:50:40 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay bared his metallic fangs as he reared up and spread his hood. Thanks to the fact that he had killed a Purifier, his artificial venom tanks were still intact. They debated surgically removing them but in the end, they simply settled for eventually killing him to send a message.

"You! You're the one who tried blackmailing me!" Beads of his natural venom began to appear on the tips of his metal fangs.

Aaron shrugged as he sat on a metal chair. "Yeah, I got her to talk but seeing her practically cum when I tortured her...ugh. Now if you'll excuse me, I need a cold shower and a stiff drink." He opened the door to the cell block and headed back to the livin quarters.

(Robotics Factory)

Soren got into the rear compartment of the stolen truck. "Okay, Axel, you drive."

He then rubbed an armored hand across his helmeted head. "Now I have to decide where we can go. Right now, I want to find Emilena so I can extract info from her. But first, I need some extra firepower."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2013, 10:36:56 PM**

"I asked for your help in escaping a combat zone while drugged!" Emilena shot back. "Hardly blackmail. Though considering you stole Class 3 Augments from the government yet didn't flee the country, I shouldn't have been surprised at your selfishness or that you were stupid enough to get captured and locked up in here!"

Due to her lack of weapon she simply assumed an unarmed combat stance with her fists. If he felt like attacking her, she knew a form of disarming judo designed to work against opponents who fight with their mouth. His fangs gave him the defensive advantage, so she couldn't initiate the fight, though she wanted to.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 30, 2013, 10:46:16 PM**

"Where do you think I was planning to go!?" Sanjay snapped. He swayed as he watched Emilena assume a combat ready stance.

His limited training and on the job learning gave him plenty of hand-to-hand combat pointers. He was aware that if someone either threw a punch or a kick, his favored tactic was to weave around it, exploiting his narrow and slender body and then either trap the offending limb with his arms or wrap his body around it and then use his fangs.

Knowing this, he decided to goad Emilena into throwing the first strike. "So I heard some moaning coming from the torture chamber. It sounded like you. My, you are a kinky one, getting off on things like that!" He flicked his tongue at her. "And I can taste it; you're getting wet at the thought of being dangled from a pole and then flogged. Am I right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2013, 11:00:53 PM**

Emilena growled. "I bet I managed better than you would have! I can only imagine the sorry state your ass would be in if it were ridden as hard as mine just was by three interrogators at once!"

Were she not covered in red fur, her face would be practically ruby. Both of her fists twitched, and her memory of the defensive-oriented combat stance was being overridden by her desire to punch Sanjay in the face as hard as she could.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 30, 2013, 11:53:40 PM**

Sanjay smirked. "My, someone likes it rough! I'll bet you're just begging for them to come back so you can lift up your tail and have some fun with them?"

He flicked his tongue at her. "Am I right, you filthy Vixen?"

Sanjay took careful note of Emilena's twitching. He was getting to her!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2013, 11:58:22 PM**

Emilena was not interested in hearing smack from a loathsome individual like Sanjay. Darting forward with inhuman reflexes, she aimed for a full-body tackle centered around the chest. A snake's primary weakness was where the head connected to the body; if she could get an elbow, fist or her fangs in there, that would shut his mouth up right.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 31, 2013, 05:06:41 AM**

Axel hopped into the driver's seat, leaving the door open. He leaned out. "I guess we can think of a plan while we wait for Kojuuro's transport. Hey, Anne probably knows some back-alley dealers we can get some extra guns from!" His ears perked up as he had the idea. "Not to say there's anything wrong with being a back-alley kind of person..." Axel added hastily. Anne's horn looked horribly sharp.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 01, 2014, 01:08:43 AM**

(Robotics Factory)

Anne pinched off the burnt end of her spliff and ate the marijauna inside. "Name something and I can probably get it."

"Tony!" Soren called from the back of the truck. "Coming with us or Kojurro's 'transporters'?"

(Purifier Compound)

Unfortunately for Emilena, Sanjay was *extremely* limber. He seemed to bend around her as she tried to tackle him. Dropping lower to the ground, he made a number of sexual gestures with his hands.

He smiled. "I see someone likes it rough."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2014, 01:43:54 AM**

"You can't dodge forever in a cell the size of a closet!" Emilena snarled, lashing out with her foot at his side. When he dodged that too, she abandoned all pretense of defense and just attempted a sliding bullrush, attempting to pin him between herself and the cell bars. By staying low to the ground, she could manipulate the fact that he can't jump."Let's see how clever you are when I rip your hemipenes out of your body!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 01, 2014, 09:30:27 AM**

"With you guys, I guess!" the ferret responded, jogging over to the back of the truck and hopping in now. He'd stay with the familiar faces... and while technically everyone was familiar, he'd been interacting the most (and rather well too, much to his relief) with a few of the ones in the truck, so the truck it was. He knew none of them trusted him, and that was fine. He didn't completely trust them either. He could work on that though by getting them into his father's good graces... and hope they reciprocated. Though at the same time, he was still extremely uneasy about teaming up with others who used augments.

Not too long ago he'd been opposed to this very group he was riding with after all, but they didn't seem vicious, or evil. They were just trying to survive with what they had. That wasn't so bad... was it? He just wished Adrian was up and talking, as he'd seemed very reasonable after capturing the ferret. He'd pointed out an alternate view on things that Tony hadn't considered before. Either way, Tony was now determined to help Adrian as much as possible, until he recovered. He felt obligated since Adrian had spared his life, and it was a debt the ferret was looking to repay.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 01, 2014, 10:20:24 AM**

(Purifier Complex)

Sanjay grunted as he was smashed between the cell and Emilena. He coughed a bit as he wriggled upwards. "Bad move."

He opened his mouth and plunged his fangs into her shoulder and shot a dose of his highly neurotoxic venom into her. Her clothing offered no resistance to his metallic fangs.

(Robotics Factory)

"'Sup," Anne replied. She leaned against the truck's stolen cargo. Her eyes were slightly glazed over and she reeked of marijauna.

Soren nodded as Tony climbed in.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 01, 2014, 11:43:48 AM**

"Uh... hey." Tony gave Anne a slight wave, noting the heavy stench of weed about her. It made his head swim, and he briefly considered holding his nose, but decided against it, the fear of being rude outweighing his fear of getting high by the end of this trip.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 01, 2014, 12:13:00 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 01, 2014, 01:46:11 PM**

Axel grinned and leaned back towards Tony. "It's okay. The smell kind of grows on you after a while," he said lightly, then looked out at Lily. "You getting in? There's room for one more up front." The heavy duty SUVs rolling in set him somewhat at ease. *At least there's less chance of us being attacked. Pretty conspicuous though.*

"I guess we should go ahead so Tony can lead the way for the rest of you," he called out to Kojuuro.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2014, 03:57:19 PM**

Lily didn't hear Axel, she was taking the opportunity to ask the doctor something, since finally Adrian was stabilized and he had a free moment. "Doctor...can I ask you something?" She showed him her head, skin, and the tattoo on her breast. "Have you heard of anything that causes this? Do you know what's...what's happening to me?"

Emilena cried out as her body was flooded with poisonous toxins. She had her arms in a stranglehold around Sanjay's neck, and even as she grew paralyzed she could feel him short for breath. She couldn't remove her hands if she wanted. *At least I'm taking the bastard with me...*

"Well, it looks like you two are having fun," a third voice suddenly said from outside the cell. The wolf agent appeared, carrying a syringe and a pistol. "But playtime is over. "

With a swift kick through the bars he sent Emilena skidding off of Sanjay. Keeping the pistol trained right between Sanjay's eyes, the wolf grabbed Emilena's leg, dragged her up against the bars, and stabbed the syringe through her heart with surgical precision.

As Emilena gasped and curled up in the fetal position, unable to control her muscles when they all relaxed simultaneously, the wolf observed Sanjay. "No more of that, I need her alive. I'd also prefer to keep you alive as well, so if you could kindly work to prevent further such instances, that'd be optimal. I'm the only one preventing the Purifiers from killing you both."

Whoever this man was, he wasn't any Purifier either of them had ever seen.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 01, 2014, 11:21:49 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay made a face of disgust as he slithered away from the growing puddle of bodily fluids forming around Emilena. He clutched a hand to his side; Emilena's tackle had broken at least sixteen of his ribs. "Who the f--- are you?" he said between coughs.

(Robotics Factory)

Even in her stoned condition, Anne's ears pricked up and began swiveling around. "Hey, anyone know why so many new cars are arriving?"

Soren shrugged. "Dunno but I hope those are Kojuuro's Transporters. If they're not, well, we're f---ed."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 02, 2014, 10:16:27 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2014, 01:43:17 PM**

"I don't remember," Lily replied softly. "About four days ago, I woke up in the middle of the forest with no memory. Since then..." She wondered whether she could trust him with the details. *Well, he is assisting a wounded criminal*... "Since then I've been on the run from the police. I haven't managed to find anyone that can explain what I did."

She glanced at the tattoo, relieved to see it hadn't dropped since last time. "I don't think I had that tattoo before either."

"My name is Agent Lupis," the wolf introduced himself. "And I work for the government. We have...a bit of a situation, and our Vulpine friend has already encountered it."

Emilena managed to sit up, coughing violently. Her ears pricked. *Is he talking about that Sapaar woman?*

Her suspicions were confirmed when Lupis held out a headshot. "Lily North has become something of a topic of interest to the government. As such topics tend to do, she has gone missing and my assignment is to retrieve her. Somehow she has allied herself with a proficient team of survivors, most of whom have been hiding from authority for most of their lives. This has made it difficult to approach her."

"Well, that's your problem," Emilena snapped. She tried to stand up, wobbled, and fell over.

"It can be your problem if you like," Lupis added dryly. "I offer both of you complete immunity from your past crimes, and licenses to keep any Augments or other equipment you currently possess." The wolf was glancing at Sanjay when he said this. "In return, you assist me in catching Ms. North."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 02, 2014, 03:28:31 PM**

Axel rested his elbow on the truck's window sill. "Well, sure, your transport might be bulletproof, but we've got all the groceries we could want back here," he said, gesturing towards the boxes piled around Soren, Tony and Anne. "So I guess it's even." He glanced around at the others talking outside, then turned back to Kojuuro. "So, are we about ready to go? Hanging around here for too long probably isn't a good idea."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 02, 2014, 11:45:04 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay flicked his tongue in and out. The idea of being allowed to keep his augments greatly appealed to him. "Hmm, I like this. But there has to be some more strings attached."

(Robotics Factory)

"I'd like to go for stealth," Soren replied to Kojuuro. He then noticed that his suit suddenly became noticibly heavier. "Great, my suit's batteries are dead."

Anne got to her feet. "Maybe we can plug you into the vehicle's electrical system." She dragged Soren out of the truck and onto the concrete parking lot.

She popped open the recharging port and eyed it along with the portable charger clipped to his suit. The hexagonal port on the truck wasn't compatible with the t-shaped plug on his charger.

"Oh, this might need a little work."

Soren struggled to his feet and climbed back into the truck with a bit of difficulty thanks to the weight of his now unpowered exoskeleton. "Deal with that later! Right now, we're hauling ass out of here!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 12:54:11 AM**

"There really aren't," the wolf replied sincerely. "No offense, Mr. Bhat, but you are an extremely small fish compared to this woman. Ms. North contains one of the most dangerous secrets our government has ever held, and they'd be willing to empty death row if it would guarantee her retrieval. But I think the two of you have the skillset needed for this job."

"Wait, you want me to work with *him*?" interrupted Emilena, suddenly finding more than enough strength to leap up indignantly. "I refuse! I can capture this female alone; I already know where she is!"

"Not an option," Agent Lupis responded without hesitation. "You're too much of a loose cannon. Mr. Bhat has the analytic mind and long-term planning philosophy that a capture of this nature needs to succeed. I expect you to follow his orders if and when he makes them. On the other hand, Mr. Bhat, you are to--"

"--Why the hell should I agree to any of this?" snapped Emilena again, causing the wolf to sigh irritably. "I don't have any illegal augments, and I'm following my own plan to get my job back--"

"Broadstreet has already scratched your name from the records," the wolf said through a tired facepalm. "And your badge has been reassigned to a new recruit. You really thought he'd ever consider reenlisting an officer with your number of black marks? I never offered your old job back, Ms. Echo, because the possibility of that occurring is slim to none."

Emilena opened her mouth again but Lupis cut her off. "*Instead*, I'm offering you a new job. As a government agent, like myself. Access to the highest quality technology, dealing with threats of national importance. A sphere of influence greater than anything you've done before."

That shut Emilena up.

"No more questions, no more explanations," the wolf continued, shooting Emilena sideways glance. "You each get one sentence before I walk away. I'm asking you both to work together to retrieve Lily North and bring her to me *alive*. Upon that happening, your records are cleared, past debts are erased and the government pretends your old selves don't exist any more. Will you accept my terms?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 03, 2014, 04:15:00 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay smiled. "Deal," he said, shaking Agent Lupis's hand.

He then turned to Emilena. "I don't like you anymore than you like me, but the reward is too good to pass up. So don't f--- this up!"

(Robotics Factory)

Soren propped himself up against the truck's shelves. "Axel, we're ready to go."

He then turned to Tony. "Tony, mind giving Axel a hand with navigation?"

The armored Human then turned to Kojuuro. "We need to drop someone off first, you mind setting a rendevous point later?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 07:25:23 PM**

The wolf nodded respectably. "I figured you would know a good deal when you heard it." He glanced at Emilena. "You on the other hand..."

Emilena folded her arms. She realized that the alternative was dying in a Purifier cell. "...fine."

"Fine what?" pressed Lupis.

"Fine I'll work with the snake to catch the woman!" Emilena snapped. "But it's not my fault if he gets himself killed or ruins the assignment!"

"Yes it is." The wolf pressed a button and a transparent aluminum wall started rising from the floor, flush with the bars. "Your job is to follow his orders and keep him alive. Fail to do either and you won't be an agent in my department any time soon. Now, share some quality time together, and this time keep your hands to yourself. The purifiers will be releasing you once I've finished negotiations."

With that the glassy wall sealed the cell off from outside noise, and the wolf disappeared into the shadows. Then two ceiling sprinklers began lightly spraying the room and its occupants with the healing gel that filled cloning pods, a cheap way of fixing up the occupants' minor wounds.

"Eeergh..." Emilena flashed her eyes at Sanjay, like it was his fault. "I *just* showered this gunk off me..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 07:34:37 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2014, 07:50:35 PM**

Marie drove rose, marita and gittsun after the others, trying to keep pasce with the delivery truck in front of them. ' where they were going, they werent quite sure..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 03, 2014, 07:50:38 PM**

The ferret nodded, and moved towards the front, sliding so that he could speak to Axel. "OK, well you know the Garden Parkway?" Tony asked, leaning into the driver's compartment. "My father's compound is a large place called the Heights near the western edge of the city. It's well guarded so... you should probably let me do the talking when we get close." Tony said, giving Axel a smile. "We'll be fine so long as you don't drive up to the gate too fast. Just slow down when I say, and we'll be good." he reassured the driver.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 08:02:37 PM**

"Counting down..." murmured Lily, lost in thought.

"Hey, all aboard!" whooped one of Kojurro's companions. "Ship's away in five!"

Lily noticed that Tony had taken the spot next to Axel. So she waved Kojurro over and led him into his companion's transports.

"Is there a...private place on these?" she asked.

"Uh, I guess we can keep everyone else out of this SUV," the driver replied, focusing on the pre-departure preparations. He pressed a button and a tinted screen rose up between the driver's area and the passenger bay.

Now alone with Kojurro, Lily began pulling her dress over her head. "Here's your half of the favor," she said softly. "Take as long as you want...we have the whole car ride..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 08:10:43 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 03, 2014, 08:18:34 PM**

"Okay, sounds like a plan. I guess I'll have to test whether this windscreen's bulletproof or not on another day," Axel said, laughing nervously, painfully aware that with the red blood smears on his grey t-shirt, he was essentially a moving bullseye. He turned the key in the ignition and the engine sputtered to life unhealthily. Slipping it into first, he started moving the truck towards the exit, beeping the horn to alert the SUVs that they'd started moving.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 08:27:28 PM**

"That's not how favors work," Lily said in a low voice. She shuddered. "This is for you. Then you'll have to fulfill your half...when we all go to sleep..."

She embraced him, looking nervous. She had to get Kojurro to follow through on what she needed later...gently she stroked him through his pants. "Come on..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 08:30:53 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 08:37:45 PM**

"I will, I will," Lily responded hastily. "Don't worry about that. I'll enjoy myself, I promise. Go go..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 08:47:01 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 08:57:11 PM**

Lily took a deep breath and smiled. She allowed herself to be lowered to the floor. "I'm sorry, I'll be more relaxed." She closed her eyes and blanked her mind. "I'm always so tightly wound, aren't I...?" She took a few more deep breaths. "...okay...relaxed..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2014, 08:58:49 PM**

marita browsed through her putrse looking for a fake id id she could use to bluf her way though any secure location, well almost any..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 09:00:16 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 09:09:25 PM**

Lily smiled and relaxed her muscles. She ran her hands down Kojurro's sides, slipping his coat off.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 09:16:21 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 09:22:13 PM**

Lily blushed. "I'm glad you think so..."

She traced his face with her hand, wincing only slightly at the sight of her long spindly grey fingers. "I think you're handsome too..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 09:39:22 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 10:24:54 PM**

Lily winced as Kujurro's lips brushed the tattoo. She half expected something horrible to happen, but to her relief the tattoo merely behaved like a tattoo.

"I'm glad to hear that..." she sighed. Her hand clenched his tightly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 10:35:16 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 10:38:25 PM**

Lily shuddered and moaned loudly. Her breath got haggard as he traveled lower.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 10:39:46 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2014, 10:46:36 PM**

Lily winced as his touch; she wasn't very familiar with foreplay, she suspected that she wasn't a very sexual person. But it still felt good, if weird, and she moaned again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2014, 10:49:15 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2014, 02:45:10 AM**

Lily winced again and arched her back, still unfamiliar with such treatment and feeling slightly overwhelmed. Part of her worried that she may have 'changed' down there, but the other part of her was too self-conscious to ask.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 04, 2014, 10:23:57 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2014, 01:42:54 PM**

"I'm...fine," she panted. "I've never...done this before..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 04, 2014, 02:31:42 PM**

marie and wiped her brow as she continued following the others.. ' rose was catching a quick nap in the back seat while Marita gazed at a atlas..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 04, 2014, 03:10:49 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 04, 2014, 03:22:53 PM**

(Lanthae Skyways)

The repulsortruck flew through the smoggy skyways of Lanthae.

"So Tony," Soren said from the back of the truck. "Once, we're at your place, is there anything else we need to know about?"

A loud bang issued from the outside as a hoverbiking hooligan threw a bottle at the stolen delivery truck.

Anne was surrounded by opened boxes and ripped packing material as she began open all the packages in search of something she could hock or get high off of.

(Purifier Complex)

Sanjay groaned as the thick slime covered him. Miraculously, he could feel his broken ribs starting to mend.

"Great, I'm going to need a change of clothes ó and a shower," he muttered as he scraped globs of the healing goop off of his face.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2014, 04:04:52 PM**

"I apologize," Lily said hastily. "I'm not very good at this, are I?"

She stroked the top of his head. "You're doing fine, it feels great," she smiled back at him. "I love it."

"Quit your whining, at least you *have* clothes!" Emilena shot back. "They better give me at least a pair of pants before dropping me on the streets."

She wiped her face clean as the sprinklers shut off. "So, Sun Tzu, what's your brilliant strategy the wolf wouldn't shut up about?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 04, 2014, 04:22:58 PM**

Axel jumped as the bottle bounced off the window. "Hey!" he shouted through the glass, then recoiled as the thug started drifting towards them. Luckily, he was cut off from them by a flow of traffic heading in the opposite direction. Axel flew the truck through a dark cloud of exhaust smoke, and turned to see what the rustling in the back was. "Any food back there, Anne? I could kill for a bag of 'Funyuns'."

He nodded at Soren's question and glanced at Tony. "Yeah, are there any, like, secret hand signals to show we're cool and they don't need to.. you know, shoot us?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 04, 2014, 04:41:43 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2014, 06:04:15 PM**

"Anything you do is fine," Lily smiled again, then lying back. "Keep going as long as you like..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 04, 2014, 06:15:15 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2014, 11:20:09 PM**

Lily squinted her eyes tightly shut as he continued, and exhaled sharply. She focused on keeping her mind very very blank, so that she didn't disrupt him again. She couldn't stop wondering when the sex was going to start, but then she had said he could take his time...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 04, 2014, 11:25:45 PM**

"Ummmm." Tony scratched his head with a claw now, pushing his hat back. "Remember to show respect to the capos if they're around; they're kind of like the... lead enforcers I guess, and oh, do the same for my father's consigliere, and most importantly, my father, if you speak to him. He likes polite people." Tony commented now. "Don't piss the underboss off, or my dad for that matter, and well did I mention respect?" he asked again, knowing he had.

"No secret hand signals... at least there weren't when I left. Basically just drive slowly up to the gate, and let me do the talking." he reiterated, cracking a smile at the secret hand signals. "Too fast will get this truck shot up like Swiss cheese, and we don't want that. My father will extend you his hospitality for helping me, so just try and reciprocate by showing him you're grateful. You shouldn't owe him anything, since he'll be repaying you with his hospitality for helping me out, and maybe even extend you a few other favors."the ferret explained now.

"The big rule not to break is DON'T insult the family. So long as you're courteous and respectful, you'll get the same back." he concluded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 05, 2014, 01:38:14 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 05, 2014, 04:46:50 AM**

Lily smiled and kissed him back. "Mmmm..." she smiled warmly, as it seemed the right thing to do in the moment.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 06, 2014, 07:31:11 AM**

"Alright, so keep the jokes to myself. Got it." Axel gave Tony a wan grin. "Pity, I had a couple of good ones." Through the dusty windscreen, he saw a sign indicating **Garden Parkway**. "We'll be there in a few miles guys," Axel announced.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 07, 2014, 02:52:41 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2014, 02:58:39 PM**

Lily sighed. "I'm sorry, Kojurro...I just don't think I'm a very sexual person. You can keep going, but you should just focus on pleasuring yourself. You were doing a fine job, it's just me."

She shivered in the puddle of cold sweat that had formed in the lengthy amount of time since they had started.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 07, 2014, 03:23:17 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2014, 03:29:03 PM**

Lily smiled weakly. "Oh-okay...if you're sure..."

She lay back and focused on the roof of the car.

"Hello?" Emilena flung a handful of green goop at Sanjay. "Earth to Sanjay? You're supposed to be giving orders, apparently you're really good at that?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 07, 2014, 03:30:58 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2014, 03:44:16 PM**

"ETA five minutes," the driver said over the intercom.

Lily jumped. "Come on, you're almost out of time!" Tiredly she slipped his coat off and scrabbled at his belt buckle. "Quickly, let's go!"

If she didn't seal the deal, he'd be under no obligation to seal his...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 07, 2014, 04:12:37 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay flung the goop out of his eyes as he looked around. The bars were too narrow for him to slip between and the area appeared to be deserted.

He noticed a security camera in the corner and flung a handful of the healing slime at it.

"All right," he whispered. "That should attract attention. Once the guards come, we can subdue them, grab their weapons and flee."

The repulsortruck turned down the aforementioned street. The area was surprisingly nice and clean with none of the garbage and bums lying about.

"Tony," Soren asked. "That complex up ahead, is that where we're going?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 07, 2014, 04:13:04 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2014, 04:20:47 PM**

"No, no..." Lily forced his belt off desperately and tried to pull his pants down, "That's not good enough! Come on, we had a deal!"

Emilena grinned. She suspected there were some serious flaws in that plan, but that's never stopped her before. "I figured we can't trust that bastard either. You've been here a while, got any shivs or improvised weapons you've made around here?"

She clutched the only weapon she'd been left with; the syringe that had saved her from the poison.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 07, 2014, 04:29:17 PM**

Tony nodded at Soren's query. "Yep... that's the Heights." It was aptly named, being on a high bluff that overlooked the city, with the only access being a road that wound up to it from the outer wall. An inner wall ringed the massive compound as well, hiding it from view from the street below. "OK... start slowing down, Axel." the ferret instructed. "You'll be flagged down by some guys at the front gate. They may look harmless, but make no mistake... they're all armed. Also, they'll have other guns trained on you from hidden positions too so... I'll identify myself immediately once we get within range. They won't shoot unless you try and break through, so just take it easy." he cautioned.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 07, 2014, 04:30:59 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 07, 2014, 04:44:51 PM**

The Heights loomed over the truck imposingly as they started making their way up the hill that snaked around to the front gate. Axel gulped and eased his foot off the accelerator, dropping the truck's speed considerably. The SUV behind beeped its horn, and he jolted in shock. *Holy crap, this place is a fortress...*

Driving up slowly, the gates soon began to emerge in the distance, creeping closer. "Okay... here we are..." Axel said nervously, while trying to adopt a relaxed, innocent expression on his face and failing miserably. "Maybe you could start, like, waving your arms or giving the secret signal or something, Tony? Please?" The sentries at the gate had begun to stir, staring at the battered truck heading their way.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 07, 2014, 05:03:04 PM**

A guard in a dark blue trench coat held up his hand for the truck to stop, and Tony could make out the assault rifle just barely visible under the guard's coat. "Stop." Tony whispered under his breath, and hopped out of the truck now as it rolled to a halt. "Guys! It's me! Tony!" he called over to them, removing his hat.

"Check fire!" came a yell from inside the gate.

"Tony?" the first guard asked, blinking as he looked the ferret over. "Holy shit! It IS you! Where ya been?"

"That's for my father to know." Tony responded. "These guys kind of rescued me." he said motioning behind him to the truck.

The guard regarded all the SUVs suspiciously. "All of them?" he asked in disbelief, and Tony nodded. "What's the password?"

Tony swore under his breath. His father used two passwords, one for duress, the other for non-duress. But he changed it every year... and it had been a year. He went with the old one for non-duress, hoping it'd work. "Priority mail." he said.

"That's the old one." the guard responded. "But all right... you been gone a year." Tony sighed visibly, relaxing as the guard spoke a few words into his radio. Waiting for a response, a few awkward moments passed, and then the guard approached Axel on the driver's side of the truck. "All right, you, drive up to the front of the house. Here." he held out a map for Axel to follow. "Do NOT deviate from that route. The SUVs are gonna have to park it in our lot. You'll be subjected to thorough screenings at the main entrance, so be prepared." the guard warned, then waved a hand, and the front gate began to retract sideways into the wall. A secondary concrete barrier also visible behind the gate lowered into the ground, and a gravity trap along the ground deactivated as well.

"My father takes security seriously, as you can see." Tony said with a shrug as he climbed back in beside Axel. "One of his capos will probably be meeting us at the front entrance. Whatever you do, don't set him off... both of them are trained killers. Just know you'll have to be screened if you intend to enter the main house." the ferret advised.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 07, 2014, 07:09:10 PM**

(Purifier complex)

Sanjay opened his mouth, revealing his metallic fangs. "Metal fangs and highly neurotoxic venom. I can punch through thin sheet metal with them."

(Mob Compound)

Anne was sleeping off her high in the back of the truck.

Soren was sitting in the back of the truck, his exoskeleton was now little more than a passive piece of armor.

His two guns had detached from his now powered down suit and were lying in the truck's compartment.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2014, 12:44:10 AM**

Lily pushed Kojurro away angrily. "Why can't you make this simple?" she snapped, tears running down her eyes. She curled up in a ball and faced away from him, overcome by emotion. "Here I am letting you...letting you..." she couldn't even say it. "And I don't even know what the point is, I know you won't hold up your end!"

She couldn't take it any more. Getting up and grabbing her dress, she put it on and threw the car door open. Jumping out of the SUV, she hit the ground rolling.

"Hey! What the hell is she doing?" one of the guards snapped. Instantly a dozen assault rifles were trained on the convoy. "Stop! Stop the cars *now!*"

Several guards stepped into the hallway of the jail area. Each one carried a high-powered rifle. "What the hell do you think you're doing?" one of them snapped, pointing his rifle at Sanjay.

"We've been told not to kill you, but our orders were significantly less clear on the subject of *kneecaps*," the other snapped at Emilena, cocking and aiming at her leg.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 08, 2014, 02:10:51 AM**

Axel looked at Tony grimly. "Yeah, I can see your dad likes his privacy... Alright, where did that guy say to go..." He started pulling the truck towards the gate as it slid open. At the sudden shout from the guards, he slammed his foot down on the brake and glanced at Tony, panicked. "What? What'd we do? I don't..." Movement in the rear-view mirror caught his attention, and he looked over his shoulder to see a shape in a dress rolling on the road alongside one of the SUVs. His eyes widened. "Oh, f*ck..."

Without thinking about the guns trained on him, Axel scrambled out of the truck and started waving his arms, moving closer to her. "Wait! Don't shoot her!" he shouted at the guards. He looked back at the truck desperately. "Tony, say something!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 08:22:17 AM**

A burst of gunfire cracked out, kicking up dirt at Axel's feet. "Stay where you are!" one guard shouted.

"Wait!" Tony cried, moving to get out of the truck. He had to slide over to the driver's side though, not wanting to exit on the passenger side for fear he might be too late. "Wait!" he threw up his paws in the air. "It's all right! I don't know... what happened. But just... hold fire!" he pleaded. The guards didn't riddle the convoy thankfully, but didn't lower their guns either.

"Get her up!" one of his father's soldiers ordered.

"Yes... yes! Right away!" Tony exclaimed, and moved rapidly over to Lily, who thankfully wasn't too many SUVs back.

"I don't like this." the ferret could hear the guards murmuring. "They're awfully suspicious if you ask me."

"Hey..." Tony said softly, approaching Lily now. "Are you all right? Just... don't make any sudden moves." he advised her as he stood over her now before kneeling down. "They want you to stand up. But do it slowly... OK?" He tried to sound reassuring so that she wouldn't panic and set security off.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2014, 09:11:21 AM**

Lily's face burned red with embarrassment. She tried to comply but the wind had been completely knocked out of her, she couldn't even speak. *The car didn't look to be traveling that fast...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 09:17:04 AM**

Tony noticed Lily wasn't doing a very good job of rising. She appeared dazed, and perhaps the fall out of the SUV had winded her more badly than the ferret had initially thought. He could hear his father's soldiers muttering all about him, their weapons still trained on Axel and the prone Lily.

"All right..." Tony said, knowing he had to do something. He reached out, and firmly grasped hold of Lily. He didn't yank her to her feet though, but instead gently started helping her rise. "Just take it slow." he told her softly. "It's all right! It was an accident!" he called over to the guards, who gradually showed signs of relaxing, though their wariness still remained and their rifles didn't lower much.

"Are you all right?" the ferret asked her now. "I'm going to have to get you to a vehicle. We'll go at your pace though if you were injured." he politely informed her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 08, 2014, 10:43:48 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2014, 02:13:25 PM**

Lily staggered to her feet. Not meeting anyone's eye, she allowed Tony to lead her back to the first SUV. She didn't say anything.

Emilena kept the syringe hidden behind her back and glanced at Sanjay, looking for a cue. She wasn't sure how they were supposed to deal with two armed guards when they weren't even freed. Maybe they should have waited for the wolf to free them after all.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 02:22:13 PM**

Tony noticed Lily's quiet disposition, so he too remained silent as he moved her back to the first SUV and Kojuuro. The guards had trained their rifles on him when he'd stepped out, and finally, the lead guard stepped forward again. "Just make sure it doesn't happen again." he said with some annoyance. "Get back in your vehicles and move along."

Tony helped Lily into the SUV, and gave her a pat on the back. "Don't worry. You'll be fine." he said, and stepped away now, moving back over to Axel. "I think we're all good. I don't know what happened, but we can figure it out at the house." he said now. "We can't stay here blocking the gate. We gotta get moving."

Already he could see lights flaring up inside the main house, and the ferret wondered who would be waiting for them at the front doors. Certainly not his father, but he knew he'd be seeing him before the night was out. The front porch lights snapped on as well, indicating they were getting ready to receive the newcomers.

Sliding back into the passenger seat of the truck, Tony waited for Axel to get them rolling again as he turned around to speak to Soren. "You said you needed... something to make your suit work again? We might be able to get you what you need at the house." he stated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 08, 2014, 02:43:31 PM**

"Yeah, okay..." Axel turned back to the truck slowly when Tony let him know everything was fine, his pulse rocketing from the shock of the situation. *What the hell was she doing? Maybe she got scared of the guards...* The sentries still looked agitated - Tony was right, they could figure out what happened later. He hurried back to the driver's door and climbed in, starting up the engine quickly and rolling through the entrance. "Jesus, they were actually going to shoot, weren't they?" he muttered, shaken. "Thanks for stopping them..."

After a few moments, the truck reached the front of the huge mansion. There was a figure standing at the top of the porch, but with the lights behind them Axel couldn't make out who they were. He let the truck stop in front and glanced at Tony, unsure of what to do now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 04:05:57 PM**

There were several figures in fact, most of them soldiers of the estate, though two looked different. One was a lean but powerful looking crocodile whose rows of razor sharp teeth glinted in the porchlights. The other was an immaculately dressed green iguana who immediately stepped forward. "Tony! It is you!" the iguana said, the spines running down his back flecked with tinges of red which seemed to wave a bit in the light.

"Max!" Tony exclaimed, beaming as he exited the truck. The crocodile meanwhile stepped down from the stairs and motioned for the SUVs to park in a lot off to the side of the house. "Axel, this is Ignatius Fontana, but we call him Max here. He's my father's consigliere." Tony introduced Axel to the iguana now. "The big croc is Oscar Gambino, one of my father's capos." he explained.

"Pleased to meet you." Max responded. "On behalf of Don Anthony Stracci, welcome to the Heights. If you would please proceed to follow me inside, you'll be screened, and then we'll get you set up with some rooms if required. Tony, your father wishes to see you at the earliest convenience." Max informed the ferret as he led the way toward the front entrance.

"Yeah... well he's going to have to see some of my companions, too. They helped me out... brought me here. Is dad... angry?" Tony asked, flinching.

"Hard to say. He rarely shows his emotions, you know. Now then, if you would all step into the side room here, you'll be screened, and then we can get down to business." Max instructed the others. The room to the side was really a giant screening device, able to detect even concealed weapons inside bodies. Tony stepped with Max into the main foyer, bypassing the security checkpoint for now. The house was still as lavish as Tony remembered it, his father's taste in Renaissance Revival still strong it seemed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 08, 2014, 05:26:25 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 09:13:37 PM**

"Right, come on through." Max waved forth the Doktor and Adrian's limp form. "Does he need medical attention?" the iguana asked as he looked Adrian over. Kojuuro was scanned and cleared, and Tony beckoned him into the grand foyer.

"Sorry." he apologized. "It's procedure. You won't be attacked here though. My father's very honorable, and doesn't shoot first unless provoked." he reassured Kojuuro.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2014, 09:21:42 PM**

Lily stepped up next. She looked worried. Between her little stunt outside and her unusual appearance, she feared that she would be stopped by security for whatever reason.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2014, 09:22:30 PM**

She was cleared easily though, and Max waved her on through. "Welcome to the Heights." he told her as she passed by.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 08, 2014, 11:18:23 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 09, 2014, 12:45:45 AM**

Axel passed through the room. No alarm sounded so he figured he must be okay. He walked across to where Max stood. "I'm not..." he started to crack nervously, then stopped at the look in the Iguana's eye. "Ah... never mind."

Passing through, Axel joined the others who had already been through. "Nice place," he managed, before turning to Lily. "You okay?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 09, 2014, 01:46:06 AM**

Lily nodded silently. "It was...a bad car ride," she said quietly. "But it's over now."

She looked at the expansive mansion around them. "This house is massive...I wonder how nice the bathrooms are."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 09, 2014, 08:43:38 AM**

"You've been here before?" Tony asked Kojuuro in some amazement. He hadn't actually been expecting that. Did Kojuuro know his father?

The ferret caught Lily's comment and couldn't help but crack a smile. "The bathrooms are rather palatial in size." he informed her. "I don't think we have a small one in this house. I have to admit, kind of an odd category of room to muse over, but there you are." he stated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 09, 2014, 11:46:43 AM**

(The Heights)

Soren stayed behind and outside the mansion itself because his exoskeleton was pretty much deadweight. Four guards watched him ó both to ensure he wouldn't attack them and to ensure that his stuff wasn't stolen.

Anne emerged from the screening room and met up with the others.

She whistled as she laid eyes on the lavishly decorated interior. She had a vague suspicion that behind some of those elegant carvings lay sensors or even hidden weapons.

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay thought a moment. "That was the only way to get your attention. Now I'd to point out that my cellmate hid contraband in the toilet."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 09, 2014, 11:58:10 AM**

Tony remembered Soren couldn't move, and snapped his claws as he thought of something. "Oh! Hold on a moment!" he said, racing off down the hall on the right hand side to what looked like a closet. "Hopefully it's still in here." he murmured, rummaging around until he found what he was seeking.

Running back out, he was snaking a long extension cord behind him as he darted past Max, the iguana giving him a confused look. Hopping down the stairs and to the truck, the ferret held out the power plug to Soren now. "Here you are, Soren. You can use this since it's connected directly to one of the house's generators. We sometimes use it to charge vehicles parked out front, but I don't see why you can't use it." the ferret shrugged here, offering him a smile. "I'll just chalk it up to what my father owes you guys for 'rescuing' me." he said in a lower tone now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 09, 2014, 12:04:06 PM**

Soren groaned as his stiff fingers and joints struggled to plug the extension cord into his suit.

"Thanks!" he said. His helmet lay next to him but he still wore his HMD glasses. "I'll be a minute, Tony. I can't take this off unless there's a little power."

He then nodded his head. "Lovely place."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 09, 2014, 12:09:30 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 09, 2014, 12:43:22 PM**

"Well, I could really use a shower," Lily replied softly. She wasn't yet sure whether a cold one or a hot one.

The guards raised their eyebrows. "Back against the wall," he ordered. "Both of you!"

Cautiously he opened the cell, wrinkling his nose at the smell of panacea; though most of the gel had drained through filters in the floor, a thin residue still coated everything. Creeping over to the toilet, he glanced inside.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 09, 2014, 01:59:38 PM**

"Yeah, I could do with borrowing a new top or something," Axel said, indicating his grubby T-Shirt. Smeared with blood and grime, it made him look pretty rough. "Maybe after we've seen your dad?" He gave a small grin. "If it means using up my favour, I'll pass though."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 09, 2014, 02:04:17 PM**

Tony gave Soren a nod, glad he could finally help out. "Yeah... it certainly is." he agreed, looking back up at the house. "Well... I'll see you inside then." he said, giving him a wave, and heading back to the foyer while Soren's suit charged.

He arrived in time to catch Kojuuro's remarks, and rocked his head back at this. "Oh... well uh... I guess that's OK." he said now, caught off guard by Kojuuro's apology. "I had no idea you were connected to my father."

"He is indeed, and things *are* running smoothly, thanks." Max responded, giving Kojuuro a smile of recognition. "I wasn't sure if it was you or not before, but I can see now it is. Business is going very well for the Straccis as of late." he informed the merc.

"Now then... if the lady requires a shower, we can provide that." The iguana waved at a human guard who was kind of hovering around the door. "Bruno, take the lady to one of our guest bathrooms. You may shower or draw a bath if you wish." the consigliere informed Lily. "Just follow Bruno, he'll show you the way."

"Max... is dad... dining alone tonight?" Tony asked, approaching the iguana now.

"Hmmm, I don't know. I'm sure your mother is eager to see you, though. With so many guests, Don Stracci may organize a group dinner, for those interested. Right now he's conducting some business with a supplier, but he should be available shortly." He caught Axel's comment, and shook his head. "I think we could arrange some more... suitable clothing for you to wear." he commented.

Tony nodded at this, and looked behind him at the group. "Anyone up for a dinner with my pops?" he asked, fiddling with his claws.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 09, 2014, 02:36:18 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 09, 2014, 02:45:37 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

While the guard was hunched over the toilet and the guards were interrogating Emilena, Sanjay slithered up to the guard and plunged his fangs into his neck.

He the snatched the guard's pistol, slithered behind the stainless steel toilet and took a shot at one of Emilena's guards.

(The Heights)

Anne nodded. "I could use a good meal. I was going to get one until the fucking cops stole my cash." She turned to Max and Tony. "Thank you for your hospitality."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 09, 2014, 02:49:54 PM**

Marita Marie and Rose passed through the screening rooms and were handed back their belongings. this place sure puts my apartment to shame" Marie whistled at the ornate surroundings.. ' you sure live in the lap of luxury tony she said to him. ' i'm marie. i'm sorry if I didnt properly introduce myself until now. I'm Marie, This is Rose and Marita. we're with the larger group here..' she explaining.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 09, 2014, 03:00:40 PM**

"Thanks, I'd really appreciate it." Axel said, looking up at the large iguana. "I kind of feel like I'm ruining the atmosphere of such a..." He tried to think of a complement that didn't sound cheesy. "...Such a snazzy house." *Snazzy. Nice going.* He winced when he heard Anne swear.

"Dinner sounds great!" he nodded, turning gratefully to Tony. "I'm starving... Erm, your dad won't mind having to suddenly feed all of us?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 09, 2014, 06:18:05 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 09, 2014, 07:10:56 PM**

"Oh it's no problem." Tony said now. At least... he hoped it wouldn't be. He shrugged at Marie's compliment. "I guess I'm just used to it, but thanks." he said humbly. "Oh... that's quite all right by the way; it's nice to meet you all." he nodded at the three of them.

A beep on Max's cellphone caused him to glance down at it. "Aha! Dinner will be served at 8 o'clock." he announced. "That gives you an hour. Tony, your father would like to see you. And... you needed a shirt, yes?" Max asked Axel. "What's your size?" he inquired.

"Uh... I hate to ask this but... I was hoping at least one of you could see my father too before dinner... to... you know... regale him with tales of how you 'rescued' me." Tony stated, trying not to sound too obvious. "Because now we owe you quite a lot for that so yeah... just a confirmation would be nice." he suggested.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 09, 2014, 07:20:41 PM**

Lily gratefully followed the iguana to the nearest bathroom. Smiling shyly, she shut the door and gasped when she turned around and saw what amounted to a small pool covered head to toe with water jets, adjustable currents, and peculiar colored nozzles.

Curiously she hit one and fragranted fluid dispensed into her hand.

These are shampoos and body washes, she thought with amazement. *He's got spigots for different flavors of shampoo and body wash!*

Sanjay's attack distracted the other guard for split second, long enough for Emilena to leap forward and stab him through the forehead with the syringe. This did not do good things for him.

Heh, because they're purifiers you don't need to worry about subdermal armor, she thought wistfully as the guard began screaming and jolting uncontrollably. Reliving him of his rifle, she mercy-killed both of them and double-timed down the hallway. "I'll lead, you navigate."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 09, 2014, 07:24:59 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 09, 2014, 10:34:01 PM**

Tony nodded at Kojuuro. "Very well. I can find my own way up there, thanks Max." Tony said, waving off the consigliere. The ferret led the way up to his father's study, climbing a set of stairs and moving down several hallways until he was standing outside the heavy paneled door. "Well... let's do this." he said, trying to gather himself up before he inhaled deeply, then strode into his father's office.

Cigar smoke curled around an older ferret who sat at the desk at the far end. He was puffing away on a long stogie, and was squinting across the room in his typical fashion. "Come in." Don Stracci said quietly, motioning with his paw for his son to step forward.

Tony hadn't breathed yet, and began moving forward. "Hello... pops." Tony finally said, letting his breath out in too loud a fashion.

Blowing out a wreath of blue smoke, his father narrowed his eyes, the cigar hovering around his mouth before the don tapped it into an ashtray. "If you EVER... leave me again..." Don Stracci said, fixing one eye on his son as he narrowed the other one to practically closed.

"Pops I'm..."

"Shut up!" the don snapped, rising to standing behind his desk now. He wasn't a tall ferret, but he was taller and more well-built than his son, who was much thinner by comparison. "Don't you EVER leave the family again, you hear me? Your mother was worried half to death... how could you do that to her?" he demanded.

"I'm sorry..." Tony said, hanging his head and closing his eyes. "I messed up dad... I know... I haven't done a lot of things right lately... but I came back... I came back because I love you... I love mom... I'm sorry dad... forgive me... please."

His father remained stone-faced, still squinting at him. "You better explain yourself."

"I will..." Tony nodded. "I... was stupid... I was immature... I wanted more... I was impatient... I fell in with a bad crew... dad I just... look, some guys helped me out. They got me out of there... brought me back... I'm sorry OK? Please... I just want to be your son again. I'll do anything... please." Tony clasped his paws together.

His father eyed him darkly, then looked at Kojuuro. "This boy telling the truth?" he asked, nodding at Tony. "That how it was? You got him out?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 10, 2014, 12:17:10 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 10, 2014, 01:51:17 AM**

As Tony and Kojuuro walked off, Axel looked at Max. "I'm a medium... Thanks a lot, I really appreciate it." He was led down another corridor to a large dressing room containing a huge variety of clothing. There was a row of shirts hung up on coat hangers along one side of the wall, and he made his way over, shifting his way through gently until he found a light blue shirt with *medium* on the tag. "I won't get too many food stains on it, I promise."

When Axel peeled off his T-Shirt, he winced at the sight of the ugly bruises and scrapes dotted around his body. In all the excitement, it was easy to forget he'd been thrown around a fair bit in the past few days. Unhooking the shirt, he slipped it on and buttoned it up. Clearly, even though it was a medium, it was fitted for someone more heavyset than him - it was a little ill-fitting and hung slightly loose on his lankier frame. *At least I don't look like I've been dragged through mud anymore.*

He rolled up the sleeves then swiveled back to Max. "I feel like one of the Family! Sorry. Erm..." Holding his balled up T-Shirt in his hand, he looked around for somewhere to put it. Finally, he stuffed it down one of his jeans' pockets, the top of it poking out and flapping down. "Alright, I'm good. Thanks again." Max took him back to the lobby where the others were waiting.

"Kojuuro's still talking to Tony's dad?" he asked Marie. "Better him than me..." He looked at Anne. "This place is huge! The changing room's bigger than my whole apartment!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 10, 2014, 11:14:56 AM**

Don Stracci narrowed his eyes now at this, and took a long series of puffs from his cigar before he blew out a great pall of smoke and sighed. "Hm... yes... good to see you again. You've done us a service... I'll repay in kind." he said, nodding at Kojuuro. "Very well..." he started moving from his desk now and towards Tony.

The younger ferret gulped, but didn't move, trembling a little as his father reached out, but instead of smacking him sharply across his face, Stracci Sr. placed a paw on his shoulder. It was firm, but not painful. "It's good to have you back." were the words now, and Tony stopped cringing, relaxing a bit as a small smile played over his features. "Say hello to your mother before you eat."

"Yes... thanks pops!" Tony said, brightening up considerably now. He then proceed to hug his dad, which caused the older ferret to straighten up and initially do nothing, caught off guard by his son's display of affection. Though Tony couldn't see it, the slightest wisp of a smile passed over his father's face before he clapped him once on the back.

"Yeah... now go. She's waiting." his father ordered.

"Right." Tony nodded, and looked at Kojuuro. "Thanks for the assistance. I'll be down in a bit after I see my mother." he informed him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 10, 2014, 06:20:56 PM**

Gittsun blearily opened his eyes. He groaned and raised himself up into a sitting position, taking in his surroundings. He was sat in the back of a car... how did he get here? *Oh right... The girls went to help their friend...* His foot clunked against something and he looked down. It was a whiskey bottle. *Right...* On the way to... wherever they were meeting Marita's friend, he been taking some generous gulps of it, and after a while he'd felt like taking a nap in the back. But... where was he now?

Looking through the car windows, he could see he was in some kind of lot. A little way away, in the distance, there was a large mansion. Since the girls weren't here, he could only assume they were over there - though thinking right now was a little hard... Rubbing his temples and letting out another groan, he opened the car door and dragged himself out. Letting it close behind him, he leaned against the body of the car and looked around him.

There wasn't anyone around... *No, there's someone!* A few meters away, a man in a suit leaned against a fence, facing the opposite direction. He was listening to some kind of MP3 players, his head bopping up and down slightly - Gittsun could make out a pair of earphones sticking out of his ears. *Maybe he knows if the girls are at the house... or if there's anything else to drink, heh.*

"Hey mister!" he called out. There was no response. Apparently the man's music was too loud. "A little help here?" Still nothing. *Damn it.* Still limping on his leg, Gittsun stumbled over, his shoes kicking up little clouds of dirt from the floor. He reached the man leaning on the fence. "Hello?" Gittsun clapped a hand on his shoulder.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 10, 2014, 06:36:09 PM**

((Done with permission of Bushwacked))

The guard whirled around, his heart almost jumping out of his chest as his silenced pistol whipped out, and fired off three rounds. They connected with Gittsun's chest, throat, and head, splaying blood about onto the fence and causing the human to stagger back and to the side. Unfortunately, he was staggering right towards the cliff face, and though the horrified guard tried to reach out and grab him, he only grasped thin air as Gittsun tumbled over the side and plummeted hundreds of feet into the black void of the rocky canyons below...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 11, 2014, 02:59:09 AM**

(The Heights)

Anne whistled. "Yeah, I could use a meal but let's wait until everyone's present first."

She sat down in an opulent seal-skin chair. "Wow, sealskin. That must a cost quite a few creds."

She rubbed a finger along her horn inplant. There was a small gouge at the base where some punks had tried to cut off her horn. Unfortunately for them, the horn also made a rather effective stabbing weapon and the Shetland's metal shod hooves did a major number on the thieves' bodies.

Soren's suit had charged up and he had stripped it off. The guards had told him ó in no uncertain terms ó that his weapons, HMD and exoskeleton could not be bought into the Stracci

Compoun. On the flipside, they assured that his equipment would be left untouched

He was escorted to the screening room. A few minutes later, he was in the lobby with Max, Axel and Anne.

The Human looked around the elegant room with its white and black marble floors, crystal chandalier and subdued yet tasteful Italian Renassiance decor.

He took a seat in another sealskin upholstered chair as he waited for whatever business

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(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay had his pistol out as he navigated through the dimly lit stainless steel and concrete hallways of the complex. Luckily, his cybernetic third eye could see quite well with the low light available.

Unfortunately for the Indian Cobra, his hearing wasn't as good as that of a Vulpine ó or for that matter, a Human.

Aaron slammed back a bottle of beer. The breakroom was a rowdy environment with guards of all species drinking, cursing and generally having a good time.

"You see that cunt in Cell 43-B?" one of the guards ó a big Clydesdale stallion with a skull and crossbones freeze brand on his right bicep.

Aaron pounded back the rest of his beer. "You mean the Vulpine?"

Another guard, a scarred up Human, nodded. "The one who practically came all over you and Marcus during the torture session!"

Aaron's eye twitched as he clenched his beer bottle. "Anyways," he said, his flattened ears betraying his true emotional state. "What do we do next!"

"Get the Fox and Sanjay some more butt-buddies!" a Collie exclaimed. Like the other's she was either scarred up or had a freeze brand. In her case, it was half of her right year ó it had been bitten off by a Macaw in a street fight.

(OOC - Going to assume it's late at night ó ~12 AM)

(OOC - sea animals and songbirds are non-anthro and non-sapient)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 11, 2014, 04:25:27 AM**

Marcus sat hunched over in the corner of the breakroom, his hands balled into fists and laying on the surface of the table he occupied. Though the room was full, the others tended to avoid Marcus, which was fine by him - he had no interest in joining in with their inane, drunken conversations.

A scowl creased his face as he wondered why Echo and Bhat were still alive. Normally, a prisoner's reward for reaching the end of their interrogation was a bullet to the back of the head. What was so special about these two? Leaving loose ends made Marcus uncomfortable.

All he'd been told was to ensure that Emilena wasn't injured too badly in the course of her questioning. Marcus clenched his fists. He'd seen that Wolf walking around the compound...

though they'd had dealings with him in the past, Marcus knew he couldn't be trusted. *He's involved in this somehow...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 11, 2014, 11:19:53 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 11, 2014, 11:53:40 AM**

Tony rejoined the group a few moments later, having been warmly greeted by his doting mother. The family matriarch had been overjoyed at seeing him, and had practically drowned him in worrying affection. The ferret had finally managed to excuse himself under the pretense of needing to get ready for dinner, and after about 15 minutes, was back with the main group.

He noticed Soren had joined the group, and greeted the human as he sat down. "Glad you could join us, Soren! We'll be eating together in about half an hour, so I hope you're hungry." the ferret said. He noted that everyone now seemed to be present, and he didn't notice Gittsun's absence, namely because he hadn't met Gittsun before, so wasn't even aware he was missing. He noted Lily was still away as well, but that wasn't surprising if she had wanted to freshen up.

"I see you changed." Tony nodded at Axel. "Bloody shirt not *snazzy* enough for dinner?" he inquired, comically using Axel's previous term here.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 11, 2014, 03:22:23 PM**

Axel groaned. "I was *really* hoping nobody heard that. Yeah, I figured my dinner conversation's going to be enough to make people lose their appetite, don't need to add my T-Shirt into the mix." He grinned and took a spare seat next to Soren. "I can't remember the last time I ate something that wasn't from the microwave."

He looked between Tony and Kojuuro. "So, Koj said the meeting went well?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 11, 2014, 06:35:54 PM**

Lily was completely ensconced in the bath. The jets were playing water across every curve of her exhausted body, and the mingling of every available shampoo and bubble bath had formed an aromatic perfume around her little haven. Even stretching her body out as far as she could, she couldn't even brush the porcelain edges of the jacuzzi tub.

It was the single most relaxing thing she had experienced since waking up in the forest. Drifting off into a deep content sleep, she didn't even notice that she was completely submerged and breathing underwater.

Emilena ushered Sanjay into a closet as several unknown individuals walked through their hallway. "We aren't going to get this lucky forever," she muttered. "Someone's gonna see us or sound an alarm eventually..."

She creaked the door open a peek, and the unoiled hinge gave a protesting shriek. One of the Purifiers, who had silently stopped to check a text, jumped and looked around. Emilena snapped forward and smashed the pistol into his skull. This only resulted in him screaming uncontrollably. Cursing, Emilena finished him off with a series of shots to the face and chest.

"Goddamit, why can't some people die quietly?" she swore. Casting her eyes around the room, she doubled her pace.

Once she was gone, the mutilated young man crawled slowly down the hallway, leaving a thick trail of blood. Reaching an emergency phone, he dialed security but passed out before it finished ringing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 11, 2014, 07:57:09 PM**

A series of faint, muted pops from down the corridor drew Marcus' attention. His ears flattened as he turned his head slowly towards the open doorway next to him. *Gunshots?* Possibly... but the gun range was in the opposite direction - and from the dull, echoing quality to the noise, it sounded like it was being carried a long way down the maze-like corridors. Marcus' stomach knotted. *The cells are in that direction...*

Nobody else in the breakroom had made any sort of reaction, deaf to all but the laughs and shouts of their conversations. He rose and made his way out through the doorway, proceeding cautiously down the hallway. The *clump* of his footsteps soon replaced the echo of voices as he turned and followed the branch-off that led to the cells.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 11, 2014, 10:02:27 PM**

(The Heights)

"I am indeed, Tony," Soren said as he took a seat. He then involuntarily shuddered as he recalled the fight with the Purifiers. What if they had managed to stick a tracer on his stolen truck or on one of them?

Anne then turned to Soren. "Hey, Soren. Mind looking at my horn? I'm having trouble transmitting signals."

Soren nodded as he looked at the Shetland's horn implant. He noticed a rather deep nickóone that could be caused by an angle grinder or some other cutting instrument. "I don't have the right tools and equipment but it looks like someone tried cutting off your horn.

"No shit," Anne growled.

Soren looked at the nick closer. After a few minutes, he nodded his head. "It looks like the transmitting cable got severed. I can fix it so you can send signals but without the right tools and materials, the signals will be kind of staticky."

"Whatever, just fix it and get rid of that nick!"

Soren nodded. "Axel, Anne's horn implant needs a bit of repair. Mind giving me a hand?"

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron's ears suddenly shot upright as a distinct odor wafted past his nose. Blood. Coupled with the gunshots he had heard opposite the shooting rangeóand the screamingóthat meant only one thingóprison break.

He gave a loud and deep bark that silenced everyone in the room. "We have a prisoner loose."

That did it! All the guards practically stumbled over each other as they made their way to the armory.

"Marcus," he radioed. "I'm coming with the rest of the guards!"

He then tucked the radio into his belt as he followed the others to the armory.

Sanjay's heart thudded in his chest as he looked around the closet. "We need to create a distraction that should occupy the Purifiers or cause panic. Once we do that, we can hopefully get to an exit and swipe a vehicle."

He then noticed the air intake above him. "Speaking of which, I have an idea! Got one of those autocig?"

(OOC - an autocig <slang terms: burner, hot stick, poke 'n smokes, pull-starts> is a self-lighting cigarette. Cheap ones ignite via an incendiary chemical reaction. More expensive ones ignite via an electrically heated wire.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 11, 2014, 10:26:20 PM**

Tony nodded at Axel. "It did indeed go well! Well... as well as can be expected with my pops. He rarely gets positively emotional. Negatively... oh yeah... but hey... he is my father." the ferret said here now. He took some interest in what Soren and Axel might be doing with Anne's horn. They had some time before dinner after all, and Tony took interest in this. He wasn't really technically inclined, but things like "shop" always intrigued him, so he kind of hovered around, hoping to maybe learn a few things.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 12, 2014, 12:55:41 AM**

"No, but someone around here does," Emilena kicked the door open to a nearby lounge room and brandished her pistol threateningly at the two surprised occupants, who were playing on a game console. "Nobody move and I don't shoot!" she yelled, firing twice and hitting both in the back. "Wait, crap. Oops."

She rifled through the drawers and their pockets and came away with a number of useful items, such as a lighter, batteries, writing supplies, steel wool, and a pack of autocigs. "Work your magic," she smiled, passing him all of the items; she had a distressing lack of pockets at the moment.

At the armory, a young wolf Purifier came puffing into view. He had a bloodied wound on the side of his head. "The Vulpine!" he gasped to Aaron. "She and the snake...they're heading below! I think they're trying to escape through the sewers!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 12, 2014, 04:32:07 AM**

"That's good," Axel smiled at Tony. "I'm glad." He turned to look at Anne and Soren. "Sure, no problem. Soren's right though, with what we've got it might be a pretty patchy job," he said as he rose and approached the pony, "But hey, you seem like a patchy kind of girl." He bent closer to the damaged augment. "Mind if I just..." Axel carefully held the horn as he switched vision. He could see a faint electrical signal getting past the cut.

"It's not a clean cut all the way through," he said as he straightened up and glanced at Soren, his eyes flicking back to blue. "If we had something thin enough, I think it *should* fairly simple to connect the wires up again. Then we could try soldering the cut closed?" He looked down at Anne and chewed his lip. "You should be back to your... uh, charming self in no time."

Marcus rounded a corner and stopped dead when he saw the body of the Purifier sprawled on the ground, a phone buzzing in his outstretched hand. "*Son of a bitch...*" he snarled as he looked up the hallway. They had to have gone that way, it was a straight path back the way he'd come...

He heard the voice of the young Purifier crackling through faintly on his radio. "Aaron!" he barked into it, "Go down into the sewers and get everyone to split into four teams, one for each exit - follow the others, they know their way through! I'm heading up to cover the ground from the roof..."

The mutilated Purifier on the ground gurgled, still clinging to life that was rapidly fading. Marcus stepped over him and started sprinting towards his quarters where he kept his sniper rifle.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 12, 2014, 02:03:00 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 14, 2014, 03:52:21 PM**

As Aaron and his men raced to the sewers, the young Wolf purifier watched them go with a calculating look, all fear and pain vanishing suspiciously quickly. Then he darted in the other direction.

A guard stood at the entrance to the back alleyways. He was startled when a burning ball suddenly ignited to his left.

Immediately he cocked his rifle and assumed a combat stance. "Identify yourself!"

Then Emilena shot him from behind. The ball had been a battery wrapped in steel wool, which ignited shortly after Emilena threw it.

Emilena kicked the door open. "That had to sound an alarm, but we're almost out of here."

As they darted into the alleyways, she glanced up at the looming headquarters. She noted a sniper tower overlooking them and shuddered. Luckily, it appears nobody was stationed in it at the moment...

"Come on!" she hissed, waving at Sanjay. "We gotta move!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 14, 2014, 04:33:17 PM**

Marcus barreled through the door to his quarters, grinding his teeth hard enough to make his jaw crack. Crouching down, he grabbed a heavy metal box and dragged it out from under the bed. Unclipping the latches, he threw it open to reveal a dissembled sniper rifle. Still crouching down, Marcus snatched up the pieces and rapidly put it together. He didn't care why the two prisoners had been allowed to live this long... but they'd escaped, and they'd killed one of the Purifier's soldiers. They had to die.

Sliding the stock home and locking it into place, he grabbed a handful of bullets and loaded them in with the bolt as he darted out of the room and down the hallway. Soon, he turned off and came to a narrow metal staircase rising sharply up, the faint sound of wind echoing down. A small sign drilled into the wall leading to it was marked **Watchtower**. Slinging the rifle over his shoulder, Marcus charged up the stairs three at a time.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 14, 2014, 09:40:45 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron stopped by the armory to get a shotgun. He muttered some curses as he started loading his weapon. The men with him grabbed their own weapons.

"All right into the sewers!"

The group quickly headed outside and lifted up a manhole cover. Slinging their weapons across their backs, they quickly descended the ladder. Spots of light could be seen as the men turned their weapon lights on.

Sanjay nodded and crouched so his entire body touched the ground. He then slithered surprisingly quickly after Emilena.

He looked around, scanning with his infrared third eye implant. He smiled as he noticed a large transformer was nearby. Unfortunately, it was surrounded by a fence too narrow for him too squeeze through.

The Indian Cobra looked at his pistol and then Emilena's rifle. His pistol wasn't powerful enough to pierce the plating of the transformer but her rifle was. "If I can set that transformer on fire, the power outage and flames should cause enough panic that we can scram before they know what's going on.

He took out a handful of autocigs – all chemically ignited ones – and carefully ripped away the tobacco, revealing a small waxed paper pouch the size of a pea. Squeezing the cigarette in the proper place would break the pouch, causing the two chemicals to mix and ignite, lighting the cigarette.

Sanjay then carefully wrapped the incendiary pouches in a sheet of writing paper.

"Okay, once you shoot a hole in the transformer and oil leaks out, I'll use the lighter to set the paper on fire and then throw it into the oil. The paper won't burn hot enough to light the oil but it'll burn away the paper on the autocig lighters, which will give a very hot but short lived flame. That should set the oil on fire."

He then held the crude incendiary grenade with one hand and a lighter in the other. "On your shot."

(The Heights)

"Whatever works," Anne said with a shrug.

Soren looked at the cut. "Some aluminium foil should do the trick." He then turned to Tony. "Mind showing me to the kitchen?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 14, 2014, 10:30:44 PM**

"Oh yeah, sure!" Tony nodded. "This way!" he exclaimed, waving his paw as he led the way towards his family's massive kitchen. Massive was a bit of an understatement though. The kitchen in here was more like a hotel's kitchen, with a lot of large mixers and ovens and stoves. Tony felt a little embarrassed showing Soren this, but quickly moved to one of the numerous cabinets and tossed over a box of aluminum foil. "Here you are! If you need more, just let me know." be said simply.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 14, 2014, 11:05:39 PM**

Soren grunted as he caught the box of foil. "Thanks! That's way more than enough."

He then carried the box to the living room where Anne was sitting in a sealskin chair.

Anne looked at the foil. "Well fuck me, I'm getting fixed up with kitchen goods!"

Soren sighed as he carefully tore up a piece of the foil. "Okay, Axel, Tony, I need some more things: a radio, a set of pointed tweezers, some non-conductive glue, solder and soldering iron."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Rocky** on **January 14, 2014, 11:19:29 PM**

Meanwhile, Patrick Anderson, a wealthy Liger was returning home after a charity event. The wealthy Anthro was exhausted and ready to go to sleep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 15, 2014, 02:11:29 AM**

"Hey, we told you it wouldn't be pretty," Axel told Anne, then nodded at Soren. "Alright. But she'll probably need to get it looked at more... uh, professionally soon - this stuff's only gonna keep her horn going for so long."

He turned to Tony. "Lead the way, I'll give you a hand. Unless your family hasn't gotten around to buying a radio..."

Marcus reached the top of the watchtower, the metal flooring rattling underfoot. It was a plain setup, a square perch with a roof shielding it, surrounded by a metal balcony that ran all the way around. He stepped out onto the balcony and looked down, the wind snapping his coat to the side. This watchtower gave him almost total visibility across the northern side of the compound - the side that faced towards Lanthae city. If they were going to be escaping on the surface, this would be where they'd go.

He rested the rifle on the balcony railing and switched the scope to night-vision, scanning the dark alleyways below.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 15, 2014, 11:36:15 AM**

"Uh... OK, sure." Tony nodded now, trying to think of where he could obtain these things. "Well my father has a radio... but we're not... using that one." he said hesitantly. "I'm sure there's others around the house in the guest rooms... the tweezers would be in a bathroom, and the glue, solder, and soldering iron can all be found on the workbench in the garage... or... should I say... the shop, in the garage." Tony said, trying to sound modest.

He led the way to the stairs now, heading up to the halls on the second floor of the house. Walking down the carpeted floor, his shoes made only muted echoes as he looked from left to right. He bypassed his siblings' rooms, and made for the guest rooms around the corner. Knocking on one and not hearing anything on the other side, the ferret entered and looked around. "See if there's a radio in one of the nightstands. I'll check the bathroom." Tony wandered past the polished and heavily paneled veneer of the guest room (including the poster bed) and entered the bathroom. Most guest rooms in his father's house had en-suite bathrooms, and this one was no exception. "OK... OK... let's see." he murmured, rummaging around in the medicine cabinet, and pulling out some tweezers. "Got some tweezers in here!" he called to Axel. "How'd you fare on the radio?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 15, 2014, 12:19:50 PM**

"Still looking!" Axel called back, crouching down next to the nightstand. The drawers were full of odds and ends. He pulled open the final drawer and pushed aside a leather bound copy of '*Great Expectations*', reaching further in. "Oh hey, I... I think I found something..." he announced as his fingers closed around a heavy object.

He pulled it out to see it was indeed a radio. It looked like a pretty expensive make too, but it looked like it hadn't been used in a while. "Yep, got it!" he said, standing up and tucking it under his arm. *Damn, something like this would take me ages to save up for it. These guys are really loaded.* "Workshop next?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Rocky** on **January 15, 2014, 01:55:40 PM**

Patrick Arrived Home went straight to bed, drifting off to sleep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 15, 2014, 02:33:15 PM**

Tony caught sight of the copy of Great Expectations in the drawer as Axel pulled out the radio. "Oh hey, that's my favorite book! I wonder what it's doing in there..." the ferret wondered, pulling on his chin fur. "Anyway yeah... let's go to the shop." He nodded, and led the way back out into the hall, threading his way around the corridors and back down the stairs, then towards the side of the house where the garage was located. "OK... try not to have a heart attack." the ferret warned the rat as he opened the door.

The garage extended into the darkness for quite some ways before the lights automatically kicked on, their glow glinting off the polished chrome and rich colors of cars from all eras (though mostly classic) arrayed in two rows that ran down the length of the place. There was a Marmon, Isotta Fraschinis, Auburns, a Cord, Delahayes, Aston Martins, Bugattis, a 1953 Allard, an Avions Voisin, a Stutz, Packards, Pierce Arrows, and numerous other vehicles even further down the rows, making his garage more a museum. "Uh... my dad likes cars." was all Tony said, and moved to his right into what was like an auto repair shop.

"I think we can divide up what to carry so we're not overwhelmed." he suggested, looking around for the supplies.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 15, 2014, 03:27:27 PM**

Axel grinned as he hung back a second, taking in the rows and rows of expensive, classical cars. "Your dad likes cars? Bit of an understatement," he laughed, shaking his head. Tony's voice to his right drew his attention, and he followed him through to the repair shop.

"Alright, sounds fair enough," he agreed, coming up beside Tony. He sifted through some of the tools piled on the workbench with his free hand, then made a contented noise. Leaning forwards, Axel picked up a worn tube of non-conductive glue. "Well, I guess I've found what I'm carrying," he joked as he slipped it into his pocket, freeing up his hand for another item.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 15, 2014, 03:36:58 PM**

Emilena nodded and blasted it with a single shot. As if on cue, oil began leaking out.

She looked nervously at the sniper tower; if anyone was in there, they'd have heard the shot. "How long is this gonna take?" She asked.

A mansion cleaning lady, noticing that the bathroom had been silent for hours, knocked politely. "Hello?" She asked. "Is someone in there...?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 15, 2014, 04:05:15 PM**

"Yeah... I guess it is." Tony chuckled, shaking his head as he picked up the solder and soldering iron. "I think I can manage these. You got the biggest thing with the radio, after all." Tony nodded at the radio in Axel's paws.

As they stepped out of the shop now, Tony glanced at a 1939 Delahaye 165 Cabriolet. "*That* is a sleek car." the ferret said appreciatively of it. "It's one of my favorites that my dad owns. That and well... the 1932 Auburn Speedster V-12. I mean can you imagine it? A V-12?" Tony grinned, shaking his head as they exited the garage. "You a car person, I mean, you know, with your name and all?" Tony joked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 16, 2014, 01:07:07 PM**

"Oh yeah, in my spare time I'm an illegal street racer. But don't tell anyone..." Axel mock whispered. "Nah. I mean, I'm not, like, an expert on cars or anything. But holy crap, you'd have to be dead not to like those babies!"

As they made their way back around to the house to where the others were waiting, Axel glanced at the ferret, his ears perked up with interest. "So, any other collections around the house? Mona Lisa in the bathroom?"

The crack of the rifle shot carried up to Marcus on the howling wind. He snapped the sniper's sight down to where he'd heard it, and caught movement down in the alleyways below. Two figures were huddled below. Marcus zoomed his scope in, and hissed. A dumpster between them and him obscured his vision of the pair - he could only get brief glimpses of them as they moved around. Marcus didn't want to take any chances - one shot, one kill for each of them.

Keeping his scope on their cover, he reached down with one hand and unhooked his radio. "Aaron, they're not in the sewers. They're on the surface heading for the north exit." There was no response. "Aaron? *Aaron?! Fuck!*" he snarled, throwing the radio into the tower behind him. *Was something jamming it?* Marcus returned both hands to the sniper and steadied his aim, finger hovering above the trigger. The moment one of them poked their head out, he'd put them down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 16, 2014, 04:59:45 PM**

"I know! Right?" Tony asked as they walked back, chuckling at Axel's mention of being a street racer. "I just HAVE to convince my dad to let me roll on outta here in one of his cars when you guys leave!" he exclaimed. "That'd be so cool!"

As he listened to Axel's next question, Tony couldn't suppress a grin. "Well, my father DID buy the Mona Lisa, but the French government refused him an export permit." he explained, not elaborating on whether he was being truthful or not, only giving the rat an amused look.

As they rejoined the main group, Tony waved the tweezers. "Hey, Soren! We got your stuff!" he called.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 16, 2014, 07:44:55 PM**

With a light whiff, a microscopic dart embedded itself into Markus' neck, fired from somewhere behind him. It had an almost instantaneous tranquilizer effect, designed to put every muscle in the body into instant paralyzation. A beast thrice Markus' size wouldn't have the chance to even close his eyes.

The cleaning lady knocked again, and, hearing no response, took out her set of keys and unlocked the door. "I'm coming in..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 17, 2014, 02:37:12 AM**

(Purifier Compound)

Sanjay lit his crude incendiary bomb with the lighter and quickly tossed it over the fence and into the pool of oil. The oil sputtered a bit but the paper continued to burn.

"Let's move! Those incendiary packets could burn through any moment!" He began slithering towards the exit as fast as he could.

Aaron's ear twitched at the gunshot echoing from one of the drainage pipes.

He frowned. "Fucking hell, they're above us!"

The German Shepherd slung his shotgun across his back and began climbing one of the ladders that led to the surface.

(The Heights)

"Thanks!" Soren said.

He used the tweezers to carefully push the tiny piece of foil into the cut in Anne's horn. Turning on the soldering iron and letting it heat up, he pushed the foil back a little bit more so there was a little indentation.

A small dab of the white nonconductive glue completely concealed the nick in Anne's horn. By the time the glue hardened, the soldering iron was now hot enough.

Soren tinned the soldering iron and carefully applied solder, covering the glue and making sure that the molten solder made an electrical connection between the two parts of her horn.

The Human turned off the soldering iron and turned on the radio until he got static. "Okay, Anne, transmit!"

Anne rubbed her horn to make sure everything was good. She took a deep breath and her ears splayed in contentment. They then shot up. Her voice – albeit marred with static – soon emnanated from the radio.

"*It ain't perfect...but hey, it's better than nothing!*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 17, 2014, 09:06:40 PM**

"That's... impressive!" Tony nodded as he heard Anne's voice come through the radio. Must've been a signal relay of some kind... but Max interrupted the group at that point.

"Ahem... dinner is served." he informed them, and led the way towards the dining hall.

"Right! I'm starved!" Tony said, rubbing his paws as he moved off to follow after the iguana. The dining room was large, like everything in the house, and a long mahogany table stretched off down the length of it. There was more than enough room for everyone, and a crystal chandelier hung from the center of the room, it's bright light playing over the walls and darker table.

Already seated at the table were four ferrets, Tony's siblings who turned to look at him as he entered. There were two males, and two females. The first male, the oldest, was brawny and looked like he could take on a mutant alligator. He was dressed casually, his arm draped across the back of the chair. The other male was more formally attired, but was slighter of build than both the older one and Tony. He had a very friendly disposition.

The older of the two females was... ravishing, to say the least. She had an ample chest, tight waist, and curvy figure. She regarded the group with some interest with deep eyes, though brightened upon seeing her favorite brother enter the room.

The younger female darkened upon seeing the group. She was the youngest in the family, probably mid-teens from the looks of it, and she looked anything but cheery, regarding the newcomers with suspicion and wariness.

"Yo, bro." The oldest brother said with a simple wave.

"Tony!" Both the older sister and the younger brother cried almost at once. The younger brother, Elio, actually jumped out of his chair and ran over to Tony to squeeze him affectionately, causing Tony to exhale.

"Ooof!" Tony breathed.

"It's been... a year! We were so worried! Well... I was at least." Elio said warmly, letting his brother breath now. "It's so good to see you again!"

"Yeah... it's good to see you too, Elio." Tony grinned. "Everyone... I'd like you to meet Victor, Elio, Paula, and Caroline. My pops will probably enter once everyone's seated, knowing him." the ferret introduced the group to the rest of his family.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 18, 2014, 02:32:30 AM**

Axel smiled and awkwardly scratched his arm. "Erm... hey. I'm Axel," he said, raising his hand in a wave. His smile faltered a little when he saw the dark look Tony's younger sister was giving them, but at least the rest of the family seemed friendly enough. "You guys have an awesome place," he tried lamely. *Lily's been gone a while...* he thought absently.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 18, 2014, 09:38:17 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Rocky** on **January 18, 2014, 01:35:09 PM**

Patrick was snoring as he slept.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 18, 2014, 10:40:33 PM**

"Yeah... it's 'awesome' all right." Elio grinned at the use of Axel's term.

"Kids?" Caroline asked with some hint of revulsion at the term. Paula however elbowed her sister. "Oww! Watch it!" Caroline growled.

"We have guests." Paula shushed her younger sister. "Yes... we're... the don's children, as you put it. It's very nice to meet you as well." she told him, giving Kojuuro a winning smile.

"Uh right... let's uh... get ready to eat. I'm sure my father will be down soon." Tony said a bit nervously. He took a seat next to Elio, wanting to be near his younger brother for this.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 19, 2014, 12:17:24 AM**

(The Heights)

Soren and Anne arrived and sat at the table.

Anne nodded as she saw Don Stracci's children.

"Hello," Soren said as he sat down and looked at the lavishly decorated room.

Anne looked around. "Hey, where's Lily and Marita?"

(Patrick's Neighborhood)

Outside a very posh looking gated community, a Ford 2031 Econoline van with the livery of a plumbing company drove up to the guard house. The guard at the front waved them through.

Inside the van were four men – a Purifier strike team. They were clad in dark blue and had pistols tucked into hip holsters.

Their mission wasn't to assassinate Patrick or destroy his property. They were going to give him a little scare.

The electric van's motor spooled down as the driver stopped. "All right, y'all know what to do!"

The men inside pulled down their balaclavas and donned gloves. They muscled out a large box with a laser carved metal note at the top – and the broken gear emblem.

They made their way to the front door of the house. One of the men, a equine of undetermined breed, got a cylindrical tube ready. Another one of the men used a small magnetic accelerator to shoot large ball bearings through every window.

"Go! Go!" the equine hissed as soon as he yanked the pull-ring and tossed the tube through one of the broken windows. The tube in question was a stolen military training grenade, designed to replicate the flash and thunder of an actual grenade but without the risk of starting fires or throwing shrapnel around.

The men scrambled into the van and drove off.

"Well, let's hope that silicon slut gets the message," one of the Purifiers said, pulling off her balaclava to reveal a surprisingly attractive Golden Retriever bitch. She ran a gloves hand through her golden headfur.

"He's probably too busy gettin' freaky with one of those chipheads!" another Purifier cracked.

The van was filled with raucous laughter as they drove off into the darkened elevated highway that led to this exclusive development. A distant *bang* was heard as the training grenade went off.

When Patrick would wake up, he would find a file box containing forty pounds of metal scrap, a plastic bag with small bit of C-4 and a blasting cap and this laser-cut metal note:

Quote

> To Patrick Anderson,
>
> You have sold your fellow Baselines out to the technological abominations known as "Augments". The explosion you heard was the grenade simulant we tossed through your window.
>
> As you can see, the box in front of you is filled with forty pounds of metal scrap. This your first and only warning:
>
> Cease prostituting yourself to these hybrid abominations or else the next delivery you recieve from us will be C-4.
>
> [cracked gear emblem]

(OOC - silicon slut = term for someone who supports Augments, manufactures augmentations or works with augmentations. It is a *highly* insulting term and using it is likely to result in violence.)

(OOC - chiphead = term for Augment. It's not as offensive as Gleamer but it's still not a socially acceptable way to refer to an Augment.)

(OOC - [] in quotes is a picture description.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 19, 2014, 03:06:22 AM**

"I think Lily was taking a bath," Axel said as he took a seat next to Anne. "I... guess she's just taking her time to relax for once." He glanced down at the cutlery and tableware - it all looked good quality. The sight of the empty plate waiting for food made his stomach rumble. "I'm sure she won't mind if we, ah, just eat a little without her..."

He leaned his elbows on the tabletop, then quickly took them back off in case it offended the hosts, folding his arms nervously across his lap. "Your dad sounds like an interesting guy... I really, ah, like the collection he has in the garage."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 19, 2014, 04:47:03 AM**

Emilena darted out from behind the dumpster and kept her rifle aimed at anywhere that Purifiers might think to show themselves.

They reached a chainlink fence at the end of the alleyway and Emilena emptied her clip at it. "Bulletproof!" she cursed. Apparently somebody had installed basic security precautions in this area. "Either we climb, or find a way around!" She turned to Sanjay, looking for direction.

The purifiers could only be getting closer to their location....

The cleaning lady pushed the door open and coughed as she saw the room was filled with steam. The bath had been running nonstop for what must have been hours. "Hello?" she choked. The air was thick with a phlegmatic taste.

Stumbling to the jets, she turned off the bath and hit the fans. Once the room was clearer, she could see inside the bathtub and cried out. There was an unmoving body floating limply, and the bathtub water was saturated in thick blood.

Staggering backwards, she sprinted into the hallway and reached the first intercom she could. She immediately dialed the security guard on duty in this wing.

"There's been a murder in the east wing bathroom!" she exclaimed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 19, 2014, 01:41:47 PM**

"I'm glad you like my collection... and that you think I'm an... 'interesting guy.'" The voice that responded to Axel's comments was low and accented, and standing at the entrance of the dining room was an older ferret. He wasn't particularly tall, but he wasn't overly short either. He was dressed in a blue pin stripe jacket, white shirt poking out from underneath and blue pants. A thick cigar was clamped between two of his claws, and he seemed to regard the party with a squint. At his side stood a female ferret wearing a red dress with black fur around the neckline, and a pearl necklace. "Auto enthusiasm is a hobby I've always shared with my son." The don nodded in Tony's direction as he took a puff from the cigar.

Tony nodded back once. "Sir." he replied.

"Which one of you..." the don looked at the assemblage. "Is the leader of your group? Which one of you decided to bring my son here?"

=========================

Security was all abuzz in the hall where Lily lay in the tub. The family doctor was summoned, and he entered the bathroom now accompanied by security. "All right..." he murmured, stretching gloves over his hands as he approached the figure in the bathtub. "OK... let's see what we've got here..." he whispered to himself as he knelt down to begin inspecting the body.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 19, 2014, 04:07:13 PM**

It soon became apparent that the body was not dead; she appeared to have passed out from blood loss. Small open wounds had appeared on the sides of both of her hands, and nubs of bone were sticking out, bones that didn't correspond to any naturally-ocurring bones in the human skeletal system. A much larger opening had formed in her tailbone area, which was where most of her blood loss had occurred. She had roughly 80% of the minimum required blood supply still in her system, which was putting incredible strain on her heart and keeping her in a state of unconsciousness.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Rocky** on **January 19, 2014, 04:21:15 PM**

Patrick, by this time was awake and was being brought up to speed of what happened. "I'm glad mom and dad aren't here to see this." Patrick said. His human Parents were vacationing in Switzerland and were accompanied by the finest Privately owned security force money could buy.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 19, 2014, 08:11:24 PM**

marita marie and riose looked at the food on thier dishes' they had been observing their surroundings as they followed Tony around his fathers house. marita knew it was good manners to never refuse something when a host offers it to you, especially when the host is someone of the Don;sd persuasuion. saying no might very well get you kiled..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 20, 2014, 02:36:06 PM**

Axel started slightly and turned in his seat to face Tony's father. He gulped. The ferret looked like he'd stepped straight out of the set of 'The Sopranos', radiating an air of total control. *Probably not someone you want to piss off...* Axel thought, noticing Tony's sudden sobriety.

He blinked at the Don's question. "Erm... we're, like, a team. Ah, sir... your, er... Don-ness..." Axel grimaced, trying to stop his mouth running. "I mean, we work together, and we all thought this was the best thing to do. Right guys?" he said, glancing around quickly at the others, before returning his gaze uneasily back to the Don.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Rocky** on **January 20, 2014, 02:55:19 PM**

Soon enough the Police were at Anderson estate interviewing Patrick. The Victim was being transported by an ambulance to the nearest hospital.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 20, 2014, 03:56:49 PM**

Don Stracci pulled the cigar out of his mouth and exhaled a wreath of blue smoke about his head, looking at the others. "A group?" he asked now, beginning to walk to the head of the table. "So... I have to give out a group reward?" he asked.

"I don't think you have to do anything, pops, if Tony hadn't left in the first..." Victor began, but a steely look from his father shut him up immediately.

"Quiet, boy. No, I believe in doing something... I reward loyalty, after all." the don said as he snuffed out his cigar in a crystal ashtray. Looking down at the meal prepared for him, he smiled. Spaghetti carbonara... his family favorite. There were also selections of veal, steak, salads, and chicken which waiters moved about the table with, offering them to each of the guests. If they didn't see what they liked, the waiters were more than happy to place a custom order.

"So... as a token of my... appreciation..." Don Stracci continued as he began twirling the pasta around his fork. Tony had the same dish as his father, his father remembering his son's shared tastes. "What can I do for you for bringing my son back?" he asked, shooting his narrow gaze around the table.

Tony shoveled a forkful of spaghetti in his mouth. He didn't want to speak out of turn, and if he recalled, there were some who had more solid ideas on what they wanted. Weapons would be good though, for as the ferret recalled, they would need some more firepower... and perhaps an all access pass to a hospital under the guise of a family member for Adrian. But of course... it was up to them what they wanted... Tony had his own ideas, namely a fast classic car for his personal use, but... later.

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"She's still alive!" The doctor announced. "But she's lost quite a lot of blood! Let's get her down to the infirmary!" He noted the... changes that seemed to be causing this blood loss all over her body. It was as if she was metamorphosing into something... completely not human.

A few minutes later, Lily was set up on a bed down in the family infirmary. The doctor was busy cleaning and dressing her injuries to prevent further blood loss so that her heart could start replenishing the lost quantities. He was debating on whether or not he should hook her up to an IV, but didn't wish to start a blood transfusion until he knew her type, which he would get to after her wounds were probably dressed. He noted the bone protrusions through her skin, and did his best to work around them. As remarkable as it seemed, her entire structure seemed to be reworking itself.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 20, 2014, 05:35:59 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 20, 2014, 11:16:01 PM**

(The Heights)

Soren swallowed his mouthful of spaghetti carbonera. "Don Stracci," he said. "I only desire two things: repair of my workshop and house and exacting revenge on the Purifiers who destroyed my life."

Anne was eating the salad with gusto. Apparently, her high had worn off and she was having a serious case of the munchies.

(Purifier Compound)

The transformer fire had now gotten the attention of those in the compound.

Aaron climbed out of the sewers as soon as the alarm went off. The transformer that Sanjay had set aflame controlled the pumps – without them, the sewers would flood. He radioed Marcus. "Marcus! The fuckers burned one of the transformers!"

Sanjay looked at the fence. The holes were just wide enough for him to fit through. He squeezed through the gap and disappeared for a moment. He then returned with a knotted rope which he tied to a dumpster. "Climb that!" He tossed the rope over the fence.

(OOC - Again, I ran into the issue of meat in an anthro world...See the discussion topic. Pterano, can I assume the meat is lab grown meat?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 20, 2014, 11:55:03 PM**

Emilena had tried and failed to scale the fence; her bulky rifle slung behind her back kept throwing her off balance. Grasping the rope and gritting her teeth, she felt Sanjay pulling her over as the first of the Purifiers located their position.

Suddenly one of the bullets severed the rope and sent her plunging. Grasping the top of the fence with a wild cast of her arm, she panted loudly and was forced to abandon the rifle. Hoisting herself over, she went tumbling into the grime on the other side as the first salvo of bullets pinged against the fence.

She got to her feet staggering. "Go, go go!" she panted, racing down the alleyway as fast as she could.

It wasn't until they'd reached relative safety in an alleyway on the outskirts of the city that she realized she was limping and bleeding. "Sanjay, I think..." she staggered and collapsed. She'd been hit twice; once bullet had passed through the space below her left rib, the other was embedded in her right buttock.

Lupis stepped out of the shadows behind the paralyzed Marcus. Politely sliding the Doberman to the side, he equipped the rifle and sniped the first three Purifiers who attempted to follow Mr. Bhat and Officer Echo over the fence. Pressing a button on his watch, he lifted the radio jammer so that Marcus could hear the survivors radioing him in confusion and fright, trying to figure out what was going on.

With a shimmer, the Agent dissipated from sight.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 21, 2014, 09:15:10 AM**

Don Stracci considered Soren's request, and slowly nodded. "These Purifiers... it's become a rather dirty business as of late. While I can neither confirm nor deny if I deal in augments, the Purifiers have never been able to prove anything with me, and they know better than to randomly raid my trucks. I own a construction company... mostly road repair, but..." he paused here, his eyes not leaving Soren. "I would be willing to extend you this favor, and get your workshop and house rebuilt. However... the Purifiers are not my concern, even if they did invade the sanctity of your home. But... with that said..." he glanced over at Tony now.

"You did save my son and bring him home. For this kindness, I would be willing to lend you more... indirect assistance, shall we say, against these Purifiers. I don't like them personally." Don Stracci continued. "But I also have no war with them at present. However, there's an old saying... the enemy of my friends... is my enemy." the don stated, cracking a slight smile here.

"Sir, we were talking about maybe some guns. Firepower." Tony spoke up now respectfully.

"Guns?" his father smiled again. "I don't provide guns. I do however, provide hardware." It was clear what the euphemism meant, and also why the don was choosing to use it. "Hardware I can provide in abundance. All untraceable; the cops will never know where you got it, if it comes to that. And if you *do* get in trouble..." the don pointed at Soren now, still smiling, but in a much smaller way. "I can recommend some very good lawyers... or even a judge or two who sees things my way, provided you keep tight-lipped about where you obtained your hardware." The smile grew a tad here. Tony noted Max was present at the table... most likely for legal reasons. This conversation would be refuted by all of his siblings if it ever leaked, and Max would of course provide the clincher. Tony also knew that anyone who ratted his father out had extremely low expectations of actually making it to court to testify... it was amazing how many friends in unexpected places his dad actually had.

"If you could please provide Mr. Fontana the address of your workshop and home, I will ensure that one of my crews are sent out there. I can't guarantee work will start immediately... it's dependent on what current contracts I have, but we'll get the job done at some point." he promised Soren. "I never forget a favor requested of me." he said with finality.

"Oh... should we also ask for Adrian to be checked into a hospital under the protection of my family?" Tony asked Axel in a low voice now.

The family doctor backed away from the mechanical contraption now who was insisting it be allowed to attend to Lily. He merely gave it a nod. "Suit yourself." he said, moving off to at least get a chart started on Lily on his data pad.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 21, 2014, 01:56:00 PM**

Axel nodded across the table to Tony. "Ah, Don Stracci? One of the people who... Oh, thanks..." he paused as one of the waiters placed a salad in front of him. "One of the people who brought Tony back, Adrian, was injured pretty... ah, pretty badly. We took a look at him, and I think he's been taken upstairs, but there's only so much that can be done for him outside of a proper hospital. If it's possible... could you arrange to have him taken there and kept under some kind of... I don't know, protection or something? If he was here with us I'm pretty sure that's what he'd want."

He forked a bunch of the salad leaves into his mouth. The fresh food was a shock to his system after the microwaved, processed junk he'd been living on all this time, and he hungrily stuffed down another few mouthfuls. After a moment, he put the fork down and looked up hesitantly at the Don. "I, erm... I don't have a request for me personally. But the girl in our group, the one who went up to take a bath, Lily... she's in some trouble and we still don't really know why. The cops are all over my place so she couldn't stay there but... I'm asking if this could be a place where she'd be cool to, like, hide out and be protected, if she ever needed it. I want her to have at least one place she can feel safe at." He met the Don's eyes. "That's the favour I'm asking. If... if it's okay."

Marcus' head swam. He could hear gunshots, thumping as if they were a thousand miles away, and voices, tinny and distant, crackled from somewhere nearby. He tried to focus his mind. Faintly, he knew he'd been drugged somehow. *Lupis... that motherfucker...*

He picked up on Aaron's voice coming from somewhere. "*Fuckers burned... transformers...*" Marcus focused all his attention into trying to get his body moving again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 21, 2014, 10:23:59 PM**

Don Stracci nodded. "Of course... I can place him under protection at a hospital of my choosing. He'll have security and the best doctors I can afford." the don graciously offered. He went back to his spaghetti as he listened to Axel's favor request.

"Hmmm... if she can stay here?" A thin smile spread across the don's lips now. "I would say yes but... you should never speak for a lady." he said, waving his fork at Axel in an admonishing fashion, the smile still there. "It's something I learned." he glanced at his wife now, smiling affectionately at her. "Provided your Lily agrees, it's done. But she needs to say yes herself." Don Stracci stated.

That was certainly fair enough, Tony thought.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 21, 2014, 11:20:39 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 22, 2014, 12:29:43 AM**

(The Heights)

"You have my word, Don Stracci," Soren said as he wrote down the address of his home on a napkin and slid it to the Iguana. "Thank you for your help."

Anne finished off her third bowl of salad.

(Alleyway)

"Shit!" Sanjay muttered. He quickly looked Emilena over. It didn't look like her spine was involved.

He then looked around the grimy alleyway. He could easily abandon her and the cops would think that she was a bum who pissed off some street thugs. Them again, Agent Lupis was probably watching – and he really wanted that reward.

Looping both arms under Emilena's armpits, he began dragging her to the street.

He flagged down a passing motorist, a Fruit Bat who appeared to be a construction worker.

"Forget it! I ain't helping no bum!" she snapped upon seeing Emilena's bruised and filthy state. She was about to close the door and drive off when Sanjay shoved his pistol in her face.

"That wasn't a request. Now help me get her in the car and get to Stephenson Memorial before I blow your fucking brains all over the road!"

The Fruit Bat backed away and carefully hoisted Emilena into her car's backseat. Sanjay slithered into the backseat and placed his pistol against the seat's lower back where it would be out of sight to the casual observer.

"Drive!"

The construction worker gulped and headed out of the dark alley way and into the LED light main highway.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 22, 2014, 03:21:47 AM**

"Alright, I understand," Axel said, nodding appreciatively at Don Stracci. "I'm sure she'll agree and... I just wanted the possibility to be there. Thanks."

When Kojuuro reported that Adrian was doing better, Axel looked sideways at him and smiled encouragingly... then did a double take when Lily was mentioned, the smile wrenched from his face. "What?! What happened, is..." He dropped his fork and pushed his chair out from the table, started to rise. "Where's the infirmary?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 22, 2014, 08:32:27 AM**

"My pleasure." Don Stracci said to Soren. Max took the napkin, nodded once, and slipped it away somewhere inside his voluminous coat.

"I'll look through our current workload and let you know when construction can commence." Max told him.

Tony sat upright upon hearing Adrian was awake. Well... that was some recovery if he was trying to walk around! This was great news! He immediately wanted to go see him, but had his dinner to finish first. But that wasn't the end of the news, or so it seemed. Axel now desired to get to the infirmary, and Max opened his mouth to inform him where it was located, but Tony cut him off.

"You know what? I'll take you there." he offered. "I wanted to speak to Adrian anyway." he said. "I'll finish dinner when I get back." he promised his father, leading the rat out of the dining room now and towards a set of stairs that went down into the basement.

Moving down the flight of steps, Axel could see the basement was its own separate floor, with corridors that stretched away into a labyrinth of passages. Tony threaded his way through them, and fortunately, it wasn't a very long walk. The infirmary was brightly lit, all sterile and colored an off-shade of light green. There were a few beds down here, much more comfortable than you'd find in a typical hospital. "Here you are." Tony said, holding his paw out towards the open door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 22, 2014, 09:44:30 AM**

Axel stepped past Tony through the doorway, and stopped dead when he saw Lily lying in one of the beds. The robotic Doctor who'd helped Adrian earlier was standing over her, performing some kind of test, and Adrian himself was up. Axel barely acknowledged them as he hastened across the room to where Lily lay, stopping on the opposite side of the bed to where the Doctor stood.

From here, he could see the dressings on her hands - it looked like she had deep cuts along the side of them. The pale green light spilling over the room made it seem like he was staring down at a body. "Lily?" Axel whispered, his voice trembling. He bent down and touched her shoulder lightly. There wasn't a response. Looking up, Axel's eyes were lost. "What the hell's happened to her? She was fine just a while ago..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 22, 2014, 12:57:03 PM**

Emilena gritted her teeth and squinted her eyes as she bled all over the back of the construction worker's car.

"Why the hell are you...?" she coughed, thankfully no blood came out. That implies the abdomen bullet missed most vital organs. "Why aren't you just letting me die...?"

Lily moaned loudly. Her eyes suddenly flew open and her face contorted in pain. "Oh, it hurts!" She tried to roll onto her back, but the bloodied mass that had formed around her tailbone prevented this, so she remained curled in the fetal position. Something cracked and she cried out and arched her back, tearing the splint the doctor had set on her backside.

The bloodied mass was growing longer and fatter by the second. On her hands, two bony digits were pushing their way through her skin. She looked at them in horror when she tried to cover her face. "Oh god..." Her tear-stricken eyes locked with Axel's. "Help me..." she pleaded weakly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 22, 2014, 02:19:05 PM**

Marita, upon learning that adrian was up ' If you woukld execuse me Don Stracci, but i'd like to go check on him, i helped stabilioze t\him before he arrived her' She said, in a very respective tone. " and dinner was delicious. my compliments to the che, or chefs' she added. marie and Rose were still eating, Rose was on her second disgh, as was Marie, this was far beter food than what she had at home..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 22, 2014, 03:30:55 PM**

Axel recoiled back at the sudden burst of movement from Lily. His leg bumped into the small metal table adjacent to the bed, tipping it over with a crash and scattering the medical instruments on the floor. He saw the extent of what was happening to her, saw the digits coming through the skin, saw the growth on her tailbone, and he felt his mind go numb. *What the fuck...*

He met her terrified eyes, and felt himself slowly pulled back into the moment. "It's okay... it's alright, I'm here..." Axel tried to say soothingly, rushing forward. He attempted to put his arms around her - with her thrashing, it was almost impossible to see if his touch was hurting her. "Look at me! Everything's going to be okay!"

Axel held her tightly and looked up at the Doktor. "Can't you give her something?! For fuck's sake, she's in pain!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 22, 2014, 04:20:43 PM**

(Highway 225 – En route to Stephenson Memorial)

"Because I want to keep my augments!" Sanjay snapped. "And besides, you really think Lupis isn't watching?"

"Who?" the construction worker asked.

"Shut up and drive!" Sanjay pressed the pistol further into the seat back.

(The Heights)

"Thank you for the dinner, Don Stracci. Your chefs are quite talented," Soren said as he finished off the fruit desert. "Now if you'll excuse me, I'd like to see how Lily is doing."

He carefully pushed the chair in and stood up. He then waited until Marita moved as he decided to follow her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 22, 2014, 04:49:59 PM**

Don Stracci nodded at Soren. "I understand. Thank you for the compliments." he said, nodding at the human.

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Tony noted how much pain Lily was in, flinching when he heard her cry out for help. "Jeez..." he walked slowly into the infirmary now, not wanting to disturb her too much. "Hey... Adrian." the ferret said softly, smiling at him. "Glad to see you're up and about. You're at my place now... I wanted to help you since you spared me back at the factory." he said. "How are you feeling?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 22, 2014, 05:02:05 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 22, 2014, 06:23:22 PM**

"Well, how exactly am I supposed to protect you when I'm crippled anyway?" snapped Emilena back. She sat up and the action made her cough again. There was blood this time...

"Drive faster!" she spat, irritated. "Can't we just shoot her and take the car ourselves?"

Lily coughed and threw up. There was another crack from somewhere in her body.

She threw up three more times and couldn't stop choking and crying. The anesthetic didn't appear to be helping at all. And the tattoo on her breast had dropped to 4.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 22, 2014, 07:22:27 PM**

"If you noticed, I don't fucking have legs!" Sanjay snapped. "Cars have to be modified for Snakes to drive them!"

He then turned to the driver. "Go faster!"

"I'móOkay." Sanjay shoved his pistol into her neck. The driver complied and pushed the accelerator to the floor, causing the car to go over 100 miles per hour.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 22, 2014, 10:39:44 PM**

"Aw, it's OK." Tony waved his paw dismissively here. "If not for you... I wouldn't be alive either. I wanted to help you as much as I could... so I'm glad you made it." he smiled now sincerely, but was interrupted by Lily's rather loud vocalizations and her becoming violently ill.

"Jesus!" Tony exclaimed, noting Lily retch three times. "Damn! Can't we do something?" he asked.

"That mechanical guy just pumped her full of painkillers and who knows what else!" Tony's doctor responded, pointing. "If that didn't help... I don't know what else will unless... we induce a coma chemically to try and stabilize her!" he said.

"I don't know..." Tony trailed off, watching the display with wide eyes and feeling completely powerless as the horrified Lily could only further change against her will.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 23, 2014, 02:17:55 AM**

Axel didn't register the sick spilling over his hands as he tried to hold Lily still, stopping her from struggling right off the bed. The cracking noise he'd heard kept replaying itself in his head. *It came from inside her... oh jesus...*

He heard her choking. "Come on, keep breathing! This'll... this'll be over soon!" Axel babbled helplessly. His head jerked up when Tony's doctor suggested inducing a coma. "What?! Are you kidding?!" He looked desperately between the two doctors in the room. "There's got to be something else you can do!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 23, 2014, 02:15:07 PM**

Lily coughed again. "Please...can you all just leave...I don't want you to see..." she threw up again. "...just go..."

She cast an arm out and grabbed the doctor's arm. "Don't...let Kojurro...in here," she said weakly but with conviction, meeting his eyes unblinkingly.

Emi's eyes went wide when she saw their destination. "We can't go there!" she gasped. "They've got my records! I killed somebody there! Why would we go to a government building anyway, we're *criminals*?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 23, 2014, 02:30:42 PM**

Sanjay shook his head. "Doctors aren't supposed to pass judgement. Besides, you got any better ideas?"

The car then pulled up in front of the hospital and carefully helped Emilena out. He then aimed his pistol at the construction worker. "Drive off as fast as you can. If you turn your head, I will shoot you!"

The Fruit Bat nodded and the vehicle sped along a short road and then up an onramp to an elevated highway.

Sanjay then carefully helped Emilena into the ER.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 23, 2014, 02:47:24 PM**

Marita soon reached the floor where adrian was being watched over, the door was ajar so she she herself iniside.. ' hi adrian" she said kindly.. ' how are you feeling?" she asked..
_ marie and rose finished thier seconds courses, and asked to be excused' Excuse me is there a a couple free rooms where rose and i can change and get freshed up?' Marie asked the Don.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 23, 2014, 03:33:48 PM**

"Um... maybe we should go... but I want her comfortable as you can at least make her, OK?" Tony asked his doctor, who nodded.

"I'll do what I can. I only suggested the chemical coma to ease her suffering... it looks as if she's mutating in a rather painful fashion." he pointed out to Axel. "You don't know what's wrong with her, do you? Like her medical history? Why this is happening?" he asked the rat.

Tony turned to Adrian now, offering him a small smile. "Is there... anything I can get you before bed? I'll try and provide it, though I think I'm gonna turn in soon, once I finish up my dinner." the ferret informed him.

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The don nodded. "Yes... our valets will show you to your rooms." Don Stracci said, standing up now as he ordered one of the waiters to take Tony's dish to the kitchen to keep it warm. "The guest rooms are up the stairs and to the right, down the hall. I've provided for each of you to have your own rooms, so no worries on that." the don said.

"If you'll follow me, please." One of the valets at the door bowed to Marie and Rose, and began showing them to their rooms.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 23, 2014, 04:16:42 PM**

Axel shook his head. "No, I don't, I... I've only known her for a few days and she... she can't remember..." He paused and closed his eyes, taking a deep breath and letting it out shakily. *Panicking won't help her!* He opened them and met the doctor's eyes. "No, I don't know Lily's medical history, or what's happening to her. But she's been getting worse." He bit his lip. "But that wolf... the wolf knows..." Axel muttered lowly.

He looked down at Lily. Picking up a cloth that had been knocked to the floor, he wiped the sick from her mouth gently. "Look, I'll be close by, okay? If you want me, just... just call out for me..." His ears flattened weakly as he left her side and crossed the room to where Tony and Adrian stood, wiping his hands with the towel as if in a daze. Thoughts of the wolf agent, and what he'd done to her kept rushing through his thoughts. He was too pre-occupied to wonder what Lily had meant when she'd pleaded for Kojuuro to be kept out.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 23, 2014, 07:26:39 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 23, 2014, 08:01:29 PM**

Don Stracci smiled at Kojuuro. "The pleasure was all mine! It was good to see you again. What are you up to these days, anyway? Still taking contracts?" he inquired, a smile creasing his face now.

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"Well... OK." Tony nodded now, smiling. "Just let me know if you do." he told Adrian. He then turned to Axel. "Wait... what wolf?" he asked, an idea suddenly forming in his mind. It couldn't be... *that* wolf, right?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 23, 2014, 09:12:47 PM**

Marie and Rose followed the valet of the stairs finding the guest room prepared and ready for them. warm, made up beds looked inviting, with a bassket of fruit, candy and other snacks sat on the bedstand. ' this place is wonderful! Marie exclaimed, as she went into bathroom in her room to take a nice long bath.
- how are you holding up marita asked Adrian. " felling better bnow huh? it was a close call with you, you know. a VERY close call."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 23, 2014, 11:07:13 PM**

"Doctors can pass judgment when the patient file reads 'Killed the last doctor who operated on her and a security guard,'" Emilena shot back. "I thought he said you were smart, this is the most moronic decision *anyone* I've met has ever made!"

But Lupis had been quite clear; follow all of Sanjay's orders to the letter. Grumbling and light-headed, Emilena allowed herself to be led to the place she'd fought police, guards, and Purifiers to escape last time.

Lily coughed and threw up again. She had refused to let go of the doctor's arm. "I meant it!" she pleaded, "I want...security tonight! Please!"

There was another cracking noise; her spine was realigning. Letting out a low moan of pain, she dug her nails into the cot as a shuddering pulse ran through the tumor on her backside.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 23, 2014, 11:28:31 PM**

Sure enough, when Sanjay bought Emilena in, the doctors, nurses and orderlies were scrambling to get her onto gurney and into the OR to stablize her. The few that recognized her, didn't care about her previous "escapades". They just cared about her wounds.

"What happened?" a Golden Eagle asked.

"Got shot during a robbery." Sanjay took a seat in the waiting room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 24, 2014, 01:09:49 AM**

As he joined Adrian, Tony and Marita, Axel glanced up at the fox. "Hey, I'm... I'm glad you're okay." He slowly looked at Tony, still chewing his lip. "When we were hiding out at Soren's house, a wolf came looking for her. He was dressed like some kind of... I don't know, a government spook or something... He told Soren he'd pay him if he turned her in. Then back at the factory, there he was again. He knows what's happening to her, if... if there's a way to stop it or reverse it or something..." His hands were balled into fists at his side.

Axel paused, staring at Tony. "Why? Have you seen him?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 24, 2014, 09:15:07 AM**

Tony hesitated now, thinking on things. He looked down, then nodded. "Yeah... I shot him from behind as he was retreating from Kojuuro and Lily at the abandoned factory. It was just a decoy though... he took me hostage, and agreed not to harm me if I let him escape. He took me to the edge of the factory, dropped me off there, and left."

The ferret paused here, wondering if he should mention the card. He glanced at Lily again, then over to Axel. "There may... be a way to get in contact with him." he said slowly. "If you could... well I mean, if such a thing were possible... what would you do?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 24, 2014, 09:57:29 AM**

Axel swallowed. "Whatever it takes to get him to talk..." The words sounded alien coming out of his mouth. He stepped closer to the ferret. "Look at her, Tony! He knows exactly what's going on, and he has to know how to help her! He *has* to!" Axel repeated, as if to reassure himself.

His tail flicked urgently. "We can't just sit here and wait for... whatever's happening to her to happen. If you have a way to get to him, you have to say. *Please*, Tony."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 24, 2014, 10:36:21 AM**

A few hours later, a doctor and nurse came in to address the cotridden Emilena. "All right, Miss Echo, you should be all set," the doctor said, reviewing a clipboard. "The bullet was removed safely and the wounds have been bandaged and fully cleaned. Just try to take it easy for the next few days." The nurse smiled and held out a copy of the diagnosis and a small cup of gelatin.

Emilena climbed out of the cot. "If you insist, doctor."

"Now there's one final thing," the doctor added, as Emilena closed the door so the three of them wouldn't be disturbed, "You don't have any payment information on file...how would you like to balance your bill?"

Emilena stepped up and put her hands on his shoulders, smiling seductively. "Check."

In a blur she grasped his head in between her palms and twisted his neck 270 degrees with an audible snap. The nurse stumbled backwards as his body hit the floor and opened her mouth to scream, but Emilena kicked her in the solar plexus, knocking the wind out of her. Dragging her hyperventilating body to the sink, Emilena smacked her head against the porcelain and then grabbed a scalpel and stabbed her repeatedly in the temple.

A few minutes later, she returned to the waiting room dressed in the nurse's clean skirt and blouse. "Mr. Bhat?" she said pleasantly, "They're ready for you in the aumbulance parking lot. If you could please come with me?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 24, 2014, 10:58:35 AM**

Now it was Tony's turn to bite his lip, and he finally nodded. "Well..." He walked out of the infirmary now, motioning for Axel to follow him, so he was out of earshot of Adrian and Marita for the moment. "He left a card with me... there's nothing on it, but I think it's his business card." Tony said slowly, in low tones. "Maybe... maybe we can trap him... capture him even; get him to talk. Or... I could call him, pretend I need his help, and ask him if he knows why Lily is the way she is." he suggested. "Unfortunately, I DO kind of owe him for sparing my life so... I kind of would prefer the latter option first." he admitted.

"If I call him... you're gonna have to promise to keep calm. No yelling... no indicating you're even near me, OK? I'm gonna talk to him like it's a private conversation. We'd need to come up with a *really* good plan if you want to trap him though." Tony warned. "He's smart... he used a decoy, and a cloaking device. Plus he'll most likely have backup at any meeting I arrange so... we can't go into this half-cocked. Do you understand?" he asked the rat. "So first things first... let me try and talk to him... see if I can at least find out why Lily is suffering and changing. Then... if that proves to be a dead end... we'll go from there. And don't worry... I won't let myself get talked into anything. I've already kind of thought about what I'm going to say." he reassured Axel as he thrust his paws into his pockets.

"So... you have a lighter or a match or anything I can use to get this ink to appear?" he asked now. "If not, we can always head to the kitchen." He didn't pull his paws out of his pockets just yet, however.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 24, 2014, 04:04:22 PM**

"You don't get it, he'll keep coming after her if we don't deal with him..." Axel muttered. Then he sighed and rubbed a hand through his hair, brushing aside a lock that had fallen over his eyes. "But... fine. We'll see if we can do it your way and get what we need without violence. The most important thing right now's to make sure Lily's okay." A small part of him was relieved - even in these circumstances, he didn't know if he'd have it in him to hurt someone. *But if it comes down to it...*

Axel nodded when Tony mentioned a lighter, patting his pockets and pulling a cheap, plastic one out of his jeans. "Good thing I didn't quit smoking," he said dryly as he handed it over. "And... look, thanks for telling me about the card."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 24, 2014, 04:55:20 PM**

"Hey... no problem." Tony replied, pulling out the card now as Axel handed him the lighter. "Look... if it comes to that... then we'll just have to get him first, OK?" the ferret asked, giving him a nod. "I promise... I'll do everything I can to lure him out into the open. But just give me this chance first... I want to obtain information, see what I can find out, and go from there."

He lit the lighter, and held it under the card, being careful not to set the card alight too. "OK... let's see..." he murmured, and just like that, ink began to appear.

Lupis Wing II
Central Intelligence Agency
1-500-111-1111

This card will evaporate in 30 seconds

"Oh! Crap!" Tony said, quickly digging in his pocket for his phone now as he handed the lighter back to Axel. He fumbled around with it, quickly pressing the buttons and dialing. He could at least save the number... and it was a very easy one to remember too.

Typing it in, he dropped the card now, letting it dissolve into nothing as he held the phone up to his ear, and listened to the ring...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 26, 2014, 12:47:22 PM**

(Stephenson Memorial Hospital)

Sanjay put down the newspaper he was reading and slithered out to the ambulance bay.

A few of the people in the waiting room gave odd looks at the "nurse" but no one paid too much attention.

(The Heights)

Soren made his way to the infirmary. He gasped as he saw the multitude of medical personnel around.

"What's going on?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2014, 05:09:28 PM**

The security guard in the ambulance bay nodded once to them as they passed.

Emilena stopped. "You're not going to ask why I'm this section? Or check my identification?"

The guard shrugged. "Don't care."

Emilena gave him something to care about when she walked up behind him and snapped his neck. Grabbing his rifle, she marched to the nearest ambulance, where two paramedics were wheeling out a recently-rescued heart attack victim.

"What the hell are you doing?" gasped one when he saw a nurse coming at him with a rifle. Emilena shot both of them, then opened the driver's seat door and cracked the driver's skull open with the butt of the rifle. "Get in," she told Sanjay, backing the ambulance out of the garage and crushing the legs of the man going into cardiac arrest on the pavement.

The phone picked up on the seventh ring. "Faux Manchu Chinese Cuisine, now offering takeout from 9am to 6pm, this is Mike how can I assist you today?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 26, 2014, 05:25:10 PM**

Tony motioned with his paw to Axel to speak to Soren as the human approached them now. He turned away, and took a few steps down the hall. "Yeah, yeah, very funny, Lupis." Tony said. "I'd like some lo mein, with a side of information, if you don't mind. It's Tony... the ferret you ran into earlier tonight." he stated, waiting to see if the act would be dropped.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 26, 2014, 05:39:45 PM**

Sanjay nodded as he slithered into the passenger's seat.

Making his way to the back of the ambulance, he soon found the medicine cabinet. Seeing as he had no lock, he simply smashed the glass front with the butt of his pistol and started rooting around for anything he could use to fill his venom tanks with.

But first, the washout procedure. He injected some saline into the metal port and moved his head around, sloshing the fluid around. Finding an empty basin, he clamped his metal fangs against it and sprayed out the water he had used to wash his venom tanks. A few more times and he was ready to go.

Sanjay grabbed the vial of etorphine – an immensely powerful narcotic painkiller intended for use in either heavy anthros like Rhino, Elephants or Bears or in Augments with either enhanced liver and kidneys or extreme resistance to morphine based narcotics. In anyone else, a standard dosage was assured to kill. Carefully taking a syringe and drawing up the potent chemical, he looked in a nearby mirror to find the small metal port just near the side of his "neck".

He carefully guided the needle into the port and gently slid it through the self-healing silicone septum. Depressing the plunger sent the entire contents into his empty tanks.

He tossed both syringes into the nearby sharps bin and rejoined Emilena. "All right, no we need to decide where we might find our target."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 26, 2014, 06:33:15 PM**

Axel gave an exhausted shrug as Soren approached. "That's something I'd like to know." He waited for Tony to move a little further away, then continued in a lower tone. "It's Lily, she's... Something's happening to her. She's got new fingers, and... and something's growing on her... just..." Axel's voice trembled slightly. He swallowed and gritted his teeth.

He glanced down the corridor at Tony, still on his phone. "But we think we know how to help her. You remember the wolf who came to your house, looking for her?" Axel turned back to Soren. "Tony's got a way to reach him. If we can just get *something* from him, anything that can tell us how to fix it..." he said, ears poised determidly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2014, 06:41:55 PM**

"Tony! Is that your name, then." The voice-alterer was turned off and the wolf's familiar voice shone through. "You wouldn't perchance be Tony Stracci? I ask based on where you're calling from. This isn't the usual line calling me from the Stracci mansion..."

"I've got an idea for that," Emilena replied, as she drove for the cul-de-sac where the clothing store had been. "I've got two leads. The first involves a clothing store that I saw them visit. We should investigate to see if the employees could let us know anything. Unfortunately, I don't think I can enter the store; I doubt they'll be as accommodating as the hospital was."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 26, 2014, 07:01:29 PM**

"I am, yes!" Tony confirmed. "I can see you're well connected. Have you done business with my family before?" he asked. He could hear the familiar voice of the lupine agent come through after the voice box was turned off, and knew he had gotten through to the right person.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2014, 07:13:40 PM**

"Your father is a great man, very reliable," Lupis replied. "I cannot confirm or deny having worked with him. But I'm certainly pleased to have established friendly relations with the future don of the Stracci Syndicate. Tony, you need to be more careful with yourself, you're a very valuable person. If you like (and your father approves), I'd be willing to work with you and teach you how to gain the connections to stay safely off the front lines yourself."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 26, 2014, 07:22:06 PM**

This was unexpected. Tony hadn't realized his father actually knew Agent Lupis... or at least, most likely knew Agent Lupis. And that suggestion... an idea suddenly formed in his mind. "Really? You wouldn't mind doing that?" he asked. "Wow that would be... something else!" he exclaimed, sounding excited. "I-I would of course have to ask my father, but yes, I'd love to do that! But hey... I called because those freaks I was trying to take out tonight... one of them you seemed to be after. I was wondering..." Tony turned a bit in the hall now, twirling some of his neck fur around his claw. "Is she valuable? And if so... if I could track her down for you and deliver her... would that be let's say... something worth my while?" he asked now, sounding hopeful. "Of course... I don't want to get the family directly involved in any government ops but... I was just... wondering... seeing as how you seemed to be after her and all... and I DO feel like I owe you for sparing me." he outlined.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2014, 07:58:53 PM**

There was a pause. "...tell me about her," was the only reply.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 26, 2014, 08:08:16 PM**

"Well... from what I could see, she looked human but... different. Stony skin... red eyes... hunchback... seemed to be in pain when I last saw her. She mean anything to you? Or the government?" he asked now. "Seems she was your target after all when I... nailed you in the back... or your decoy. Sorry... by the way, about that." he apologized.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2014, 04:01:15 AM**

"Never mind that," Lupis replied hastily. "Young Stracci, it's time for your first lesson in connections. That woman is incredibly dangerous, and I urge you to stay far away from her; your life is worth too much. At the moment, I have two far-less-valuable allies of my own on the way to collect her; I would be in your debt if you would offer them free room and board for a night. They can take care of her from that point. If your father has any objections, I am available at any time to speak with him. We've trusted each others judgment in the past."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 27, 2014, 08:42:37 AM**

Tony paused here at the mention of the words "incredibly dangerous." He narrowed his eyes, trying to gauge things for himself. Lupis now mentioned two of his more expendable people required room and board at his father's mansion. He closed his eyes, thinking fast. "Well... as you know, my father has ultimate say over who gets to stay here. I'm sure he'll say yes but... I'm gonna have to call you back regarding that, if that's OK?" he asked.

He dropped his voice now, speaking in very low tones. "Agent Lupis... before I go... when you said dangerous... how incredibly dangerous? Like... city-wide destruction apocalyptic movie dangerous? Or... what I'm trying to say is... does she pose a threat to those not even in her vicinity? I'm worried about my family, after all. And well... practically everyone else in this city." he murmured, rubbing his forehead.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2014, 01:07:31 PM**

"If I could answer that question, she'd only be 'very dangerous,'" Lupis replied. "The reason she qualifies for 'incredibly dangerous' is that we truly don't know what she's capable of. But currently, her damage seems to extend to those only in the general vicinity, and mostly involve mental trauma. But my information comes from a time when she looked nothing like the creature you just dsscribed. For the good and yours and your family's mental health, it'd be best for you to be rid of her as soon as possible."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 27, 2014, 01:31:17 PM**

Tony listened to Lupis's information, finally looking down the hall at Axel and Soren. "All right... well, I'll let my father know about your expendables, and see what he says. I'll call you back as soon as I can. Thanks for the info, and I'll be in touch." he said, pushing the hang up button now.

Sighing, he dropped his phone into his pocket, and strode back down the hall to where the rat and human were located. "How much do you really know about Lily? I mean... *really* know about her?" the ferret asked Axel now. "According to Lupis, she's 'incredibly dangerous.' That's mostly because he doesn't know what she's capable of, according to him, but that she causes mental trauma to those around her. Now... I'm going to bet she doesn't do this willingly but... do we really know if she's safe or not?" he asked, looking between the two of them.

"Oh and also... he's sending two of his 'expendables' here." Tony sighed. "I need to get dad's permission for that one though, and he indicated as such on the phone. Don't worry... I don't think he knows Lily is actually here but... this warrants a plan, all the same. Do we get Lily out of here... do we ambush these two somewhere on the road leading up to the Heights? Do we get my dad to just say no, they can't stay here? How do you guys want to play this?" he asked, placing his paws on his hips and looking back and forth from Soren to Axel.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 27, 2014, 03:52:07 PM**

Axel gaped at Tony. "*Dangerous?!* Are you kidding me? Does she *look* dangerous to you?!" he spluttered. "I mean, no, I... I don't know that much about her, but..." Axel shook his head firmly. "No. It's bullshit. He's lying to you Tony, you can't listen to him!"

He frowned as Tony told them about the two Lupis was sending over. "They're coming to take Lily?" Axel slumped back against the wall as he tried to think. He let his breath out unsteadily. "Alright... at least we know... Gives us time to prepare..." He rubbed his eyes then looked up at the two standing with him. "I don't think we should move Lily. There's nowhere else that's safer than here, or at least not close by. And if we can't get Lupis to talk, there's a good chance the people he's sending know something about her..." Axel grimaced. "I... I think we should do what he says. Let them come here, but then when they arrive we can grab them and... get what we need. If we ambush them on the road here, there's a chance they could get away, then they'd know for sure she's here."

He looked between Tony and Soren. "But... jesus, I don't know. What do you guys think?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 27, 2014, 04:07:10 PM**

"Now hold on, calm down, Axel!" Tony said, raising his paws before him now. "They aren't coming to take Lily... he gave no indication he even thinks she's here. He said they needed room and board tonight. That's all. I don't know why the hell he thought my place would make a good stop to do that, but whatever. I guess because my father and him are connected... which also makes me uneasy. But then again... he could be lying about that too. My father has connections... but they're mostly with judges and politicians. People he can lean on...

government agents... don't hold much interest to him, and contacts with them can be dangerous." the ferret pointed out now.

"OK so you're saying... let them in, then take them?" Tony asked. "He made them sound like they were... expendable to him, so I doubt they'd know anything about her." he shook his head here. "They're probably just boneheads taking orders." he sighed. "Look... if we take them here... and Lupis finds out they failed... you don't think he'd hold me or my family responsible, do you?" he asked now. "That was kind of... why I was hoping we could move her, and lure them into a trap. Kill them or something to send a message, but keep her and my family out of each others' business. My father WOULD kill me if I got him involved in dirty government ops... and no offense to Lily, but she stinks. She reeks of black ops bullshit. Why ELSE would Lupis have attacked her earlier tonight?" Tony pressed.

He rubbed his forehead again. "OK look... let's start over, right? We have to do this in a way that doesn't spark a war between the government and my family, keeps Lily safe, and gets us information about what's happening to her. How do we do this?" he asked, looking around now. "I'm not too worried about my father's end... if things get bad, he can easily handle himself, but I want to play this safe. Is there a way we can meet and satisfy all three objectives?" he inquired.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 27, 2014, 05:22:25 PM**

Kojuuro dropped down from the ceiling, smirking a little as he landed next to the others.
"You could use me."
He said simply...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 27, 2014, 05:57:06 PM**

Tony was a little startled by this, but then folded his arms across his chest and nodded. "Go ahead... I'm listening." he told Kojuuro.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 27, 2014, 07:03:25 PM**

Axel flinched as Kojuuro landed amongst them. "*Holy crap*, you could at least warn us if you're gonna do that, Koj..." He nodded along with Tony, waiting for his pulse to return to normal. "Yeah, I'm up to any ideas, this... this isn't exactly the kind of stuff I'm used to planning."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 27, 2014, 09:22:20 PM**

Kojuuro smirked and crossed his arms.
"Simple. Have me safeguard Lily once those thugs of his show up. IF things go down, then you have an easy scapegoat. After all, both times he's seen me, then you can simply say that she hired me to protect her. If I live, then he won't find out, or if he does, again, I'm just Lily's guard. And if I fail, then, at the least, I will take them out with me."
He said coldly...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 12:05:40 AM**

(The Heights)

Anne emerged from the bathroom and pulled up a chair next to Axel, Soren and Tony.

Soren looked around. He shuddered as he recalled what Agent Lupis said. "I hate to say this but we need to ditch Lily – at least until his two flunkies are gone...or we make them 'gone'."

"Easier said than done," Anne replied as she sipped some wine. She then smiled as she looked at the bottle of wine on the end table. "Because of my high drug tolerance and large size, you can feed them – and myself a dish laced with what would normally be a fatal dose of a narcotic."

"First off, what if they're Augments with enhanced drug resistance? And secondly, that was the most fucking transparent plan ever to get high!"

Anne rubbed her horn and blushed a bit. "Yeah, you caught me."

Soren rubbed his forehead. "Maybe we can let them stay for the night and simply kill them while they sleep?"

(Elevated Highway)

"You said that this 'Soren Almaya' is a licensed cyberneticist, right? Maybe a few cybernetics suppliers might have some info on him?" Sanjay offered as he watched the vehicles passing them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2014, 12:38:27 AM**

Emilena nodded. "After we check the clothing store, we should check Pelvanida next. They might have some dirt."

She pulled into the parking lot and looked around. "Can you grab me an outfit that isn't a nurse's uniform while you're in there?"

The tumor on Lily's backside was straightening out. Growing longer and tapering. Simultaneously the bony protrusions on the side of each hand were covering over in scar tissue, stopping the unending bleeding. As Lily stared in horror at her own hands, she flexed her left digits and the new protrusion followed suit. It was a finger.

This was going to be a long night...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 28, 2014, 02:22:23 AM**

Axel shook his head at Soren's suggestion of killing them. "No... Tony's right, this *is* still the Government we're talking about. If we're going to... kill them, it can't be here, and it can't be straight away. At least, not until we know a little more about what we're dealing with." He chewed his lip. "Could... could we catch them and maybe force them to contact Lupis and tell him that Lily's not here, that's they're going to go investigate somewhere else?" He glanced between all of them. "I mean, Lanthae isn't exactly a safe place. If we made sure there wasn't any... evidence of them left... maybe we could say they left, and that was the last we saw of them?" *Jesus, a couple of days ago the toughest choice I had to make was what I was gonna eat for dinner...*

He glanced at Kojuuro. "Maybe that's..." Axel trailed off as what Lily had said to the doctor came back to him. *Don't let Kojuuro in here...* His eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Erm... hey, why don't you help us with, ah, whatever we decide to do with Lupis' men? We can always get some guards to stay down here and protect her..." Axel looked meaningfully at Tony. "Right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 28, 2014, 09:12:27 AM**

Tony listened to everything presented to him, and nodded, taking it all in, his mind whirring away and piecing everything together. "I think I've got it!" he said, snapping his claws. "Why don't we combine some ideas?" he asked. "I think I was over thinking things before." he admitted.

"Look... my dad is exceptional... scary even, at making people disappear. He's so good at it, there's never been a single disappearance successfully linked to him. Now let's do this..." he waved his paws outward a bit from his chest to emphasize. "I can put Lily in a place that only my family knows about. It's got state of the art security, and it's so secret, no one outside our immediate family knows where it is. Trust me when I say, she won't be far though. We hide her there for the night, and invite Lupis's goons in. They of course won't be permitted to poke around here without my father's permission, and good luck to them even if they somehow manage it, because it's quite literally impossible to access the place without certain conditions being met, none of which they'll have. Inviting them in to stay the night will get me into Lupis's good graces, as he mentioned he'd owe me one for doing this."

Tony paused here to clear his throat. "We either kill them as they leave, and my father disposes of the bodies, or simply just let them leave in the morning. Then, using our new hardware, we can track Lupis down, and try and find out what's happening to Lily. Oh and... on the off chance Lupis himself shows up and recognizes all of you, we say we ditched Lily in the district where the factory was, because her mutation was making it so we couldn't possibly safely move her, and we were worried about law enforcement showing up with all the gunfire and explosions that were going off. How's that sound?" the ferret asked, looking around at them. "Anyone want to add or amend anything?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 02:10:46 PM**

Quote from: bestariana1girl,Jan 28 2014 on 02:41 PM

> ;)

(OOC - Hey, just so you know, if you want to join, please see this thread (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12309) and follow the sign up form.)

(The Heights)

Soren smiled as he listened to Tony's plan. "Tony, is it customary for Don Stracci to give gifts to important people? If so, we can hide a tracer inside said gift and follow them. Granted, I still want them dead because I think they're those Purifier goons I met from before but this time, I think they might be more valuable to us alive."

(Purifier Compound)

"Marcus! Please respond!" Aaron shouted into his mask mounted radio. He and his crew were desperately trying to put out the burning transformer. He helped a large Clydesdale position a foam sprayer and aimed it at the base of the fire. White fire retardant foam covered the entire area but there were still some puddles of oil that were still burning.

(Lanthae Fashions)

As Sanjay slithered through the shop, the clerk, a gangly black teen looked at him. "Welcome to Lanthaeó"

"Official police business," Sanjay said, cutting off the clerk's spiel. He flashed his Palladia Cybernetics security badge, which looked much like an official Lanthae Police Department badge.

"Uh, what's going on?"

"I need your security footage. We've had a murder in Stephenson Memorial and we have reason to believe that the suspect was in your shop. Failure to turn the tapes over can result in your prosecution for obstructing justice."

The clerk gulped and ejected two large flash drives from underneath the counter. It was then Sanjay was aware of his clothing, sticky with the dried healing gel. He then grabbed some clothing and paid for them with his credit chit.

"A little compensation," he said with a wink.

The Indian Cobra tossed the clothes into the passenger seat as he hauled himself up. "I managed to finagle the security cam footage out of the clerk."

He then grabbed his clothes and slithered into the back to change.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 28, 2014, 03:07:54 PM**

Tony though a moment and nodded at Soren. "Yes!" he exclaimed. "My father will usually lavish a gift or two upon guests. This could be a good opportunity to find out where they report to and yes... I agree. Even though... they might be my old comrades... I won't stand in the way of your vengeance, Soren." he told the human sincerely. "Do you have a convenient tracking device we can use? If not... I'm sure my dad does." he chuckled.

"So... does that plan work then? If so, I can transfer Lily now, tell my dad the plan, and get him to confirm with Lupis that his goons can spend the night." Tony stated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 03:36:53 PM**

Soren put his glass of water aside and templed his hands. "I would prefer using a commercially made tracer but if need be, Axel and I maybe able to whip one up. It'll be shitty but it should do the trick."

Anne was now on her fourth glass of wine. Despite that, she seemed perfectly sober. "One thing," she said. "As someone who's been traced many times – cops, drug dealers, ordinary crooks, etc – we have to assume that Lupis's goons are savvy about tracers. They might do things like 'lose' the gifts, rip them apart looking for bugs when they have a moment or other such things."

Soren nodded. "So tell us about the times you were bugged?"

Anne sighed. "Well, a dealer who became an informant hid tracers inside drug capsules. Turns out, I swallowed it. Fucking cops got to me before I could shit the damn thing out. Now I just cut open every pill I get."

Soren shook his head. "Too obvious. We can't just give them pills."

"The other time was when I picked up a dropped 4000 cred chit...surprise! It was bugged but I couldn't tell because, well let's face it. I'd have to cut the thing open and waste four grand."

Soren smiled. "That might work. Unfortunately, bugs that small and thin are hard to get. On the other hand, Don Stracci could probably procure one for us. But giving money might arouse suspicion."

Anne poured herself another glass of wine. "Tuck the bug behind a frame of a painting and paint over it. They'll never know."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2014, 03:43:55 PM**

"Did you grab me anything like I asked, or do I have to walk around looking like Nurse Ratched?" Emilena muttered, noting the lack of clothing for herself. *Adrian is a much better partner, he actually thinks of me every once in a while...* she found herself thinking bitterly.

She pulled out of the cul-de-sac and headed for Pelvanida. "How do you plan on getting into the cybernetics facility anyway? I sure as hell don't have clearance."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 03:55:25 PM**

"Look in the bag," Sanjay replied.

He then looked at the streetlights that were currently illuminating the elevated highway. "As for the cybernetics facilty, we don't get in. We wait until someone gets out..."

Sanjay then coiled up on the seat. "Of course, we could break in."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 28, 2014, 04:01:33 PM**

"Well... we might not need to give them pills to get them to swallow a tracer," Axel said hesitantly. "Tony, couldn't your dad get another dinner ready for them, and then we slip the tracer into their food?" He looked around, unsure. "I mean, it's not like they'd be looking through every dish that gets brought to them, right?"

Marcus groaned, willing his body to move. Little by little, he began to get some feeling back in his limbs. After a few more minutes, he was able to clumsily pull himself upright, gripping tightly to the railing. There was a flash of pain, and he brought his attention down to his hand. He'd landed on his thumb as he fell, dislocating it. With a grunt, he snapped it back into place, then turned his attention back to Aaron's voice, which was crackling from the radio he'd thrown away.

Staggering inside the watchtower, he snatched up the radio. "Aaron, what's the situation?! Did they get away?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2014, 04:01:40 PM**

"You're the plan guy, you figure it out," Emilena shot back. "Since you and Lupis both think I'm an idiot or something and can't come up with my own plans!"

But she had come up with her own plan. She just wasn't ready to tell it to Sanjay yet.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 28, 2014, 04:09:56 PM**

marita dragged out a computer from a nearby desk and was typing away. ' the latest bugs are thin and look like the stick tac you find on kids posters in schools. we;'ll have to pass it off as something to hang the painting on the wall with. problem is that kind of stuff isnt cheap. 500 dollars an once, believe it or not.' she saidto the others.. ' how much do you think we'll need.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 28, 2014, 04:25:50 PM**

Tony nodded now. "OK... well I think the food could work... and it'd have to be of the type that it wouldn't be.. voided easily." he said here, grimacing. "My dad's got some pretty small ones I think, about what Marita described. I think I saw a movie once where someone basically forced a bug down an unconscious guy's throat without him knowing and he wasn't able to get rid of it initially. Anyway, I'm gonna go and move Lily now. You guys think of a good way to bug our quarry, and I'll be back." he said, moving back into the infirmary now.

He cleared his throat as he stood over her now, and looked at her with concern. "Um... Lily? It's Tony. We're gonna... well I'm gonna move you to somewhere secure for tonight, OK?" he corrected himself. "The others agreed. We're trying to trap Lupis, or at least learn more about your condition. Are you OK enough for me to move your bed?" he asked, noting that fortunately, it was on wheels, like all the beds in his infirmary.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2014, 04:59:27 PM**

Lily was drenched in sweat, the blood-stained sheets were clinging to her skin like a straitjacket.

She nodded weakly, not making eye contact or uncurling from the fetal position she had assumed. Her new tail dangled off the side of the bed, in the way of one of the wheels.

Emilena parked the Ambulance just out of sight of Pelvanida. "There's the place," she said. "They close to the public in thirty minutes. Someone will be leaving the faculties at that time I wager."

Done driving, she changed into the outfit Sanjay had picked out; appropriate rugged hiking clothes. Probably the best outfit she could ask for given the circumstances.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 28, 2014, 05:41:01 PM**

Tony felt terrible for Lily, looking at how much pain she was in, and how she barely registered his presence. "I'm gonna have to move your tail first..." he said, noting it hadn't been there before. He gingerly picked it up, and laid it down behind her on the bed. "Try to keep it there... OK?" he asked, beginning to wheel her bed forward now. "Dok, you'll come with me to this location to monitor her, OK?" he informed the Doktor.

Wheeling her bed out into the hallway, he began pushing it towards a particular hall. The ferret only wished there was something further he could do, as she looked absolutely in shock over what was occurring, not to mention in pain. He reached down, beginning to rub her shoulder now. "It's all right... we'll find out what's happening to you... I promise." he said softly. "We're not giving up on you.. we're not." he reassured her. He'd need to call his dad once they reached the particular hallway he was thinking of. "I'm taking you to a place my family uses...

it's soundproofed and hidden rather well, so... you should be safe for the night. Nobody can access it but us."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 28, 2014, 08:18:48 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 09:50:01 PM**

(The Heights)

"Yeah but if they bite down wrong and find electronics...We're fucked," Anne said.

Soren listened to Marita's response. "Perfect! Those flexible circuit bugs. Expensive – 5,000 creds for one – and short lived but almost impossible to detect."

Anne's eyes lit up. "I heard about them. They come with everything inside a small stick of putty. If we can find a gift, we can simply wedge it into into an appropriate hollow and paint over it. Failing that, we can carefully smash it flat and paint over it."

"Good thinking," Soren said to Marita.

Anne looked at Kojuuro. "We can't use anything that might entail drilling or cutting into a gift. And if we implant tracers on them, we run the risk of them noticing – or worse, catching us in the act."

(Purifier Compound)

"They got away. We nearly drowned after the fuckers set fire to a transformer and the tunnels flooded. We're currently trying to put out said transformer," Aaron said.

He then put the hose down. "Luckily, the fire's almost out – but the power's gonna be down for a bit. They got the main transformer."

(Pelvanida Cybernetics)

Sanjay got out of the vehicle and slithered towards the main entrance to the building. An armed guard stopped him. "Sorry, sir but Pelvanida's closing in half an hour."

Sanjay flashed his badge. "I'm with the Lanthae PD and I need toó"

He was interrupted by a Human exiting the building. He slithered after the man.

"Excuse me sir!" he exclaimed.

The man turned around. "Yes?"

"Lanthae PD," he said flashing his badge. "I need to ask you some questions."

"Look Officer, I have to get home to my kids. Am I free to go?"

"Not until you answer my questions."

The man sighed. "Fine."

"Name?"

"James Altyn."

"Occupation?"

"Cybernetics researcher at Pelvanida Cybernetics. Specializing in replacement organs."

Sanjay tapped a hand against his chin. "Now, do you know anyone named Soren Almaya?"

James nodded. "Yeah, he works on my hands." He showed Sanjay his hands, including the extremely fine fingertips.

Sanjay nodded. "Now, Mr. Altyn, did Mr. Almaya mention anything about the Purifiers?"

James nodded. "Yeah, he wanted to know if they're the ones who destroyed my hands. I told him the truth – they were."

"When did you meet him?"

"A day or so ago in the parking lot. Anyways, am I free to leave?"

"Yes you are." Sanjay slithered back to the ambulance and into the passenger's seat. James took off running to his Tesla Roadster and sped off.

"Well, it looks like one of the workers, a certain James Altyn,did in fact meet Almaya yesterday. Says the Purifiers mutilated his prosthetic hands," Sanjay said. "Now all we gotta do is find him."

(OOC - one credit = $0.10)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2014, 10:25:25 PM**

Emilena, however, was no longer in the vehicle.

Lily could barely concentrate on what Tony was saying. One of the wheels on the cart was a sliver unbalanced with the others, not even to the extent a normal human could even register. But it was enough to send jolts up her spinal cord with its every revolution.

All she could tell was that he was taking her somewhere hidden, where the others wouldn't know where she was. She didn't have the strength to protest or agree, but all she could think was, *Will anyone know if I die there...?*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 28, 2014, 11:35:40 PM**

"OK... here we are." Tony said softly, and pushed one of the wooden panels in the wall that basically looked like every other panel on the wall. A security panel then opened up. Tony bent down for a retinal scan of his right eye while he took his phone out of his pocket and dialed his father. He then placed his paw on the paw reader, which read his data and confirmed who he was. He then entered in the nine digit security code in the keypad. "Dad." Tony said as his father picked up. "I need you to activate the safe room from your floor. I'm moving one of our guests down there now... before you panic... just... listen..." he said, outlining exactly what was going on over the phone as he waited for his father to activate the safe room access point from one of the other hidden security panels in the manor.

His father heard him out, then sighed. "I don't like this. Lupis is a good contact... are you really sure you know what you're doing, son?"

"Dad... I don't really have any other choice. Lupis would attack this place regardless of what we did if he found out Lily was with us." Tony said as the wall suddenly slid back and then down to reveal a large elevator. Their safe room was designed to only be accessible if two family members activated it at roughly the same time. He wheeled Lily's bed in and hit the down button. The elevator would take her to a room deep under the cliff. No one outside of Tony's immediate family even knew this room existed. The guards, consigliere, capos, all were in the dark about it, making interrogating them a pointless task.

"Well all the same... if he did that... he wouldn't do that. He's not stupid." his father pointed out. "He knows how easily I could retaliate. Anyway, you want me to call him and invite his... thugs over?" Don Stracci asked now.

"Sure... do it. Nothing will link back to you... I promise." Tony said.

"Nothing will... don't you worry about that." the don said.

The elevator arrived now, and Tony pushed the bed into a rather sumptuous room. This one was slightly more Turkish in its furnishings, and was large as well, comprising a kitchen, a bathroom, several bedrooms, and a living room. "OK... here you are." he patted her shoulder again. "Listen... you need anything..." Tony fidgeted with a remote control type thing in his paws now that had originally been on a table down here. "You push this red button, OK?" he asked, holding the remote directly in front of her face for her to see. "It'll notify my phone that you need help. I'm gonna leave this with you." he said, placing the device on the bed next to her. "Hey... you watch her, OK?" Tony asked the Doktor now.

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Don Stracci dialed Lupis's number after he got off the phone with his son.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 28, 2014, 11:41:42 PM**

Sanjay's hood involuntarily flared out, a sign that he was afraid. He unholstered his pistol and closed his eyes, allowing his cybernetic "third eye" to take over. All he saw were the lights beginning to cool down as they were shut down and the hot glow of the factory's exhaust pipes.

"Emilena, I got the info!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 29, 2014, 01:12:46 AM**

This time, Lupis picked up immediately. "Now there's the number I'm used to seeing from this address. I figure you're calling about your son?"

Emilena was sprinting through the woods outside Pelvanida, as she had been since Sanjay left the ambulance.

Those cock-sure strategists, both of them... she thought bitterly, *thinking they can boss me around and that I can't tell they both secretly look down on me...I am not a jarhead to be ferried around gunning for others! I'll capture Lily myself!*

She had done some research when left alone. While Sanjay was in the clothing store, she had gone to the phone company across the street and obtained the call history of the only number she knew from her old team; Adrian's. A quick search on the police database showed that the last number dialed directed to Stracci manor, the crime lord's. She could regain the trail from there, if they'd even left.

Suddenly she and her thoughts went reeling as something in the shadows tripped her. Picking herself out of the dirt, she discovered a weathered backpack containing bottled water and protein bars. Helping herself (she'd forgotten when she last ate), she quickly continued on her exodus.

Lily whimpered. The pain was lessening (not saying much, considering what it had been), and her mind was wrapping it's head around the feeling from when Tony had picked up her tail. Her brain was having a hard time comprehending the feeling of nerves from a body part that hadn't existed yesterday. And even something as simple as grasping the bloodstained sheets for comfort had become awkward with the extra finger.

"Am I...am I a monster?" she tried to ask the empty chamber, but all that her vocal cords could create was a hoarse growl. She'd lost the ability to speak.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 29, 2014, 02:39:43 AM**

"So we bug the gifts?" Axel nodded. "Alright, I can get on board with that... I mean, as long as we're careful and hide them properly." He thought about it some more then nodded eagerly, glad they now had a plan could work. "Yeah, let's go with that!"

He looked to the side as Tony approached. "Is... is she okay? She's safe?" Axel asked restlessly, standing up straight.

Marcus swore. He put a hand to his neck and pulled out the small dart, dropping it to the floor and swinging around to scan the watchtower. But, of course, Lupis was nowhere to be seen. *Son of a bitch...* Marcus crushed the dark underfoot with disgust.

He raised the radio and growled into it. "I'm on my way."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 29, 2014, 09:27:46 AM**

Tony couldn't even understand what was being asked of him... it just sounded like a growl. A growl that sounded nothing like Lily. He closed his eyes on the ride up, exiting the elevator after a bit, and walking back to where he'd left everyone. Axel was the first to ask how she was doing.

"She's safe but... she's not OK." Tony said heavily, his face fallen. "She's changed a lot... she doesn't... even look human anymore. And I don't... even know if she can talk. She let out this growl in response to me that... sounded more animal than English." he stated sadly. "I don't.... honestly know if she's going to be OK. But I left her with a way to contact me if anything changes. The Doktor is watching her and well... she's safe at least." He informed the rat, knowing it probably wasn't what Axel wanted to hear.

"Yes, I am." Don Stracci replied. "He told me about some of your people needing a place to stay. Let me be clear Lupis... I'm in the middle of some very important business, and my fellow associates might not like seeing government pukes walking around my house. Might make them uneasy... catch my drift?" he asked. "They don't stay longer than a night, and they confine themselves to the area I confine them to, no protests. Any violation of this agreement and well... make sure they understand the consequences of failing to abide by my rules before coming here. And also as usual, they'll have to check any weapons they have with them." he informed the wolf.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 29, 2014, 11:06:09 AM**

"Believe me, it was not my intention for you or your family to get involved," Lupis replied quickly. "I'm honestly not sure how Tony became immersed with this group. But I have reason to believe they are harboring an individual who jeopardizes our national security. A woman named Lily North has proven to be an incredible danger to both herself and those around her, and I've been trying to apprehend her for over a week now." Lupis paused. "The rewards would be substantial to anyone who played a part in her recapture. I'm not even talking money at this point." Lupis trusted that the don would understand the political benefits of assisting the government in a capture of this nature. "You know I'm a man of my word, Don. With your cooperation, my men wouldn't have to stay longer than five minutes."

Emilena continued her sprint. She was near the edge of the forest, halfway to the manor. Every police officer knew the manor's address by heart, considering it was the hub of organized crime in the city...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 29, 2014, 11:21:40 AM**

Don Stracci paused here, his eyes shifting from left to right as they remained narrowed in that squint he so often wore. "Are you implying..." He began, "that I should somehow assist in your search for this fugitive? Agent Lupis... you should know me better than that. I never mix my family business with government affairs... it's too messy!" he said, waving an unlit cigar in his paw now as he paced through his office. It wasn't anything new though... Lupis was always trying to pressure him to do something or other for the government. "While I provide indirect support... I can't in any good conscience lend my family's extensive resources to something like this. I mean if I were ever linked to you... think of the implications of that." he said, tsking now as he shook his head. "That just won't do! You have my house for one night for your... people. After that, they're on their own. Of course... if I do find anything on this... what did you say her name was? Lily North? I'll be sure to send it your way." he said now.

"Of course..." he paused here, deciding to play the card. "I *might* be induced to more effectively cooperate if I knew exactly why you're hunting this woman. You know as well as I do your targets aren't always... legit, shall we say? If you could provide me with some details... then maybe I could be persuaded." Bribes were below him. He knew the government's promises weren't worth shit half the time anyway. Lupis didn't have direct authority to give him anything substantial he'd really want, after all, and thus, the don considered his hints of further assistance as empty for the moment. Sure he *might* be able to deliver on some things, but Don Anthony Stracci didn't trust the government any further than they trusted him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 29, 2014, 11:48:19 AM**

There was a pause. "There are only three people other than myself who know the full story behind Ms. Lily North," Lupis said slowly. "I cannot in good faith tell you much. But for your own safety, I can warn you why she is dangerous."

He chose his words very carefully. "Ms. North is unknowingly developing psionic abilities. Until this occurred about a week ago, she was a completely normal housewife, so she has no training and no idea what is happening to her. We've witnessed her possess the minds of others and get them to do her bidding. As we speak, one of your housemaids might be unlocking the back door to your kitchen to let her in, without even realizing they are doing it. She can also predict danger before it occurs; she receives a flash of insight that informs her of her future killer's whereabouts and thoughts, letting her react accordingly. Every time she uses this ability, she gains a little more psionic power and a little less of her sentience. She might have developed new abilities since we were able to study her, I can't say."

He paused. "Anthony...speaking as a friend. Even if you don't help me...keep an eye on Tony. He's trying to get himself involved in all of this, and I don't want to see him get hurt. He's a good kid and he's got a great future ahead of him. But when I found him, he was in an abandoned factory having a shootout with some Purifiers in a biological cleansing hit. I got him away safely, but that isn't where a boy of his stature should be hanging out."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 29, 2014, 12:06:00 PM**

Don Stracci listened to the information relayed to him, committing to his memory all the important details. "I know full well what my son's been doing." he said, looking from left to right again. "I agree fully with you. I intend to keep him close from now on. I thought a little life lesson couldn't hurt... but he's back now."

He smiled to himself, taking a pen from his shirt pocket and clicking it as he wandered over to his desk. "Well Agent Lupis... I do believe we're making progress, as they call it. However... I'd have to say, with all due respect... Ms. North sounds like something your government 'friends' have no business possessing. No one should possess her in fact... that sounds like it would give whoever does... an... unfair advantage, should we say? And you know I'm all about maintaining our status quo." he said kindly.

"However, with that said, you've piqued my interest. Something stood out to me that you mentioned. You said something about her being a housewife... if I'm going to start my own inquiries, I'd like to start with the husband. What can you tell me about him?" Don Stracci asked, his pen hovering over a notepad he had on his desk now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 29, 2014, 02:06:42 PM**

"Mine not to reason why," Lupis replied dryly. "I'm just following orders. And I'm sure you have the resources to find Denny North on your own." Lupis knew that, at least as far as he could tell, Denny was a dead end, so he didn't mind revealing this information. "Thank you for agreeing to house them for one night. They'll be on their best behavior and will keep to themselves. You shouldn't have any trouble at all."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 29, 2014, 02:45:03 PM**

Don Stracci scribbled the name down, interested, but noting that Lupis didn't exactly say he agreed with him, even for "old time's sake." Well that was precisely why Don Stracci was a family based ferret... and not government based. He couldn't rely on these assholes... and Lupis had just proven it, which was the don's real motivation for talking to him anyway. A true friend of the family would've agreed about Lily's condition being too dangerous to merely hand over to the government... oh well. On top of that... he'd gotten his son "out of there?" Bullshit!

If that were so, why was it these strangers delivering his son... and not Lupis?

"I'm sure." Don Stracci murmured to Lupis's last bit, and inhaled. "Right... well, I think that about wraps up the initials. Good speaking to you Lupis." the charm was back in his tone. "I'll be in touch. And if you ever get bored pushing pencils... my offer to you still stands!" As he hung up, he gazed at his phone for a moment, then dialed Max. "Mr. Fontana, get me everything you have on a Denny North... spelled like it sounds on both names. No, he's not someone I wish to ice... just get me info on him." He then hung up, and looked up at the ceiling.

Finally... he'd been wanting to fuck with that stiff-assed agent for years. It was a game they'd always play... feigning concern for each other... but Don Stracci's family always came first. *Always*. Maybe now he could seriously screw with the government... and perhaps even unlock the secrets to Lily's ability himself, in time. But first things first. He'd need to inform his son of the developments, and also let him in on his intentions. Oh this would be good... Lupis's goons wouldn't even realize she was right under their noses! It would be rich when he could finally rub that wolf's nose in that little detail! Right... to business then!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 29, 2014, 03:33:15 PM**

"Always good to talk to you, best wishes," Lupis hung up the phone and rubbed his temples. "Why did the damn Straccis have to get involved in this?" He muttered bitterly.

"Sir?" Agent Extasis had entered the room and was waiting politely for the call to end.

"It better be good news!" snapped the wolf.

"The tracers indicate our marks have split up. From analysis it appears Echo has abandoned Bhat."

"Hmmm. Honestly, she stuck with him longer than I expected. Where are they both headed?"

Extasis handed him a printout of their movements starting with the moment of departure in the Pelvanida parking lot.

"You'll need to fill in for Echo, go find Mr. Bhat," Lupis ordered. "Then head to Stracci manor. I suspect they know more than they're letting on."

"Me?" Extasis looked uncomfortable. "But that means I'll get--"

"It wasn't a request! I don't have time for this!" Lupis tuned his fellow agent out and concentrated on the printout, trying to gauge where Officer Echo was most likely headed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 29, 2014, 06:17:49 PM**

'well its a good thing I get to contribute to this little adventure' Marita said , waving off the prause. whatever was going on, she was too involved in it now to back out, same went for Marie And Rose. '' same what item are you going to 'give' to them?" she asked.the others..
- thids sounds like something out of a movel' Marie said ' nah in moveels theres always a dues ex machina to get folks off.. here not so much" marita replied.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 29, 2014, 08:38:07 PM**

Don Stracci showed up a few moments later, Tony noticing his father approach. "Oh... sir." he said, bowing his head a little.

"Got off the phone with Lupis." the don informed them.

"And?" Tony asked hopefully.

"I still don't trust him. But never did to begin with. He told me some things about that woman you're trying to protect though. Things which may or may not be true." He regarded the group now as if he were sizing them up for... something. "First off... she's apparently a latent psionic with the power to control others' minds. This alone sounds incredibly dangerous... and NOT something I'm keen on the government getting their hands on. She can also detect danger to herself before it happens, and can take measures to prevent her own death, but loses more of her sentience every time she does this."

Tony thought a moment about these things. "So... that kind of matches up with what I heard with her. I mean... she was more growling when I last left her... she didn't say anything." Tony shook his head here. "So what did you tell Lupis?"

"I ain't revealing nothing to him. Family first, son." he cracked a slight smile at Tony here. "But I wonder... is this... Lily North even worth protecting? Or even worth keeping alive, for that matter? Control others' minds? That doesn't sound very... safe... though of course, he didn't really comment on her personality. If she's an OK individual... the ability to control others' minds isn't so dangerous... is it?" he asked now, spreading his arms. "But if she can't control it all... then... who's to say what could happen? Provided of course his story's true. It's hard to separate the bullshit from reality a lot of the time." he grumbled.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 30, 2014, 01:59:52 AM**

When Tony told them what condition Lily was in, Axel sagged back, feeling like someone had just punched him in the stomach. "She's that bad..." he whispered, mouth suddenly dry as sand. *Then this plan has to work... there's no time left...*

Axel's head raised when he heard footsteps approaching, and his tail curled nervously when he saw it was Don Stracci. As the Don talked, his stomach tightened. *He couldn't care less if she's okay or not,* he realised sickly, *but at least it sounds like he won't just hand her over...*

"Don Stracci," Axel said, trying to fight the panic in his voice, "You said it yourself, you can't trust this Lupis guy... If you'd spoken to Lily just yesterday you'd know she's a good person! I mean... yeah, she can tell when something bad's going to happen, but I've never seen her control anyone's mind, and... and even *if* her body's changing," he glanced at Tony, "She's still in there, Lily wouldn't just lose control! We just need to find how to... reverse it somehow!" Axel looked pleadingly at the Don. "Please, just don't... do anything to her. If anything happens I'll take full responsibility for it and... and if there's anything I can do to repay you for protecting her, I'll do it!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 30, 2014, 09:29:41 AM**

The don regarded Axel with a steely gaze, not flinching as the rat plead his case before him. He remained stone like, frowning slightly as the rat outlined his thoughts. He didn't say anything at first, merely standing with a contemplative look on his face.

Tony at least gave Axel a sympathetic look the few times the rodent glanced in his direction. He knew what Axel was thinking... they wouldn't get another chance at this thing. Lily's condition wouldn't allow it.

His father finally spoke, reanimating himself after a moment's thought. "You care for this woman... don't you?" he asked. "It doesn't take a genius to see that. You're willing to do whatever it takes... aren't you? If anything DOES happen... you'll take full responsibility... I like that. You aren't afraid of owning up and doing whatever it takes. I'm afraid if my family is threatened... I'll take whatever steps necessary to protect them, though." he said, glancing at Tony. "You just make sure it doesn't come to that. Do you have an idea on how you can reverse this process? What do you need?" he inquired, raising his brow.

"Sir... we were thinking of getting those answers from Lupis. But..." Tony glanced at Axel now. "Do we even know he knows what's going on with her, or is he just seeking her for her abilities? He might not know, after all." the ferret pointed out.

"Then you're going to have arrange a meeting with him... either willingly or unwillingly on his part. What's your plan?" Don Stracci queried.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 30, 2014, 10:31:32 AM**

Emilena came puffing up to the manor. She raised her hands in the air as she approached the guard station. "I'm a friend of some visitors you may have had recently!" She announced, trying to look nonthreatening; she'd hidden her gun somewhere in the forest. "Adrian...I don't know his last name, Soren Almaya, and Lily North? I need to find them!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 30, 2014, 03:16:33 PM**

"Hold it!" One security guard shouted as several rifles leveled at Emelina. "Check her out!" Another guard stepped forward and began scanning her while the first one watched her. "What's your name, miss?" the first one asked, ready to radio the name through.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 30, 2014, 03:20:18 PM**

"I... I don't know," Axel admitted. "I don't have a plan. Well, we thought if maybe we could somehow bug one of his guys, we could find out where he is when they go back to him. But even if we managed to pull that off, Lupis isn't... I mean, I doubt he'll just come out to us in the open, not if it isn't to his advantage. So either we need to lure him in somehow, or give him a reason for coming to meet us that he can't refuse..."

He shook his head in frustration. "I didn't even know this guy existed until a couple of days ago, I've got no idea how he thinks... From what Tony said, it's pretty clear he doesn't care about the two he's sending here, so they can't be used as bait. The only thing I can think of is... What if we forced one of his people to say that they'd found her, somewhere secluded, and that for some reason she couldn't be moved? Might... is there a chance he'd come out himself?" Even as the words left his mouth, Axel knew how feeble it sounded - this wasn't exactly a situation he was used to being in. His ears twitched. *Dammit, there has to be something...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 30, 2014, 03:31:38 PM**

"Emilena Echo," she replied unflinchingly. "They know who I am." At the moment, she had only her clothes and the water canteen in the backpack, so she didn't fear trouble with the scans. "I don't need to come in if you can direct me to where my allies have headed."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 30, 2014, 04:52:59 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 30, 2014, 10:33:12 PM**

"All right, you get that? Emelina Echo, here for Adrian.. Soren Almaya... and..." the guard paused as he couldn't remember the third name. "Lily North!" he finally said. "Wait here, miss. We'll get confirmation in a few seconds." he reassured her. "What's your business with them?"

"That's not going to work." Don Stracci shook his head now. "You need to move fast... best tag those agents immediately, then send them on their way. I'll refuse them access here tonight... apologize and tell them I'm far too busy for them tonight. Then follow them to wherever they go... you can't waste time with..." He paused here suddenly, as he received some information via a small earpiece he wore. He looked at them now. "There's an Emelina Echo at the gates asking for Soren Almaya, Lily North, and an Adrian. She... someone you know?" he inquired of the group. She certainly knew their names at least.

It didn't immediately click with Tony. He hadn't met Emelina, and hadn't really remembered all the details at the factory of who had been abducted. "That name sounds really familiar..." Tony said, trailing off.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 31, 2014, 02:06:59 AM**

(Pelvanida Parking Lot)

Sanjay cursed as Emilena was nowhere to be found. He slithered into the ambulance...and cursed as he realized that it had not been modified for use by Snakes.

"Emilena, you motherfucker," he muttered.

He was stranded in a factory parking lot and in the middle of the night. He was going to be in deep shit come morning.

(The Heights)

"So we agreed to go with bugging the gifts, right?" Soren asked.

Anne scratched the base of her horn. "I suggest we don't bug the gifts until they leave. Once they're ready to go, I could pose as domestic help and bug their gifts while their eating breakfast."

Soren smiled as he looked at the "putty tracers" that Marita had procured. He handed them off to Anne.

He then turned to Axel. "Truth be told, I'm not sure what's up with Lily but if everything I'm hearing about her is true..." He trailed off, not wanting to finish the statement.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 31, 2014, 08:27:26 AM**

"Then what?" Axel said, rounding on Soren. "What, you want to just... kill her? And what if they're wrong and she can be helped?! Come on Soren, how long have we known each other? You've got to have my back on this..."

He paused and turned halfway towards Don Stracci. "Hang on, Emilena's here?" Axel looked back at the group. "I thought some guys... took her back at the factory? She got away?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2014, 09:50:08 AM**

Emilena didn't bother to answer; she had no interest in trading pleasantries with the hired hands. Instead she rifled around in the backpack, trying to find something to entertain her while she waited to get cleared.

She paused and her eyes went wide as she noted something in the smallest pouch.

Oh. Oh my. I can work with this...

Elsewhere in the parking lot, a flare lit up. "Sanjay!" a voice called out. "Sanjay Bhat! I have a message from Lupis Wing!"

A hulking rhino was doing a fantastic job of being noticeable to anyone in the surrounding acre.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 31, 2014, 09:50:38 AM**

Tony closed his eyes, feeling both sides were right. Axel was clearly deeply invested in Lily's well-being but... Soren had a point too. What if what Lupis said *was* true?

"She's outside right now." Don Stracci said. "Waiting."

Tony looked at the others. "I don't know if I like this guys... OK... why don't I go up there to meet her? One of you goes with me... just so sees a familiar face, and... we don't let anything on right away, but first determine what she wants." Tony suggested. "Sound good?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 31, 2014, 01:43:57 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 31, 2014, 02:56:25 PM**

"Are you really sure you're up for that?" Tony asked, looking him over, before it clicked in his mind. "Wait... she was the one... wasn't she? The one you said you wanted to protect? Well... provided you feel up for it..." Tony said, tailing off. "I'll assist you. Oh!" A sudden thought clicked in the ferret's mind now. "Hey! Dad! Um... can we maybe pick her up in the..." his voice shrank here considerably. "Daimler?" he almost squeaked. "Please? It would look really cool!" Tony said, giving his father a nervous smile. "And... it would just be down the driveway... you know? Oh and Adrian can't walk that far! Not in his condition!" the ferret pointed out.

His father thought a moment, but Tony's pleading look with those big, round eyes and that enthusiasm that was just ready to burst at a single good word from his father was too much. Don Stracci relented, giving off a warm smile that he quickly suppressed after a few seconds. "All right... but be very, *very* careful!" the don said warily.

Tony almost exploded with excitement that he actually jumped a tad in place. "Sure thing, dad!" He turned to look at Adrian now, a wide grin on his face. "So uh yeah... you good to move?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 01, 2014, 03:33:40 AM**

(The Heights)

Soren raised his hands defensively. "Hey, I didn't say we had to kill her! But in the event that she does become dangerous, what else can we do? Leave her somewhere in Lanthae?"

The Human's eye twitched as he heard the name Emilena. He said nothing but his tense muscles betrayed the anger and hatred he felt for the Vulpine.

Anne was reclining in a sealskin sofa and sipping some water.

(Pelvanida Parking lot)

Sanjay hastily slithered towards the flare-illuminated Rhino.

"What does Agent Lupis want?" he demanded.

He shot one last infrared glance at the forests surrounding the factory – nothing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2014, 05:17:47 AM**

Lily, meanwhile, had slipped into a fitful and twitchy sleep.

"Agent Exstasis," the Rhino introduced himself. "We've received evidence that the Stracci crime family might either possess Lily North or know something about her current whereabouts. Under the guise of government agents who need a place to stay for the night, you and Officer Echo are to visit Anthony Stracci's manor and attempt to secure as much information as you can. Can you do this?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 01, 2014, 08:46:07 AM**

Tony assisted Adrian up to the garage, ensuring they took the public elevator directly into that location to avoid Adrian having to wrestle with using his crutches on the stairs. Walking down the row of glinting cars, Tony stopped at a particularly large silver and maroon convertible. Measuring almost 22 feet from bumper to bumper, the 1951 Daimler DE36 boasted a straight eight engine, and was the epitome of luxury for Britain in the early 50s.

Letting Adrian take one of the back seats in the limousine (he wasn't letting someone he didn't trust into the back seat after all), Tony slid behind the right side driver's wheel, and turned the ignition, letting the big car grumble into life and feeling a sense of glee as he listened to the big motor turn. Carefully pulling out into the center lane and accelerating slowly towards the garage's exit, he waited for the door to lift up before he drove the car out onto the driveway, snapping on the headlights as he rolled down the somewhat snaking drive to the main gate.

Emelina would've seen this

(http://www.barthworks.com/cars/cussler/photos/1951daimlerde36c.jpg) heading towards her in the night. By now she had been ushered through the foot gate and was standing behind the main barrier, and Tony turned the big car around in the driveway and braked so the passenger side door was adjacent to Emelina. Reaching over, Tony opened the left-hand door, and motioned for her to enter. "Ms. Emelina Echo... I'm Anthony Stracci Jr. I believe you already know Adrian. Welcome to the Heights. Might I ask your business here?" he inquired, starting to drive back up to the house.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 01, 2014, 10:00:49 AM**

Adrian smiled slightly, looking at Emilena from the window.
"Hey Emi..."
He said gently...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 01, 2014, 03:57:23 PM**

Once Adrian and Tony had left, Axel breathed out slowly and leaned back on the wall. He crossed his arms over his chest, taking the lull in conversation to try and clear his mind. After a while, he sighed and swung his gaze to the others. Soren didn't look pleased at the news they'd just received. *I guess him and Emilena aren't exactly the best of friends...*

"So, uh... you said you wanted to act like a maid? They won't tip you with weed, you know..." Axel gave Anne a small grin, trying to lighten the mood.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2014, 03:58:27 PM**

Even Emilena was impressed when the vintage model rolled up. Certainly not the reception she was expecting, she gingerly opened the side door and smiled at Adrain, though her expression turned serene when she saw his appearance. "What on Earth have you been doing while I was gone?" she exclaimed, noting his crutches and wounds. "I've been tortured by Purifiers and I look better than you do!"

She turned to Tony. "These are my allies. I was captured recently, but I've managed to escape. And I have very, very important information about someone traveling with us. She'll want to hear it as soon as possible."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 01, 2014, 04:35:09 PM**

Adrian smirked a little, then paled a little.
"You were...they tortured you?!"
He said, suddenly concerned as he pulled her into the car...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 01, 2014, 06:57:45 PM**

(Pelvanida Parking Lot)

Sanjay bobbed his head. "Unfortunately, I do not actually live here, nor am I law enforcement, so I know nothing about the crime families in this area."

He then flicked his tongue. "But...as long as it helps me keep my augments, I'll do it."

(The Heights)

Anne shrugged. "Alcohol will do for now until I can get some of the good stuff later on."

Soren drained his glass of mineral water. "Excuse me," he said coldly. "But I do not want to be near that cunt."

He got up and left the living room.

(OOC - Soren knows Emilena's name from when he caught her hiding in his car and recognized her as the cop who beat him up at his house.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 01, 2014, 07:43:27 PM**

Tony completed the turn after Emeline got in, and began driving back up to the house. He listened to what she had to say, and glanced occasionally at her in profile, nodding. "Well... I can say that we've been hearing... interesting information as well." he said cryptically. "First off, I'm glad you escaped. Second, I was present at the factory earlier tonight, and well... Adrian and his friends helped me out... got me back here from a bad situation I'd found myself in. The one you're referring to..." Tony paused here. He could take an educated guess about whom Emelina meant.

"She might not be in any condition to hear anything at the moment... what's the information?" he asked, figuring it couldn't be so important that she couldn't tell it in front of Adrian. He purposely avoided any direct talk as to Lily or her present whereabouts, but once he determined Emelina's trustworthiness, he might be a little more forthcoming with details.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2014, 08:59:07 PM**

Emilena pulled her sleeves up, revealing the charred flesh around her wrists. "They were pretty extensive, but I proved to have a high pain tolerance. I'd like to talk to you personally about that tonight..." she winked suggestively at Adrian.

She turned to Tony. "I'll save the details for when the rest of my friends are present, but the gist is...while in the Purifier camp, I learned what's causing Lily's mutations. I also know how we can make her normal again."

Exstasis nodded. "You really have no other choice in the matter. Where is Officer Echo? Can you ensure she will agree to follow this plan? We don't want her making a bad impression on the Straccis; our relationship with them is rather...political."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 02, 2014, 04:24:27 AM**

Tony couldn't help but smirk a little at Emelina's suggestion to Adrian, but he shifted back into deadpan as she turned to look at him to deliver her news. He pursed his lips at this announcement, but kept his eyes on the road as they approached the house. "Fascinating. Well, if you want to save the details, that's fine. I myself don't know too much about the situation but I saw a few things... and I just hope there's still time." he said grimly as he pulled the Daimler into the garage now.

He drove slowly down the row of cars, the fancy and classic models passing on the left and right as he moved to the Daimler's spot, going past it a little bit before braking. "OK... here we go." he muttered, turning around in his seat now to try and back the big boat up. Shifting into reverse, he carefully began backing into the spot, turning the wheel in order to shift the large car parallel with the two flanking it. "Come on... come on..." he whispered, easing the Daimler back further and further and finally getting it right. "Whew!" he exclaimed aloud. "Glad that went well!"

Killing the engine, Tony remained behind the wheel just a second or two more, feeling rather proud of himself over what he'd been able to accomplish. He hadn't driven the Daimler before except to move it around the garage, so this was a step he was rather pleased with. He'd ridden in it plenty of times of course growing up, but had never driven it that distance.

Opening his door now, he exited the car. "On behalf of Don Anthony Stracci, welcome." he told Emelina, smiling slightly now. "This way." he led the way out of the garage, depositing the Daimler's keys in the workshop and ensuring Adrian had some assistance before taking them down the elevator to the basement where Axel and well... only Anne and his father now it seemed were still present. Soren had since slipped away.

"Look what the ferret dragged in!" Tony declared as he headed down the hall towards the group now.

"Not a scratch on that car?" his father asked, narrowing his eyes.

"Not one, sir!" Tony replied back with a grin. "Oh yes! This is my father, Don Stracci." he introduced Emelina to the head of the family.

"How do you do?" the don asked, giving her a brief nod.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 02, 2014, 03:01:12 PM**

"Uh... hey. I'm glad you're alright..." Axel said hesitantly, raising his hand in a wave. Though he barely knew Emilena, he was happy to see that that she'd escaped from whoever had taken her. *And it looks like they put her through hell...* he thought, noting Emilena's disheveled appearance.

Marcus stomped his way outside, approaching the group of Purifiers who were attending to the ruined transformer. He spotted Aaron. "How many casualties-" he started to demand... then spotted the three bodies sprawled around. All dead from single bullet wounds. Sniped.

"*Fuck!*" he snarled, his head pounding as the drug wore off. "I *knew* we shouldn't trust Lupis!" Marcus whirled around, teeth bared with rage as he started to storm back inside the compound.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 02, 2014, 06:25:32 PM**

Emilena treated Don Stracci with more respect than any person since this whole ordeal had started; she knew just how many shallow graves were incapable of being traced back to this man. Also, as a child she'd first established connections with the police department by working as the bait in pedophile stings, so she knew how to make a good impression on older men. "It is an honor to accept your hospitality," she curtsied. "Apologies for my appearance; I was making the acquaintance of a couple Purifier interrogators earlier this evening." She intentionally had not returned her sleeves to their normal position, allowing the others to see her charred wrists and other wounds.

She plastered a smile on her face when she saw Axel; the only other member of the party who appeared to be present except the loathsome pony. "It's so great to see you all again!" She hugged him for added camaraderie. "Where is Lily? I need to speak with her."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 02, 2014, 06:45:28 PM**

(Pelvanida Parking Lot)

"I can try but I'm not sure where Emilena is. She just ditched me while I was interrogating a Mr. Altyn." Sanjay sighed as he yawned, exposing his metallic fangs.

He then looked at the ambulance. "Also, I have no means of transportation but if you were to get me to the Straccis' I may be able to help you there."

(The Heights)

Soren was in a small study off from the living room. He was reading a newspaper but also listening into Emilena's conversation.

Anne sipped some mineral water as she watched Emilena. Out of habit, she gently ran a few fingers over her horn.

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron put down the firehose and followed Marcus into the dingy building. "Should we retrieve our captives or engage in some 'operations'?"

At the same time, he had to wonder – was the government onto him?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 02, 2014, 06:45:43 PM**

Don Stracci had to admit, he was surprised by the... good mannered woman standing in front of him. He blinked a few times. "Well... er... I'm glad you... managed to extricate yourself from that situation." the don replied, noticing the burned flesh on her arms. It certainly seemed like she'd been through more than just the wringer.

Tony noted the affection Emelina seemed to show for Axel. He'd have to get the rat's perspective on that.

Tony stepped forward now, his face heavy. "Lily... has taken a turn for the worse, I'm afraid." he said softly, bowing his head a bit here. "For her own safety... we had to move her to an undisclosed, secure location. What have you to tell her? I have to admit, I was intrigued when you said you knew what was causing her mutation, and how to stop it. Is there anything we..." he motioned to the others around him. "can do to help her?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 02, 2014, 07:07:36 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 02, 2014, 07:53:25 PM**

"Sorry Adrian, this needs to happen sooner rather than later," Emilena replied. She turned to the group at large. "While escaping the Purifier camp, I heard them discussing Lily. They want her. What's more, they seemed to understand what's caused her mutation."

She looked at her feet. "I'm sorry, but I'm not comfortable telling all of you what I've learned. I don't know who truly has Lily's best interest at heart." She looked at Axel. "I've noticed that you and Lily share a bond. I think she'd trust you. I'm leaving it up to you to decide who can hear what I've found out."

"We've been unable to contact her as well," mused Exstasis. "I fear we must consider her away without leave until she provides reason for us to assume otherwise. I will be accompanying you to Stracci manor."

He began the walk back to his transport. "I'm not...the best with words. Lupis doesn't trust me to do the talking. That'll be your job."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 02, 2014, 08:13:51 PM**

Tony could hardly believe that with government agents on the verge of showing up on their doorstep, and Lily practically turning into a monster of some sort, that *that* was what Adrian had on his mind now? He was glad at least that this Emelina was more practical. That was a point for her in Tony trusting her but...

The ferret folded his arms across his chest, and gave Emelina a more serious look now. "Sorry but... I could say the same of you. You show up out of the blue asking to see someone who's been going downhill ever since the factory and... expect us to trust you? But sure!" he said, throwing his arms up now and motioning to Axel. "Let Axel decide. He can do it." Tony nodded at the rat. "He's seen enough, I think. He knows what little time we have."

Tony was tempted to walk out of the room to clear his head, and maybe find where Soren had gone too, but he figured that was pointless. Axel would decide in their favor of course, and they'd get this information one way or the other. Of course... he hoped his father wouldn't resort to the more brutal methods of extracting that information but... Tony doubted it would come to that. Axel would be reasonable, after all.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 02, 2014, 09:25:28 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 03, 2014, 03:09:37 AM**

Axel's eyes widened in surprise when Emilena hugged him. From what he'd seen of her, she seemed like she'd rather kick a kitten than hug anyone... but maybe that wasn't fair. She *was* one of the reasons why he'd survived the attack on Soren's house, after all.

He gave her a nervous smile as they broke apart, which turned into a full fledged beam when she mentioned she knew more about Lily's mutation. "Hey, that's great! *Awesome!* There's still time if we..." He trailed off as Emilena added that it was up to him to decide who'd learn about it. "What... what do you mean? I trust..."

Axel stopped, remembering Kojuuro. Lily'd seemed terrified of him back in the infirmary... and thinking back on it, she'd been with him in the SUV when she tried to run away... *What the hell's going on between them?* Biting his lip, he looked up just as Adrian was rounding on Tony. "Adrian, just... stop. Tony's alright."

He looked at Emilena. "Look, I... I trust everyone here." *Maybe not the Don, but saying so seems like a good way to earn a bullet in the back of the head.* "If there's something you know, they should all hear it. But... I think Kojuuro should be kept out of it..." Axel glanced anxiously at Adrian. "I'm sorry..."

Marcus strode though the halls, barely giving time for Aaron to keep pace with him. "We can't just let them get away," he growled over his shoulder. "They've seen too much. If they talked..." He shook his head furiously. "I need to find out what our next orders are - we need to act fast."

Winding their way down the corridors, they eventually reached a plain metal door, identical to all the others in the compound with the exception of a small wooden sign hanging down. '*B. Rhaegson*' was scrawled across it in black marker pen. It looked faintly ridiculous. Marcus banged a fist against the door, causing the sign to jiggle on the rope it was hanging from. "Rhaegson! I need to talk to you!" he barked.

"Yeah? Come in then, don't need to break the fuckin' door down," a voice echoed through.

Marcus twisted the handle and pushed it open to reveal a room identical to his quarters, with the exception of a large desk that was pushed up against the wall, on which sat a computer and a bunch of paper files. Seated behind it, with his feet propped up on the desk's surface, was the small man who'd come to Soren's door. A cigarette stuck out from between his teeth, and he brushed aside a strand of his greasy blonde hair as he eyed Marcus and Aaron curiously. "My computer won't work," he said. "Fuckin' perfect."

"The main transformer's out... and it got taken out when Lupis helped Echo and Bhat escape!" Marcus rumbled.

"It did?" Rhaegson sighed. "So much for doing things quietly..." He looked as Aaron and smirked. "Hey, buddy. Enjoying your first day?"

"I always told you we couldn't trust Lupis!" Marcus snarled. "So what are we going to do now? Echo and Bhat need to be eliminated, and Lupis..."

"No." Rhaegson said evenly.

"*What?!*"

"I said no. We're going to let Echo and Bhat go, and *you* aren't going to do anything about Lupis. We're still working with him."

Marcus stared at him for a moment, his eye twitching. "We're still working with him?" he growled finally. "Are you insane? He just gunned down three of our own..."

"Yeah, and that's... unfortunate. But trust me when I say that in the grand scheme of things..." Rhaegson spread his hands, "It was needed." Taking a final drag, he stubbed his cigarette out on the wall beside him and stared back at Marcus. "Look. What I said about working with Lupis? That's an order. Straight down from the top. Don't follow it, and I'll make sure you don't live past the week. And I'd hate to do that, you've been a fine fuckin' soldier up until now. We clear?"

Marcus growled, balling his fists so tightly the knuckles cracked, and turned, leaving the room without another word.

Rhaegson grunted, then turned his attention to Aaron. "If you got a problem, then please, let me know. If not, fuck off. And get the transformer working again, I'm a busy man here." He lit another smoke. *If the questions start, we're gonna have problems...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 03, 2014, 03:59:17 AM**

Emilena's thoughts had followed a similar thought path to Tony's; Axel would have to be mad to deny anyone present a chance to listen in. Or incredibly naÔve, which unfortunately would fit his character quite well.

"All right. Now mind you, I didn't get to ask any questions, but the basics seemed obvious enough. Lily herself isn't what's special; it's *where* in the forest it happened."

She met their eyes one by one. "Somewhere in the forest, while on her day hike, Lily stumbled across...something. It sounded like it wasn't a tangible thing, so she may not have even noticed it. But it's where her powers came from. The Purifiers are trying desperately to find that spot, so they can learn more about it. But only I know where it is."

She held up the backpack. "I found this while on my way here. Lying in the forest." She opened up the smallest pouch.

Inside was a driver's license and Mantreads Hiking Goods membership card, both for Lily North.

"The spot has already chosen Lily once," Emilena continued. "If we return her there, maybe she'll learn what she needs to control her mutations and her abilities. She might be able to turn herself back to normal."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 03, 2014, 08:50:54 AM**

Ferret junior and ferret senior paid attention to what Emelina had to say, and it suddenly all started making sense to Tony now. When she was finished, Don Stracci motioned to Tony. "Get out. I got something I wanna say first."

"But sir!" Tony protested, but was cut off by his father raising a paw.

"Get... out."

"Sir..." Tony bowed his head, and walked out of the room. The don's gaze suddenly became fierce, much fiercer than he seemed capable of looking as he turned his eyes on Adrian. For all the world he suddenly looked like he could walk up and throttle the life out of the wolf effortlessly, but he remained in place.

"I've taken you in... offered you full medical assistance... my son took you for a nice ride in one of my cars... I'll provide you with hardware later... and you question his word in front of me? Don't test my patience, son. A Stracci's promise of assistance is better than any promise you'll ever get in your lifetime... my son was just trying to get you to stop thinking like a horny little slut and get your mind focused on more... I dunno, important things? Plus rightly questioning the lady's loyalty. Now I think she's proven herself, but she had to do that first instead of having you try and act all macho and defend her, which proved nothing." The don raised his brows here. "But it did tell me what you value and I'm *this* close..." he held up his claws to show there was a mere centimeter between them, "to feeding you what you seem to value most and seeing how strong your libido feels when you're done eating. Do *not* ever do that again. I mean come on, you're on crutches... acting like a tough guy at the expense of my son is the absolute last thing you should be doing just to impress your little girlfriend cause I'm telling you now... I'm not impressed, and I don't think she is, either." He shook his head here.

"So start acting like you appreciate my kindness and hospitality, or you'll be finding out that my breakfast menu can be a little... different, shall we say, from other places you're used to staying, to say nothing of the fact that you'll hardly be a male when you walk out of here. Do I make myself clear?" he asked, eyes still on Adrian, the don's calm demeanor having been replaced by steely resolution and an inner fire now that showed he was deadly serious.

Tony sighed and flopped into a chair near Soren. He picked up a cars' magazine his dad liked to read, and began skimming through it. "Well... things could be going... a little better." he mumbled, looking over at the human. "Reading anything good?" he asked, noting Soren was reading a newspaper.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 03, 2014, 10:41:41 AM**

(The Heights)

Soren folded up his newspaper. "Nothing much, just some cops raiding a back alley clinic – and another Purifier attack. This one on the CEO of one of the cybernetics corporations."

He then looked around to make sure Emilena wasn't in earshot. "I don't trust that vixen at all. She's up to something and I know it."

Anne shrugged. "So Tony, any news?"

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron gulped as his tail tucked in between his legs. "N...No sir. I'll get right on that transformer!"

He backed out of the office.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 03, 2014, 11:00:48 AM**

Tony nodded, his face falling a bit at the mention of the Purifiers. "Oh... well... yeah... that's not... the way to handle things." he said with a sigh. He lowered his voice then and leaned in to reply to Soren.

"I'm with you on that too. I mean she *did* tell us what's wrong with Lily but... I dunno... something about this just seems... off. Only way to know if what she said is true or not is if we confirm her story... and I'm not willing to do that with the entire group, just in case." He whispered.

He then straightened up in his chair and looked over at Anne. "Oh you know... not much... we think we know what might be wrong with Lily... provided we can trust this newcomer... and well, my dad's threatening to feed Adrian his genitals... the usual, right?" he half-joked here, chuckling as a wan smile spread across his features. He felt sorry for the wolf, but that was something you learned here rather fast... nobody crossed the don. His father was the type who'd do just the thing he threatened and then still end up helping you because he'd promised to do so.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 03, 2014, 11:10:51 AM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 03, 2014, 12:14:59 PM**

Soren nodded. "She used a doctored warrant to go snooping through my burnt workshop and before that, she tried beating me up. I strongly urfe you to use caution in dealing with her."

Anne nodded. "Let me follow her. If anything goes wrong, I can use my radio horn implant to let you guys know."

"One problem, Emilena *hates* Augments."

Anne deflated. "Back to square one." Her ears suddenly pricked up. "Tony, Don Stracci has drones, right? Why don't we spy on them with drones?"

Soren tapped his fingers against the fine mahagony table. "That'll work but what if she's up to something? All we can do is watch."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 03, 2014, 12:17:24 PM**

Axel held his breath in the few moments after Stracci and Adrian had traded words, the tension between the two of them being thick enough to cut with a knife. The Don's threat - which Axel fully believed he would go through with if pushed - had reminded him that they were in the home, and at the mercy, of a powerful criminal mastermind. It left him feeling distinctly rattled.

"I'm... I'm sure Adrian meant nothing by it, sir," he said hesitantly. "We've been through a lot and it's... hard not to be cautious. We *are* grateful for everything you've done... More than you could imagine."

Swallowing, Axel turned his eyes to Emilena. "You... you actually heard this?" A hopeful smile pulled at the corner of his mouth. "If you're right, then it sounds like a decent plan! Or, *a* plan, at least, which is more than we've had before. Yeah, I... I say we go for it! We've got nothing to lose, right?!" He looked between the others, his smile faltering and his eyes dropping to the ground when he glanced at the Don and remembered the threats he'd been making just moments earlier.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 03, 2014, 12:36:25 PM**

The don's countenance melted back into its more indifferent self upon Adrian responding. He even gave a slight smile, though it definitely had the air of confidence behind it of someone who could back up his words. "There... see? That's all I wanted." he said, spreading his arms now. He remained silent to let the others continue from this point on, until he caught Axel looking at him. "I'm sure." he responded simply to Axel's attempted reassurance, though gave no hint if he really believed it or not.

When Axel once again met his gaze, the don gave a slight thoughtful frown. "Well one thing I should say... is that I'll deal with the government pukes who are coming here for the night. I'll ensure they're so tied up with my hospitality that they won't be able to do much of anything else. They're playing into my paws after all by willingly coming here... knowing they have to surrender all their weapons and gadgets. So I'll keep them busy while you do whatever you want to do regarding this." he offered.

"What? She did that?" Tony whispered back, his brow furrowing in confusion. "Then what the hell is she doing hanging around with you guys?" he asked, uncertain on this. "And she hates augments? Sounds like she picked the wrong group... not to mention boyfriend... to pal around with." he murmured.

He listened to the plan about the drones, and nodded. "No... better to send some of my father's soldiers along if you're worried about her turning turncoat. I mean I don't know anything about her, but she suddenly shows up here offering to take us... and Lily for that matter, into some strange spot in the woods that we don't even know about? Doesn't sound like the safest of plans to me." the ferret commented. "Plus, you could just insist that Anne has to come along... it's a group effort, or no deal. I think we've already made it clear we don't trust her... say she needs to earn that trust by bringing whoever you want along." he said in hushed tones, pushing his claws onto the tabletop now.

"In fact... why don't some of us check out this 'spot' first? See if what she said about it is true? If it is... then we send Lily along in the hopes that she can be cured, like Emelina said. IF Lily can even move that is..." he said now, glancing to the side and sighing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 03, 2014, 01:53:00 PM**

Emilena hardly spared a glance at Adrian. It was after all an incredibly stupid decision on his part, and she'd never been particularly impressed by bravado anyway. Nor had she ever asked for a white knight to defend her.

She was far more interested in the don. She knew him as a ruthless and determined businessman who single-handedly made his family the leading crime syndicate. Somehow, she'd made a good first impression, and she hoped to keep it. "I agree with Axel's reservations about Kojurro. I suspect he may have...slightly off-color reasons for following Lily. Motivations Adrian would endorse."

She looked at the group. "It might be a dangerous hike. After all, we'd be heading somewhere that the Purifiers are also looking for. And I don't know anything about how this spot works...and you've all seen what exposure did to Lily. There's a risk of that happening to you. Hell, it might have already infected me; who knows."

She met the eyes of each person in the room. "I just want to make sure you each understand that whoever goes won't be in a comfy mansion with a gracious host anymore. We've all had some horrible nights recently, some of us could do with some downtime. But I think this trip should embark as soon as possible, before Lily's condition gets any worse."

Exstasis pulled out of the parking lot in a jet black Van, Sanjay in the passenger set.

"What do you know about the Straccis?" Exstasis asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 04, 2014, 03:43:01 AM**

Axel blinked at Emilena's comment on Kojuuro's 'motivations'. He opened his mouth to ask what she meant... then closed it again slowly when she continued speaking, deciding to bring it up later when they weren't discussing more important things. *Even if that was true, it doesn't explain why she'd seem so scared of him... there's more to this going on...*

His face set firmly. "I don't care about the risks. If it could help her, then I'm going. And hey, comfy mansions are overrated, right? Ah..." He coughed nervously, hoping Stracci hadn't caught that last comment. "I'll... I'll understand if not everyone wants to go. It's just something I have to do."

Marcus was standing motionless in the hallway. "We do what he says," he said lowly when Aaron backed out of the office. When the door closed behind him, Marcus added, "For now. As soon as we don't need Lupis anymore, I'll deal with him." Marcus snarled. "Personally."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 05, 2014, 12:36:10 AM**

(Pelvanida Parking Lot)

Sanjay adjusted his stolen and holstered pistol. "Aside from the fact that they and the *Bak Long* Triads are the two largest organized crime syndicatea in Lanthae? Not much."

(The Heights)

Soren nodded. "But how do we know what to look for?" He then carefully peered through the small crack in the door as Axel, Emilena and the others argued

He then got up from the chair. "Anyways, I'll have a word with Emilena."

Soren then stepped out from the small study and crossed his arms as he fixed his gaze on the Vulpine. "All right, Emilena, I'll let you take Emilena to this location. But on two conditions: I and whoever I chose will accompany you with Lily. And you show us where this place is – before we allow you to bring Lily."

(The Purifier Compound)

Aaron nodded. His natural canine night vision helped him navigate the dimly lit hallways. A few points of light showed where the less visually endowed were using flashlights.

"Marcus, I'll be overseeing work on the transformer if you need me. Speaking of which, I heard the name 'Patrick Anderson' mentioned in a newspaper story. Turns out one one of ours got to him. Shall we...finish the job?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 01:21:52 AM**

"I literally just invited *everybody* who wanted to go," Emilena reminded Soren, as if she were talking to a fifth-grader. "You don't get to choose anything; they can volunteer themselves."

She turned to Axel. "Thank you for agreeing to come without trying to tell everyone else what to do. Now, regarding whether Lily comes with us; obviously I think she should, since from what I heard her status is deteriorating at an alarming rate. But the two here who really have the right to make that judgment are Axel and Lord Stracci. Axel since he's the only one in the room that's really proven his loyalty to Lily, and Lord Stracci because Lily is currently recuperating under his medical care."

She glanced at Soren again. "That's just my opinion of course; since Mr. Almaya wants to make decisions for the entire group, he might not agree."

"That should be enough," growled Exstasis. "Now, our goal is to learn what we can, so try to use your charms to get us as far as you can into the mansion. I've got trackers and bugs I can plant after that. I've also got a psionic reader in my eyepiece; I'm hoping to pick up evidence as to whether they've held Ms. North at any time."

He stopped at a red light. "But you better be damn careful, or they're just gonna shoot both of us. You understand?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 05, 2014, 02:47:13 AM**

Axel looked quickly between Emilena and Soren, feeling the tension rising. He held his hands up. "Guys, come on, we can't argue! That won't help anyone." He faced the human. "Look, I... I don't think we have time to scout it out before we bring Lily. She was looking bad and Tony said it was just getting worse.... I don't think we have a choice. Taking her out there is the only thing we can do."

He glanced over his shoulder at Emilena. "I can't think of why she'd double cross us... Besides, I think we can trust her. Why else would she say we can take whoever we want?"

Marcus scowled as they walked. "Patrick Anderson? He didn't listen to our last warning?" He grunted. "Too bad for him. He dies."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 09:10:18 AM**

Tony shook his head. "I have no idea..." he said softly, then got up to follow Soren. It seemed as though Emelina didn't exactly dig Soren's orders. Well... so much for that idea.

"Don... Don Stracci." Don Stracci corrected Emelina with a smile. "I ain't descended from no goddamn European royalty after all." he pointed out, looking around and chuckling a little bit. "Don Stracci is fine. I ain't no lord."

A small smile spread across Tony's features as well at this. He then decided to speak up of his own accord, lifting a claw in the air. "Uh... one problem. Lily might not exactly be capable of moving." he said now. "Is there a road that runs by those woods? Cause short of carrying her ourselves... which would really slow us down, I don't see how else we're gonna get her out there. But I am going to go check on her condition and see if she's capable of moving." he threw in now at the end.

"If you're going out there... you aren't going alone." Don Stracci muttered. "I'll assign you a detail... and you'll be taking Mr. Stryker with you." Tony's eyes went wide at this. Mr. Stryker of course wasn't his real name... no one but his father knew his real name... but he was certainly one of the more feared enforcers and hitmen in his father's organization. The don pushed his earpiece now. "Mr. Fontana... arrange for Mr. Stryker to meet me near the infirmary." he ordered.

"You got it, sir. Don Stracci... that information on Denny North is in." the iguana informed his boss.

"I'll take it in my office. Come on... let's go ensure you can visit Ms. North." Don Stracci said to his son now, nodding with his head. "Please... excuse us a few moments."

The two ferrets left the group now, heading through a series of hallways that dead ended at the hidden elevator. Both went through the steps to activate the thing, the wall sliding back to reveal the large elevator behind. "Go on... I'll go back to the others." the don stated.

Tony nodded, and stepped in, riding down deep into the cliff and finally arriving at the secret safe rooms. The ferret noted the Doktor seemed to be off. Approaching Lily's bed now, Tony glanced down at her. "Lily... it's Tony... can you hear me?" he asked, gently shaking her.

Upstairs, the don arrived back with the group. "All right... my son's checking on her. How are you planning on moving her if she can't move on her own?" he inquired, looking at Emelina.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 12:45:31 PM**

"Is she really that bad...?" Emilena put a troubled look on her face. "Hmmm. Perhaps a gurney, if we have high-quality ones that don't make any sound. Or a wheelchair. It has to be able to navigate in the forest. I'm sorry, I haven't seen her, so I don't know the nuances of her condition."

She looked around. "Where is Kojurro anyway? And has he ever explained to anybody why he's been following us since he randomly appeared in the hospital parking lot? He doesn't appear to have a connection to anyone."

Lily stirred. Her extremities had basically stopped growing at this point; all three of her appendages were covered in crusted blood but they appear to have become functional parts. Her tail was swaying slightly, recalibrating her balance as she shifted positions to get a look at Toby. She didn't say anything, but Toby had her strangely rapt attention.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 12:53:52 PM**

"She was in a medical bed the last I knew." Don Stracci answered Emelina. "I don't know if we have anything mobile like a gurney but... how far did you say this location was?" he asked.

Down below, Tony suddenly froze as he was staring into what seemed to be a very coherent Lily's eyes. And a very changed Lily for that matter. But how... was... she better? "Um... Lily?" Tony asked again. "Can you get up and walk? We have to take you someplace... can you stand?" he asked, enunciating his words just in case she couldn't understand him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 01:39:23 PM**

Lily continued staring at Tony. She seemed to be examining him. She let her gaze run along his flank, lingered on his neck, and finally meet his gaze unblinkingly with her bright red eyes. The pupils had become smaller than ever.

She squinted and shook her head, dizzily. Assuming a crouching position, Lily got onto her knees and shakily climbed off the bed. Her stoney skin seemed slightly lustrous, a side effect of its natural ability to reflect light away from it.

She stood shakily, but her tail twitched to help keep her balance. It was actually rather sleek and stretched to the ground.

All in all, the figure standing before Axel was quite a sight, but not necessarily a pleasant or comforting one.

"It's a little out of the way, but not too bad," Emilena replied evasively. She didn't want to reveal any more of the location than she had to.

She regarded their host with grace, but on the inside her thoughts were spinning. *He's just going to relinquish control of a psionic monster, let us walk away with it? That's not the mafia don I've heard of...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 01:52:09 PM**

"Oh my god..." Tony whispered, in awe at the sight before him. He noted how she seemed to be looking him over... as if he was new to her, or something. But... would she be OK to touch? Gulping, he reached out now, slowly... slowly... very slowly. He gently grasped her hand, hoping nothing would happen to him...

The don caught the evasive answer and narrowed his eyes again. "Out of the way, you say?" He had his own plans... but first things first. "Mmm." he said, nodding now, a thin smile spreading across his features. "I see... of course it is. Such evasive answers, Ms. Echo. If I didn't know better... I'd say you didn't want me to find this place." he said now, his smile growing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 02:06:43 PM**

"If you wanted to come with us, sir, the offer of course extends to you, as it does everyone," Emilena amended hastily. "We couldn't guarantee your safety, I'm sure you know, but seeing as Mr. Stryker had over two thousand credited kills in the Scorched Earth War of 2030, he'd no doubt be more than adequate to the task of protecting you."

The Stracci's personal butler was something of a legend among the city police folk.

Lily flexed her six fingers curiously once Tony reminded her of them. Her skin was rough and stoney. The sixth fingers were next to and slightly smaller than her pinkies, and her grasp felt weaker and uncoordinated.

She stumbled slightly as she took a step forward, and growled softly. She was hungry and thirsty. For a few seconds, she forgot to relinquish Tony's hand despite having focused on something else; the door.

She tried to say something, but all that came out was a guttural bark.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 02:25:35 PM**

"I'm not sure I can be bothered long enough to step away from my business." he said, waving his paw dismissively here. "Besides... someone has to deal with those government hacks." Don Stracci knew the agents were probably going to be stupid and try and bug his place... no one had ever successfully done that before, but he wouldn't put it past these guys. "However... I suppose it depends on how important this truly is..." he trailed off now as Tony suddenly appeared around the corner, walking with Lily... or what Lily now was.

Tony still had his hand in hers to steady her and get her used to walking. "Well... here she is." he said grimly.

His father looked at the monster intently, studiously roving his gaze about her form and her eyes. What was she capable of? "Mr. Fontana..." he signaled his consigliere now. "Do we have any instruments capable of measuring psionics?"

"We might... I can check for you." Max replied back through the headset.

"Good..." Don Stracci said quietly now. He didn't like this... he didn't like this at all.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 02:33:46 PM**

"My god..." whispered Emilena when she got a glimpse of what Lily had become. *This* was the gentle Sapaar girl who'd offered her a ride just two days ago?

Lily wasn't walking so much as slinking. Something had changed in her spinal structure and she couldn't walk fully upright. She was shielding her eyes from the bright lights on the main floor, and in a moment of primal panic tore her hand away from Tony and darted into the most shadowy part of the room: the space between the corner and the door to the kitchen.

As she crouched in the corner, nude and with hands bared in a feeble display of self-defense, she hardly even looked like a sentient being.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 02:43:05 PM**

"Hey!" Tony said, running after her now. "Hey! It's... it's OK... we aren't... we aren't going to hurt you." He said softly. "Axel! Come on!" the ferret motioned to the rat now.

Don Stracci watched the display, and was disgusted by it. This wasn't right... he couldn't use this woman for his own gain... in fact... ANYONE using her would have an unfair advantage... she was a human under there... a person... and she was suffering. "Ms. Echo." he turned to look at her now. "Are you POSITIVE about what you're doing?" he asked firmly. "This woman needs help... serious help... you aren't leading her into some sort of trap... because if you are... I'll ensure you eternally suffer for it." he growled. "I wasn't sure if I could trust you before, but I'm making myself clear now... she's getting the help she needs, all right? This thing... it's not natural." He hissed. "I don't know what the government is after her for... but it ends now. It goes no further than this!" he pointed behind him at the creature in the corner.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 02:58:43 PM**

"You're free to try whatever you please before we take her out there," Emilena stood her ground. "I'm only telling you what I know and what I think."

She still didn't trust the don's sincerity; nobody in a position of power got there by being compassionate and understanding. But it'll depend on the opinions of the rest of the occupants; she wasn't trying to set herself up in opposition with the Straccis.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 05, 2014, 03:01:07 PM**

Axel's eyes widened as he saw the figure Tony lead through. "*Oh fuck...* Lily?" His voice was a strangled whisper. He stood, frozen in shock as she stumbled away from the light and backed into the shadows. For several moments he stood completely motionless, trying to process the sight in front of him.

As if from another room, Tony's voice reached Axel. He blinked, an act that seemed more like a twitch, and took an unsteady step towards the corner she was hiding in. "Li... Lily?" He crouched down and approached slowly, his arms outstretched in an attempt to show he meant no harm. "It's me... Axel..." He tried to stop the trembling in his voice, to sound more confident. "It's alright... nobody's going to hurt you..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 03:07:39 PM**

"Hmph... very well..." the don murmured, noting the iguana, Max Fontana, come around the corner now with a device.

"Found this, boss! It measures psionic levels and brain wave patterns... I don't know if it can actually read abilities though. Don't think we ever used it." the iguana shrugged here.

"Doubt it." Don Stracci murmured. He could never remember what he'd bought and not bought. "Scan her." he ordered.

The consigliere approached Lily now and began waving the reader up and down her body, though stood a respectful distance away, as you actually didn't need to be very close as the range on the thing was good. Tony stood up now that Axel was there. "Hey... Emelina was it?" he asked. "Can we drive to this place if it's far away and park somewhere near the woods?" he asked. "We can't waste a lot of time. Or is it in walking distance? I'm just trying to save time here." he said, his voice strained.

"Yes?" Don Stracci spoke softly now, hearing Stryker's voice in his headset. "Right... OK..." he began speaking in very soft tones, turning away from the group now as everyone was mostly preoccupied.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 03:20:43 PM**

"We can't drive there, it's off the trails," Emilena muttered back, noting that the don appeared to be distracted. "It's actually closer to Pelvanida, the cybernetics factory, than here. I'm just worried that a car will attract attention. Ideally, I'd like to reach the spot without anyone else seeing us. We could lead the purifiers right to the place they're looking for..."

Lily, meanwhile, seemed to get a hold out herself. Shakily getting to her feet, she crept forward back into the light. Glancing at the people surrounding her, the first spark of recognition on her face showed when her gaze passed across Axel. Slinking cautiously up to him, she rubbed her hands along his shoulders as if verifying his identity, and then silently embraced him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 05, 2014, 03:48:06 PM**

Axel carefully put his arms around her, trying to be sure he wasn't hurting her in some way. "It's alright... Emilena has a way to help you," he said gently, trying to keep up a soothing tone. Even through his shirt, Axel could feel the roughness of her skin. *There's gotta be a way to fix this... there has to be...*

Still holding her, he turned his head to look at the others. "It... it looks like she can walk at least, that's gotta save us some time, right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 05, 2014, 04:00:46 PM**

Tony sighed, holding his forehead and shaking it as Max continued to scan Lily. "I feel like going without transportation is stupid... especially if we need to get out of there *fast*." he said, looking down. "I'm less concerned about the Purifiers finding us out than I am about getting her in and out as quickly as possible." He said, slapping a fist against his paw pads. "If we go with enough protection..." Tony trailed off here, noting his father was talking to someone over his headset. "Um... if we go with enough protection" he continued now, "we shouldn't have any problems. I mean I don't know!" he said, throwing his right arm out to the side now. He began running things through in his mind. OK... what to do... what was the fastest car he could think of? No... the Cobra couldn't carry enough passengers... he needed room for at least six...

Well his dad's Duesenbergs and Pierce-Arrow Berline were fast... and could certainly fit six minimum... plus his dad had upgraded them so... they could hold their own speed-wise.

"If we head there on foot... *if*" Tony began again. "I'm not going without a means of getting out of there quickly. I can call something in to Pelvanida, have it waiting for us... whatever. But I'm not going out there with no means of escape in case... things turn sour." he said now, finally placing his paws on his hips as he looked at the group. "It just seems foolish otherwise to be stuck in the woods with just our feet... after walking all that way, I might add." he pointed out.

Pelvanida? That was some distance away... but manageable. "Right... Pelvanida by the way." Don Stracci said softly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 05, 2014, 06:24:54 PM**

Soren nodded. "My exoskeleton and weapons should be in the delivery truck. By the way, Anne's coming too."

Beads of sweat formed on his forehead as he laid eyes on what *was* Lily.

He then overheard Emilena. "Pelvanida? What could they have to do with Lily's transformation?"

He then used the back of his shirt to wipe his forehead and took a breath. "All right, I need some time to plan."

Anne shivered as she looked at Lily. "Maybe we can screw with the Purifiers? Have one group lead the astray while the other deals with Lily?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 05, 2014, 10:29:05 PM**

"If you insist we take a car, I'm not attempting to unequivocally shoot that down," Emilena reminded. "Unlike Soren, I'm not trying to make myself the leader and delegator of this group. We should make decisions together."

Lily meanwhile was hugging Axel tighter and tighter. Because she was starting to sense something.

It was the feeling she always got when her conscience left her body; the feeling of taking up senses already occupied by another. But she was still seeing through her own eyes. She hadn't gone anywhere...

She slowly realized she wasn't the visitor this time. She was the host.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 05, 2014, 11:15:18 PM**

-REDACTED-

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 06, 2014, 02:16:11 AM**

"But is that a good idea?" Axel asked Anne. "I mean... if there's any Purifier's out there, they don't know where we'll be so... maybe we should just leave them?" He glanced around to see what the others thought. "I mean, it seems like we'd be, like, kicking the hornet's nest..."

He felt Lily's grip tighten. "Lily... Loosen up a little..." He glanced down and paused when he saw the expression on her face. "Hey, what's wrong?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 09:33:16 AM**

"Good." Tony nodded now. "Because going out there without transport is stupid... in fact..." He said now, his eyes darkening a bit. "This whole thing sounds... fishy. I still don't know if I fully trust you." he said plainly, shaking his head.

At that moment, a sungazer lizard rounded the corner, dressed to the nines. He carried nothing visible on him, but he was armed to the teeth. "Ah, Mr. Stryker! You're just in time!" Don Stracci greeted his enforcer. The spiny lizard said nothing in response, but merely gave his don a single nod. His eyes were steely, like cold metal. Death was written on his expression, and it wouldn't take an expert observer to tell this guy was dangerous.

"Ms. Echo was just about to tell us the location she intends to lead you to." the don said here, turning back to Emelina, his own expression having become deadpan. Stryker shifted his cold eyes onto her as well. "If you think... I'm sending valuable people out to some unknown location... on foot... guess again." he said now. "Sorry, Ms. Echo... the location... if you please." he said, more determined now. "I can have soldiers there in a matter of minutes, since they're all over the city at various locations. They check it out first... and not approach it of course... but confirm that your story is true. And if it is... you're free to go." he said simply, raising a paw before letting it fall to his side again. "My word is good after all. I promised my new guests support... and they shall have it... but not until I determine your own word is... trustworthy."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2014, 02:03:22 PM**

"For Pete's sake, look what they did to me!" Emilena took her shirt off, revealing blackened electrical burns and whip marks all down her body. "It only gets worse south of the border! And I've already told you, I have *no idea* what's happening out at that spot. Anything special could be completely impossible for a normal person to detect."

She narrowed her eyes. "I admit I can't 100% trust you either. I don't mean to be rude or ungrateful for the hospitality you've given my allies, but you are businessmen. You know how valuable Lily could be from a political standpoint. I'm trying to get Lily out there to help her. Why do you want to go without even bringing her?"

Lily just hugged Axel tighter. She could tell what everyone was talking about, but she was more focused on her own inner struggle. The foreign conscience within her didn't currently seem powerful enough to control her, but it was trying. How could she prevent it from getting stronger?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 02:18:16 PM**

((Just a note, LB&T and I discussed this, so we're currently working this next part out.))

"You're gonna have to trust me I'm afraid... because you seem to misunderstand, Ms. Echo." Don Stracci said, noting her tortured body. "Heh... that's admirable... you've clearly been put through the wash by something... but just what is hard to say. You're not in in a position to negotiate... I'm NOT sending anyone out there until I know we're only getting involved in what you claim." He gave her a slight smile now. "The location... why are you being so recalcitrant with such simple information?" he asked now. "Seems rather suspicious to me. Mr. Stryker." he said simply.

The reptile quickly produced a high-caliber pistol from his jacket and pointed it right at Emelina's right knee. He didn't even blink as he did so. The gun had a high enough velocity that it could shred most standard body armors.

"This is not a negotiation, Ms. Echo. It's an ultimatum." the don said icily now. "The location..." he said once more.

"Dad?" Tony asked, suddenly getting worried.

"Relax, Tony." his father held up a paw here. "I'm not threatening you, or any of your guests... I'm still in their debt after all and I'm TRYING to look out for them... but her... I owe nothing to. She will produce the location... or she'll suffer. If you don't want to watch... please leave the room." he instructed to all those around him now.

Tony gulped, standing in place, eyes wide. He knew from experience his father's words to his friends were good... he'd help them all the same. So... was this just part of his... making sure they'd be safe out there? It did seem slightly suspicious that Emelina didn't want to part with the details of where they'd be going, and that they'd be heading there on foot. But then again, it was probably hard for her to trust his father, and he figured her story about being tortured was at least, most likely true.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 06, 2014, 02:40:27 PM**

After looking down at her for several moments with no response, Axel sighed and turned his attention to the others, trying to suck in air as Lily's grip tightened. He spluttered when he saw Stryker's gun pointed at Emilena. "Hey, hey, wait! Is... Do you really need to do that?"

His eyes found the Don's. "What if she doesn't know?! She already said she didn't! Jesus christ, she's one of us!" Axel could feel the blood pounding in his head. The thought of someone he knew being tortured made him sick. *And Emilena's the only one who knows what to do... if something happens to her...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 02:45:28 PM**

"Doesn't know what?" the don shot back at Axel. "The location she promised to take you to? How could she possibly not know that?" he said, pointing out the rather odd nature of Axel's question. "One of you? She didn't show up with you guys... what if the Purifiers turned her, huh?" he asked now. "You ever think of that? What if this is all just a big trap?"

This part... rang more true for Tony. According to Soren, Emelina hated augments... it'd make sense she'd support the Purifiers. His dad had a point, there.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 06, 2014, 03:01:19 PM**

Axel's mouth opened... then closed again. As desperate as he was to avoid any bloodshed, he had to admit the Don had a point - Emilena should know the location, but still... Was threatening a woman with violence necessary? And *could* she be part of the Purifiers? "I..."

He glanced down at Lily. *If it's to protect her... Even if there's a chance it's a trap...* He raised his gaze to the others, feeling light-headed. "Just... answer their questions, Emilena..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 06, 2014, 03:30:43 PM**

Suddenly, Anne shot up right in the chair she was reclining in. Inside her head was a faint and staticky voice along with a distinct staticky chime. The words were garbled and indistinct but she knew that sound ó someone in their group had been bugged.

She gulped. "Soren," she said. "Someone's been bugged."

Soren scowled. "Don Stracci."

Anne shook her head. "There's lots of listening devices around here and I can hear their radio transmissions. This is a different frequency and it sounds like the one from the bugs that Kojuuro showed us."

Soren's eye twitched. "When I get my exoskeleton, remind me to shove his head through a concrete wall."

"Easy. Let's have the Straccis' deal with this." Anne got up and made her way to Don Stracci's office. She knocked on the door amd waited for a response.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 03:54:22 PM**

"Can I help you?" asked a soldier who was casually standing around in the hallway. He was behind Anne, leaning against the wall. "The don's out at the moment... something you need?" he approached her now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 06, 2014, 04:25:30 PM**

Anne spooked in place but she regained her composure. "Someone has bugged our group and I have a feeling I know who it is.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2014, 05:21:35 PM**

THIS was the Don Stracci she'd heard so much about. Emilena folded her arms. "You clearly don't know just how many times I've already been shot in the last 48 hours," she challenged. "Torture doesn't have a great success rate on me."

She glanced at Axel. "But if even Axel's putting his faith in you, fine. It's a completely moronic decision, and I'm not sure why I'm the only one in the room who doesn't want to trust a mafia don, but if you bring me a map of the forest I'll show you where the spot is. Then you can go excavate it, run sensors through it, and try to control its power for yourself after you've shot all of us through the head for knowing too much."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 09:20:30 PM**

The don smirked at this, happy she'd seen things his way. Stryker wouldn't have killed her with the first shot... nor the second, or the third, or the fourth. It would've taken her awhile to die, if she died at all... of course... he could take her even further downstairs to the "special" room, and introduce her to all of Stryker's "toys."

"Well... that's not going to happen. I gave my word I would help these nice folks for helping my son... and I intend to stick to that." he stated now. "I won't be putting a bullet in any of their heads, nor will any of my associates. I mean come on... I would've done so already. Anyway... Mr. Fontana..." he snapped his claws at his consigliere. The iguana approached Emelina now and held out a data pad.

"Just press the location on the map... we'll investigate it and confirm your story." he informed her.

"Now my guests, I do owe... and a don's word is always good when it comes to assistance to those he owes favors too... but you? I need to make sure of first." Don Stracci was glad for the support, even from Axel. It seemed paranoia always won out over friendship... but that was true in really any situation in which friends weren't real "friends." "At least you're reasonable about it... I'd hate to introduce you to what Mr. Stryker likes to call his 'toys.'" The don's smile was thin here, and not at all kind.

"I can say my dad wouldn't do that either... from what I know at least." Tony came to his father's support now. "if he promises you something... you get it, trust me." he said now, nodding at Axel. "She's just trying to make us afraid of the alternative... there's nothing to be afraid of." Tony said softly.

"Oh... a bug?" the soldier asked, reaching into his coat and pulling out a remote. "That ain't no thing." he said nonchalantly, and pressed a red button on the remote. This activated the house's ultra high-frequency emitter, totally above the range of almost any humans or animals to detect, and promptly overloaded any external bugs with ruthless efficiency. Kojuuro's bugs were soon nothing more than a memory as they crackled out of existence, the extremely high-pitched whine overwhelming their circuitry. "Problem solved." he said in a bored fashion. The house's bugs were all protected by shielding devices built in that would switch them off temporarily while the frequency was emitted. "Who dared bug us, then?" he asked. "It wasn't by any chance the guy who tripped our wall alarm when he left the premises a short while ago, was it? See we don't really care if someone is *leaving* the Heights and triggers the alarm, but if someone's entering... that's another story." he said now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 06, 2014, 09:54:19 PM**

The brief burst of radio waves made itself known in Anne's head as a whine but the microprocesser associated with her implant quickly filtered it out.

The chiming and faded static in Anne's head was soon replaced by the hum of Don Stracci's own bugs. A mental command shut down her horn.

Anne scratched her horn as she tried to place the noise. "The chime I heard sounded similar to that of when this Wolf, Kojuuro I think his name was, showed me the bugs. Anyways, thanks."

She walked off and returned to the study. "Kojuuro's bugs have been destroyed."

Soren sipped his glass of water and smiled. "Now to turn the tables on him..."

The van arrived at the edge of The Heights. "All right, let's roll."

Aware that weapons would be easily detected, he opted to leave his pistol in the truck. He climbed out of the vehicle and waited for Agent Extasis to follow.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2014, 10:13:35 PM**

Exstasis led the way to the guardposts. "We're here for our free room and board!" he announced, then immediately shut up.

"I forgot, you're supposed to do the talking..." he muttered to Sanjay. "Errr, you take it from here."

Emi circled a tiny portion of the map after zipping around it for a while. "That's as good as you're gonna get; it was the middle of the night and I *still* haven't slept since traversing the entire forest floor."

She handed the data pad back to the iguana. "So what constitutes 'checking my story out'? Considering I have no idea what you're hoping to find there, and neither do you. Are you gonna kill me unless there's a newspaper stand full of the latest editions of *Psionics Monthly* and a glowing green aura straight from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 06, 2014, 10:22:41 PM**

Sanjay slithered up to the intercom. "Please parden my partner's rudeness. I am Agent Bhat with Agent Extasis and we are here to meet with Officer Echo."

He looked around as he waited for a response.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 11:26:21 PM**

((Done with full permission))

The intercom buzzed back, Oscar Gambino's voice coming through. "You're here to see who?" he asked, then a pause. "Oh yes!" he declared, tone changing to friendly. "Yes, of course! One moment please." he said, and pressed the button allowing them access to the manor. The big crocodile capo stood before them as the doors swung open, and he was hulking even by Exstasis's standards. "Please... this way." he said, dripping charm as he showed them towards the scanner.

Down below them, Don Stracci smirked. "No... but we need to find something substantial... that corroborates your story... ah!" he said now, grinning. "It seems the government hacks have arrived!" He declared, hearing Gambino's report in his ear. "One moment, Ms. Echo." he said politely enough. "Mr. Fontana, check that out." he ordered the iguana, who nodded and headed off with the data pad.

Remarkably, thanks to a slip of the tongue, the don was immediately informed of some incredibly useful information by Gambino. He didn't show it immediately, but then, after a moment, an actual grin spread across his features. He had them now! He even let out a short laugh. "Hahah! Well now... *this* is fortuitous!" he exclaimed. "It seems your idiot friends have just accidentally given you away, Ms. Echo! You're nothing but one of Lupis's twit hacks! Mr. Stryker!" he ordered quickly, and the lizard's left hand (the one not holding the pistol) suddenly produced a taser, proving the sungazer was ambidextrous as he didn't miss a beat.

The taser's wire was special, as it was high-tensile for hauling in its victims. The darts shot out and struck Emelina's chest, then proceeded to deliver 75,000 volts through her body, enough to knock any human out cold, to say nothing of the fox standing before the lizard now. She was quickly reeled in by the wire, to where she would fall right at Stryker's feet as the electricity ended.

"Take her below, Mr. Stryker... find out what you can... and then... we're gonna go after Lupis." the don ordered coldly. The powerful lizard nodded once and picked up her prone form before he began coolly walking off. "See?" the don asked, looking at them. "Seems I was right... one of those idiot government agents visiting from your good friend Lupis said he was here to see... and I quote... 'Officer Echo.' That enough proof for you?" he asked, looking around the room.

Tony gasped. "What? She was just one of Lupis's... really?" he asked.

"It came from one of my capos... Mr. Gambino, Tony... no mistake." the don said in a steely voice. "She's just another one of Lupis's lapdogs! I *knew* he was behind this! Trying to screw with me! Well I'll screw with him first!" the don shouted now, his temper actually rising before he seemed to catch himself, and calmed down, a smile spreading over his features again. "What are you willing to bet that location she gave us is nothing but a bunch of horseshit?" he asked now, smirking.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2014, 11:38:43 PM**

The look on Emilena's face was indescribable when Don Stracci revealed that the government agents had blown her cover.

"You've *got* to be fucking kidding me--" was as far as she got before the full brunt of 75,000 volts sent her reeling to the floor with a strangled cry. In seconds she had been knocked completely unconscious.

Lily shrieked when she saw a sudden display of violence around her. In seconds, her claws were bared and the tazer flew out of Stryker's hand of its own accord. A second later, she squealed and started shaking uncontrollably, hyperventilating. Sprinting on all fours, Lily ran for an exit and punched through the closest one, leading upstairs. In seconds, she was gone, leaving a trail of splinters behind what used to be a fine oaken postern.

Exstasis nodded as he was led into the interior of the mansion.

"How did you know Officer Echo was here?" he asked Sanjay curiously, keeping his voice to a low mutter so the flanking guards wouldn't hear.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 06, 2014, 11:56:01 PM**

"Shit!" Tony exclaimed as Lily bolted. "Come on!" he said to Axel. "We can't have her running around the house with government agents about!" he waved his paw, and took off after her.

"I'll activate some of the house's less lethal traps!" his father called after him, pulling out a remote to do just that.

Stryker meanwhile had quickly caught the flying taser with his tail, and shoved it back into his coat as if nothing had happened (though inwardly, he'd been surprised). Right... time to get to work then... he entered a secret door and headed for the basement's "fun house" as it was called with Emilena in tow, locking the door electronically behind him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 07, 2014, 12:33:58 AM**

(OOC - As for why Sanjay said Officer Echo. Out of universe, I screwed up. In universe, Sanjay hates her. He wants to get her on the bad side of the Stracci Family. As for why he knew about Emilena being there, he assumed that Emilena wanted to get "buddy-buddy" with the local crime lords. He's aware that Lanthae cops are *very* corrupt, even by this universe's standards.)

Sanjay didn't hear Agent Extasis. He slithered after the Rhino, keeping a eye on the flanking guards.

Soren jumped as he heard something breaking from underneath him. "Fuck this! I'm out of here!"

He bolted from the room and made his way to the exit. In his panic, he went down the wrong stairwell and ended up going into the basement where everyone was.

Anne, who was slightly drunk, followed him. And prepared to drag him to safety if need be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 07, 2014, 01:00:45 AM**

Axel gaped in shock as Lily tore out of the room, then sprinted after her, hot on Tony's heels. Taking the stairs two at a time, he could make out deep gauges in the stairs where Lily's claws had torn through in her attempt to escape. As Axel and Tony reached the top, the sound of something rocketing down the corridor to their left told them which direction she'd gone. A side table had been knocked down, the vase of flowers on its surface smashed on the floor and water pooling around it.

"Come on!" he urged the ferret, taking off after her. "Can't you warn your guards or something?! They're gonna shoot her!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2014, 07:05:57 AM**

"Uh, yeah!" Tony replied, fumbling with his phone and trying to remember what the number was as they raced up the stairs. "Come on...!" he said to himself, wishing he had the radio system that kept his family connected (which he hadn't received yet since coming back). He dialed what he hoped was the number (it was saved but it was kind of hard to run, look where you were going and dial all at the same time) and yelled "Don't shoot the... creature running around!" He hoped his father would've taken care of that too...

Downstairs, the don almost ran into Soren and Anne as he was starting to head upstairs. "Ah! Soren, was it?" he asked. "I'm not sure if you fully distrusted Ms. Echo or not, but it seems you were right to do so. Turns out she was just another one of Agent Lupis's stooges. We're dealing with that though, don't worry." he reassured him.

Upstairs, it was very fortunate that Lily was towards the rear of the substantial house, as Sanjay and Exstasis were still at the front. Gambino was leading them towards the dining room. "It seems Officer Echo is freshening up at the moment." he informed them. "The don will however be with you shortly. Can I interest you in your... 'free room and board?'" he used Exstasis's words now. "Particularly the latter? I can radio in your food so that it will be ready faster." he informed them. He was ever alert however in case Lily decided to come this way.

In the "fun house" deep within the manor, Stryker was busy chaining Emelina to a contraption that hung from the ceiling. The device was a series of chains and manacles which would keep her hovering at a 45-degree angle off the floor, as they were all connected to a hook. She wouldn't be able to move her limbs, as the chains were taut with no give to them. The hands would be brought to a bit off her sides, and her legs would be spread slightly apart.

As Stryker activated the device and began winching her up, he smacked her head. "Time to wake up..." he said, his voice low, somewhat raspy, and very menacing. There was a slight hint of a Germanic accent in there as well, but unless the observer was trained, it would be hard to pick out from which country it originated. She wouldn't be able to see much in here, as it was very dark, and only a dim, low-powered light shined almost directly in her face from across the room. Another thing she'd notice would be the heat... it was like a sweat box in this room, though it didn't seem to be bothering Stryker. In fact, prisoners could be slowly killed down here simply by letting them sweat to death by losing enough fluids, though that of course wasn't what the lizard had in mind.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2014, 08:44:51 AM**

(OOC: Eh, don' worry 'bout it. Any excuse to get Emi tortured is a good one in my book!)

Lily tore down a hallway, sending a maid (the same one that had found her in the bathroom) flying screaming into a large walk-in closet. A pair of guards saw her coming, but having received the warning not to shoot her, had little choice but attempt a physical barricade, which Lily effortlessly smashed through.

The next room appeared to be a sort of office, with the only window steel-barricaded. When she opened the door, a turret rose from the corner audibly and flashily. *<PASSWORD NOT IDENTIFIED>* it informed her pleasantly and then began firing blanks; it was designed to frighten, not actually harm.

In a panic, Lily tried to escape back out the door she'd just entered, only to hit a large stun field that had sprouted up over the entrance. As she fell to the ground, a trapdoor opened up to deliver her to a titanium-reinforced net of electrically-woven fabrics, designed to incapacitate the victim through random electrical stimulation of nerves across their body. She would twitch and spasm uncontrollably until somebody came to rescue her, and until then everyone in the vicinity could listen to her screaming.

Emilena groaned when something smacked her upside the head. Slowly coming to her senses, she took in her situation with only mild surprise.

"Well, that went downhill fast..." she muttered, testing her bonds and finding them unsurprisingly solid. "At least I get to keep my pants this time."

She then noticed Stryker hovering over her. "You don't get to make any demoralizing quips about me being stupid," she warned him, "because this *totally* isn't my fault."

"That would be excellent!" beamed Exstasis. "I'm starving!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 07, 2014, 11:20:18 AM**

Axel sprinted after her, overtaking Tony as he slowed to dial his phone, dashing past the walk-in closet from which the maid's panicked cries were emanating. He rounded the corner and jumped over the two dazed guards who were getting to their feet, trying to process in his mind that it was *Lily* who was causing this mayhem... or whatever she was becoming, at least.

The sudden sound of her screams reached him, and he picked up speed, hurtling towards the open door at the end. "Lily, stop-" he started to shout... then gasped as he made out the light blue tinge of the stun field blocking the door, his trainers squeaking on the polished wooden floor as he skidded to a halt, stopping inches from it. The energy radiation from it was enough to make his fur tingle. Her screams continued to cut through the air, churning Axel's stomach - he was close enough now to see she'd fallen through a hole in the floor, though he couldn't make out what was causing her to shout.

Axel heard Tony catching up, and he turned desperately. "How the hell do you turn this off?! *Come on*, she's in pain!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2014, 11:53:56 AM**

Tony slid to a halt beside Axel, noting the chaos Lily had caused in her passing. "Uh! Hold on!" Tony said, going for his phone now and trying to remember the numbers to press to deactivate the traps. "Uhh... one moment..." He said, holding his forehead. "Right!" he quickly keyed in the three digit code, and the pit trap deactivated. "Come on!" he said now, reaching down to grab hold of one of Lily's arms while he waited for Axel to do the same. They started to haul her up now and back onto the floor.

When she was safely deposited on solid ground once again, Tony wiped his brow and exhaled in relief. "I think she's OK... the field wasn't designed to seriously hurt anyone." he explained. "Don't worry Axel... she's going to be fine." he said reassuringly, trying to get the rat to look at him for a moment.

Gambino smiled at how... easily led Exstasis was. Turning the corner into the expansive dining room, the crocodile capo showed the rhino to a particular seat along the table. "Please, Mr. Exstasis, right here." he said, waving his hand to the particular chair. "Your food will be out shortly. Do you like pasta?" he asked.

"And you, Mr. Bhat, sit wherever you like." Gambino offered. Sanjay would be spared what was coming next, though Exstasis had his seat specially prepared ahead of time. Nothing out of the ordinary could be seen on it though; it appeared like just a normal seat. It was in fact the seat Soren had sat in earlier tonight, and he'd been just fine.

Stryker laughed in a whispering fashion, smiling at her words. "Yes... I would agree with you on that." he said softly, his words echoing in the enclosed room. "In this instance... you have your idiot friends to thank for your current predicament." he stood up now, going for the hanging control panel. "Your pants? Sounds like your last torture session ended well for someone." he commented, pushing another button on the yellow box, which was suspended in mid-air thanks to anti-gravity technology. "Let's make you a bit more comfortable... shall we?" he asked, smiling as a giant steel weight fell from the ceiling and landed none too softly on her backside. It would stretch her spine as her body would be pushed forward, and would gradually get heavier every ten minutes, increasing its mass through nanotechnology. As her body had literally nowhere to go, she'd been feeling the full brunt of the weight as it continually grew.

Stryker avoided his "toys" for the moment, but he did reach into his coat pocket and produce something that looked like a mechanical bug. He studied it for a minute, but did noting further with it at present. "Comfortable?" he asked, looking over at Emilena. "It seems your little friends... weren't as smart or as loyal as you were probably hoping... but even I admit... I didn't expect Agent Lupis to be this stupid. So first things first... what's really out there? In those woods?" He asked, rolling the little "bug" around in his fingers. "And what were your plans when we got out there?" He then began rubbing his hands together slowly, rolling the bot around between them. "You know... the Spanish were geniuses when it came to the art of inflicting pain... mutilating their targets, and forcing even the strongest 'heretics' to confess. I'm a particular fan of some of their more brutal methods... and you'll soon find out some of these for yourself if you don't cooperate." he said now, sitting down in a chair to watch her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2014, 12:34:13 PM**

"Do you have a direct line to Lupis?" Emilena asked, gritting her teeth and panting; the position also made it difficult to breathe. "Lets call him and we can all tell him what an idiot he is. I took this gig for one reason: to get out of Purifier prison. With that snake Sanjay Bhat. Do you know what my job was? 'Just keep your mouth shut and keep Bhat alive, he's a master strategist and he can do all the talking.' Well that turned to work really damn well!"

She grimaced as the weights were pressed on her. "Errrgghh...I didn't have any plans for the forest. That was just me trying to get Lily out of here because I trust the mafia about as much as I should have trusted Lupis. That spot story is totally legit though, you should go wiretap it. Bring divining rods."

Lily's body was still twitching uncontrollably; it would take some time before she'd be able to regain control of her motor functions.

Ex stasis sat down excitedly. "I love pasta!" He said excitedly. "The saucier the better!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 07, 2014, 12:51:01 PM**

Sanjay looked at his uniform. "Excuse me, but I have just slithered through some rather unclean environments and I don't think it's polite for me to sit on such an expensive chair." Inwardly, he had his suspicions about this place."

Soren's eye twitched. "She used a fake warrent to try and arrest me and deatroy my business and before that, she beat me up! Why wouldn't I distrust her!?"

He then took a breath. "Look, I kinda don't care about Lily right now. I just want to make sure Officer Echo and her stooges don't try to fuck me over."

Anne tapped Tony's shoulder. "You may want to speak to Kojuuro. It seems he snuck bugs onto us. Luckily, it seems the house's defense systems have disabled them."

Soren facepalmed. "Him too!? Ugh! What's next?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2014, 01:00:34 PM**

Tony looked at Anne. "Bugs? Really?" he asked, but knew his father's home defenses could handle those. "Where is he now?"

Don Stracci clapped Soren on the shoulder. "Don't worry, son. Ms. Echo is being... dealt with... rather efficiently." he said reassuringly, giving the human a smile and a nod. "As are our two guests. As for Mr. Kojuuro... don't concern yourself with him... he slipped away earlier over the wall." Don Stracci said in a bored fashion. "Left his weapons behind too, apparently. I doubt he heard anything useful."

Stryker smiled at her words, grinning a little bit as he shook his head, his body convulsing as another whispering laugh overtook him. He got out of his chair now. "Is that really *all* there is to it? Get out of Purifier prison? Keep your mouth shut? Help out Sanjay Bhat, whom by the way, is the one who blew your cover." he said now, wagging a claw at her as he disappeared into the darkness to retrieve some of his "toys."

He reappeared a few moments later, carrying what seemed to be two large two-pronged forks tied together with a leather collar, and a pear shaped device, about double the size of a human fist. "These are two of my favorites!" he exclaimed, giving her a winning smile as he strode over to her. "Having trouble breathing?" he asked, noticing what the weight was doing to her. "You'll have even more trouble in a few seconds. While what you say about the forest we'll confirm in a matter of time, I don't think I like your attitude about it very much. So I'll ask again..." He said now, as he took the forks in his hands. "This is called a heretic's fork..." He roughly grabbed her ears, and yanked her head back so that it was craned against her body as far as it would go. "It was designed..." He continued, strapping the fork underneath her neck and fastening the leather buckle tight, so that her head was basically forced to stay in its full back position. "To make breathing very difficult... and to cause the neck extreme discomfort with extended use... imagine having this on you... for hours." He whispered in her ear. She would now barely get enough oxygen to speak, but Stryker was an expert and knew just now much pressure to apply with the fork, in order to keep his victims getting the bare minimum oxygen they needed.

He held the pear up in front of her eyes now. "This... they call a pear of anguish... or... a choke pear, depending on where it was used." he said, waving it in front of her. "It opens up... like so." He twisted a screw at the bottom of the pear, demonstrating for her as the pear split into four leaves which separated gradually away from the center before he twisted them back down. "Now... there are..." he pretended to think a moment. "Three orifices on your body where this can safely go." he bopped her nose lightly with it. "Care to guess which one I'm going to insert it into?" he smiled cruelly again, his eyes boring into hers. "I'll ask again... what's out there, in the woods? Does it pose a danger to our men... and how much does Lupis know about it?" he inquired.

Sanjay didn't go for the trap, but it didn't matter. The proverbial tablecloth was swiftly yanked out from under them.

As Exstasis sat down, he suddenly found himself in free fall, his chair dropping out from under him and dumping his body onto a metal slide which had been greased to create minimal friction. The slide ended in a giant vat of bubbling green acid a hundred feet or so below him. It would've taken less than five seconds since his drop for him to reach the vat, whose contents were strong enough to dissolve even bones...

Sanjay suddenly found a gun pointed directly at the back of his head from Gambino, and other rifles leveled at him from two other soldiers. "Now, Mr. Bhat. I'm afraid dinner plans have been irrevocably changed, for the evening." Gambino said calmly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 07, 2014, 01:27:55 PM**

As Lily's body twitched on the floor, Axel sat down on his haunches next to her, leaning against the wall. He nodded at Tony's reassurance, but kept staring dully at the wall. The raised voices of the guards echoed dully from further up the corridor. After a long moment, Axel looked up slowly at the ferret.

"She was lying..." he croaked. "Emilena was going to lead us into a trap... and I was just going to let us walk right into it. Right into whatever she was planning for Lily." Axel bent forwards and cupped his head in his hands. "I'm such an *idiot*..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2014, 01:37:47 PM**

Tony's face melted when he saw Axel break down in front of him. "No... no, no!" Tony said now, sliding on his knees over to the rat's side. "Hey... hey..." he said softly, holding the rat's augmented arms. "Hey... that's what you have friends for, right?" he asked, smiling. "Come on... we can't do anything on our own... that's why... I mean I don't know why we exist but... sometimes... I like to think it's to help each other out..." he said comfortingly. "You didn't know... but that's why people like Soren and myself are here, right? I mean come on... I haven't known you all that long... but I can tell you're a good person... even despite... the augments." he said here, looking down at the rat's limbs. "And I can tell you love Lily... a lot. You would do anything for her... and that's why you made that mistake." he spoke in softer tones. "You wanted to help her so bad that's why you were willing to just go out and do whatever it takes... even without thinking."

He paused here, his paws still on the rat's arms. "But... we *will* get her help... and we'll do that... together. So that we won't make mistakes like the one we almost just made. Just think... if we all have each others' backs... what's to stop us, huh?" he smiled again, hoping he at least got through to his new rodent friend.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2014, 01:48:56 PM**

Emilena tried to answer, but she was too busy choking on her blocked windpipe. It was making her vision fuzzy in a way that was oddly appealing...

"I recommend...my ass..." she gasped slowly. "It's all...loosened up...from last time..."

She had to work to keep interest from showing in her voice; last time had taught her that sounding excited about torture just made them less willing to do it.

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Ex stasis let out a long bellowing scream that was almost immediately snuffed out by searing acid, that stripped his bones in seconds. His various subdermal augments floated to the surface, cleaned and probably good for resale.

Lily finally regained enough self-control to curl up in a ball and assume the fetal position. Squinting her eyes shut, she took a deep breath and tried to control herself.

She wasn't acting like herself. She didn't let loud noises shock her in that way. The other conscience was much more...animal. It was fueling her with flight-or-flight reactions. She had to work to get it under control!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 07, 2014, 03:12:06 PM**

"Alright." Axel sucked in a breath and raised his head to the ferret sat next to him. "You're right, I... I'm sorry. You could have been in danger too, and that was my fault. But if we work together..." He paused and smiled weakly at Tony, his ears perking up slightly. "Thank you. I know how easy it would have been for you and your dad to just throw us out on our asses. You don't know how much it means... And... I've got your back if you ever need it." He gave a small, choking laugh. "That probably doesn't mean much. But it's true."

Lily finally stopped twitching and curled up into a ball. Axel looked down and gently laid a hand on her shoulder. *But now we're back to square one...* And then, a thought that shocked him even as it entered his head; *I hope Emilena suffers...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2014, 04:39:35 PM**

((Exstasis :lol))

"Hey... it means a lot." Tony smiled, patting Axel's shoulder now. "You're here for Lily, and we're all here for you, OK?" he asked. "Hey... we could've thrown you out... but I think it's apparent to you by now that my dad's word is good... he promised to help... you're still here." He sat back against the wall now and looked down at Lily.

"We're gonna help her, Axel, OK? I'm serious..." He looked over at the rat now. "And we're gonna go with your plan... track down Lupis, and go after him. I mean come on! We've basically nullified all the agents he's sent here, so we've got the upper paw now, I think." He said, nodding with a smirk. "It's the only thing we have to go on, right? We got no other leads. I think he's our best bet of getting to the bottom of this."

Don Stracci suddenly chimed in. "OK... my guys swept the woods around where Emilena said to go... they found nothing of any significance." the don reported.

"Damn!" Tony breathed. "I was... really hoping that *maybe* it wasn't bullshit but... I guess... it was too much to hope for." he said here, hanging his head a bit. "Sorry Axel... guess that was a bust." he muttered. "Also... if you're worried about moving Lily around in public... my dad's got a Pierce-Arrow Berline that can tow a Pierce-Arrow Travelodge trailer." he smiled here. "She could hide out in there, and I doubt anyone would know." he suggested.

Stryker smiled at her suggestion. "That's what I was thinking..." he wiped his brow, and stood up now. The heat in here was fine for him, being he was cold-blooded (but had augments to keep him from going into shock in cold temperatures). "Though I feel I'm going to need to step up the pain after this." he said, moving to behind her now and violently tearing her pants down. He didn't care how far down, he just needed to get access, stopping when they were around her thighs... after all, a Spanish boot could be in order.

Placing the pear between her cheeks, he then drove his foot downward onto the pear, kicking it fairly deep into her rectum. He then started turning the screw a few times to the right. "I wonder how long it'll take before your rectum bursts." he said, leaving it at its current position right now. "I'll come back and do more of that in a bit." he said, walking around to her front now. "Maybe we should try the skull splitter next? It's not half as deadly as it sounds... but it'll hurt... I promise you it'll hurt. Or the knee splitter... or even a St. Elmo's belt." he commented thoughtfully. He then lashed out with his spiked tail, and struck the side of her head with great force. "There is of course... my own body as well... my spines are capable of flaying flesh." he said, smirking down at her now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2014, 05:19:27 PM**

Emilena let out a low ragged moan, but quickly shifted it into a cry of pain for appearances' sake. "This...choke pear...ain't that useful...for questioning...is it?" She choked out. "Let's...try the belt..." She couldn't resist wondering why St. Elmo was into BDSM.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 07, 2014, 06:36:05 PM**

Marita Rose and Marie starred at tony ' you alright?' Marita asked kindly ' the knowledge that Emiklena had tried to deceive them, wasnt all that surprising, the whole reason she had become involved in this adventure was because emilena had busted into her house and forced her into helping her.' i hope emilena gets what is coming to her' she muttered.
-
gawds only know what the don is doing to her' Marie nodded. ' corrupt cops' she shook her head. ' be careful what you say in here ' rose said ' the don is not a person you want to annoy , or test the patience of. In truth, she wanted to get back on the road, and she was fighting to stay still, biproxytol was something that stayed in your body for a week, after that if you didnt use it you went into horrible wiithdrawals. rose was dreading when the withdrawal would start to kick in, the last time, she had vomited heavily and made a huge mess of the dressing room, it had taken 3 cleanings- all taken out of her takings that week- to clean it up.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 07, 2014, 06:46:58 PM**

Soren shivered. "If we followed her...we could all have been killed."

"Good riddance," Anne said. She had a *very* low opinion of the cops in Lanthae. Granted, the only reason she wasn't in jail was because almost half of what she made from stealing augments and selling them went to bribing the cops.

"Don Stracci, maybe what we're looking for isn't the forest? Maybe it's Pelvanida?"

Anne rubbed the base of her horn as she poured herself a glass of water. "Maybe we can dig through Emilena's belongings and maybe their vehicles? Maybe they'll lead us to something useful."

Soren rubbed his face. "That's probably as close as we'll get for solid clues."

Sanjay swayed as the guards trained their weapons on him. "Okay, you caught me...So what are you going to do? Feed me to the catfish and crabs?"

(OOC - Catfish and crabs are raised on farms for food. They are voracious eaters and criminals often feed their victims to them – alive.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 07, 2014, 09:36:09 PM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 07, 2014, 09:47:32 PM**

What shoulld we do with Agent lupis?' Marita asked ' He was the one who sent Emilea here right/ i think he has a lot to answer for' Marita said ' iwith all due respect to your father tony- and he has been a gracious host with the nice beds, great meals and lots of art to look at- i think we need to get back on the road and go after Lupis. what do you say guys../ she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 07, 2014, 10:13:08 PM**

Soren nodded. "I don't care about Lupis. But I want Emilena's head on a platter!"

Anne shrugged "I dunno about you, but I could use some weed right about now."

Sanjay bobbed and weaved as he watched the guards. He waited for an opportunity to inject them with the narcotic he filled his venom tanks with.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 08, 2014, 12:08:57 AM**

((Sanjay executed with full permission!))

"I agree." Tony nodded at Marita. "I think that should be our new goal. We find out where he is... and we go for it." He stood up now, and held a paw down for Axel to take. "What do you say we take the Pierce-Arrow Berline and the Travelodge trailer and roll on out of here?" he asked, smirking.

"I'm getting Stryker to extract Lupis's location from Emilena now." the don informed them. "When I know... you'll know. Did I hear you're taking my precious Berline out?" he narrowed his eyes at his son now.

"Dad... we're gonna need a method of moving Lily around surreptitiously and... the Berline's got a V-12. It can out horsepower most cars on the road! Please?" he asked, smiling. "You modded it... it'll be safe." he let a grin spread over his features.

Sighing, the don shook his head. "I'm suddenly worried I'm not carrying enough insurance but... fine. You break it, you bought it."

"That won't happen dad! Or... maybe it will." Tony grinned now, thinking he could own a really awesome car if he broke it. "Anyway, you're the best!" he exclaimed.

"Yeah, yeah... I know." Don Stracci waved his paw dismissively.

Stryker gave her a grin. "The belt? See... when the prisoners start asking for certain treatments... no... that's when I go another direction." he said, striking her face again with his spiny tail. "I'll use the skull splitter." He disappeared once more, noting her disdain for the pear... oh he'd rupture that rectum of hers all right!

Returning with what was essentially a circlet with spikes on its interior, he placed it on her head. "This will split your skull... but only if I apply lethal pressure. In the meantime... I'll just do this." he said, tightening the screws so that the spikes started to drive through her skin and tightened against her skull. "I'll give you another chance." he said, looking down at her now. "You answer the question... and maybe I won't start drilling into your brain. Maybe." he said, smacking her cheek with his hand. "Where's Lupis when you last left him? Huh?"

Gambino didn't like how Sanjay was swaying and bobbing and twisting... it was too snake-like and too threatening. "That's an excellent idea, Mr. Bhat!" the crocodile stated, and fired a round directly into the back of Sanjay's skull, execution style. As the snake slumped forward, Gambino looked at the guards. "Go and feed him to the catfish and crabs. It was his idea!" the croc shrugged, and ordered a cleaning crew to get into the dining room now. "Oh and salvage those augments from the rhino... we could use them."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 08, 2014, 12:32:41 AM**

The guards quickly grabbed the dead Cobra and dragged him off.

They entered a passage way deep into the Heights. There, inside one of the many rooms, lay a large tank with several large catfish swimming lazily and crabs scuttling along the bottom.

One of the guards produced a switchblade and swiftly sliced off Sanjay's clothes. He noticed the augments on Sanjay, but the creatures would eat around them.

"Dig in!" The guards heaved the body into the tank and the voracious predators soon began attacking it, turning the water blood-red.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 08, 2014, 01:11:16 AM**

"Eeergh!" Emilena gritted her teeth as the device dug into her cranium. It was giving her an awful headache. "Fine...*don't*...do the belt then..."

The skull splitter was making it incredibly hard to think. Lupis, where had she seen Lupis? At the place...the place where she had been...*Goddammit, this isn't a hard question...*

She decided to stall for time. "I'll tell you...if you do...the belt..." she grinned lazily; the lack of oxygen to her brain was giving her an incredible high, and it was starting to take its toll.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 08, 2014, 02:36:56 AM**

Axel took Tony's paw and let himself be pulled to his feet. "I say that sounds like a plan," he said, returning Tony's grin. They might be stuck back at square one, but he felt better knowing they had something to aim for. *Once we get the information from Emilena...*

Once Tony had guilt tripped his father into letting him take the vehicles, Axel nodded gratefully. "Thanks, sir. I'll try to make sure the Berline doesn't get too scratched up." He half turned to Tony and whispered, "There's no way you're going to return it in one piece, is there?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 08, 2014, 09:55:41 AM**

Tony shook his head, and grinned. "I don't think so... but my dad's modded it too so... it's pretty resistant." he chuckled, and looked at the group. "Well... I'm gonna grab some breakfast before we hit the road. The Pierce-Arrow can hold six, plus the trailer can hold basically a family so... I think we'll be good in terms of transport, though we may want to take Axel's truck as well, just for Soren's exoskeleton, unless you have a better way of transporting it." he pointed out here.

"Breakfast? You want the kitchen staff to..." Don Stracci began.

"Oh I got it, pops, don't worry!" Tony said, waving as he went towards the kitchen. "Just gonna whip up something quick. Eggs take a matter of minutes after all." he added. Good, quick breakfast, then they'd all be on the road.

Entering the kitchen, the ferret broke out two skillets, moved over to the expansive stoves, turned on the heat, and let the pans start to heat. He went over to one of their five fridges, retrieved some butter, eggs, bacon, mushrooms, and sausages, and began carrying them over to the stove.

The don looked at the others. "I'll provide you with hardware when you leave... also, your weapons will be returned. You understand, I can't lend you direct support... can't implicate myself after all and risk sparking a war, but indirect... I'll provide whatever you need." Don Stracci stated, taking a data pad from Max now and handing it first to Soren. "Just select from the list what you want and I'll provide it." he offered. "Pass it around, make sure everyone gets it, and the stuff'll be waiting for you when you drive out.''

Stryker glared at her. "You don't get to make requests, I'm afraid... as my boss said, this isn't a negotiation." he stood up again, went around to her backside, and twisted the pear open a few more notches. "Once again... where's Lupis?" he reached behind him, into a box, and retrieved what looked like a cross between a fire poker and cattle prod. Activating it, the tip immediately began to heat up. "This'll hurt you more than me." he grinned, and applied the burning tip to her neck, holding it there and letting the tool begin to sear away her flesh. "Where's Lupis?" he demanded more angrily.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 08, 2014, 10:27:55 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 08, 2014, 11:00:57 AM**

Of course sir' marita nodded ' tony i call back seat in the car.'
i could use some biproxytol rose said feebily.. look i need to go to detox, but i really dont have the money for it..' she said.' look rose, once we take care of Lupis we'll have more than enough money to get you detoxed' Marita replied. ' maries going to help us,...' marie smiledd at rose.. ' come on girl.. just hang in there.. i'll be happy to have a gun, for defense purposes

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 08, 2014, 11:17:46 AM**

Emilena couldn't help it; she gave out a long, low shuddering moan, arching her back and sticking her tail straight out.

He's....in....heh...the Purifiers....camp..." she giggled; the lack of oxygen to her brain was giving her a similar reaction as that to laughing gas. "You...could...have...bloody...guessed that! Ohhhhhh...."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 08, 2014, 05:46:54 PM**

"Oh, it's not my truck... actually, I suppose it kind of is now," Axel said thoughtfully, suddenly feeling bad for the delivery boy they'd stolen it from. He checked that Lily was still alright... or at least, not spasming again, then sidled up behind Soren and peered over his shoulder at the datapad.

He tapped Soren, his guilt over believing Emilena temporarily disappearing when he saw a .44 Magnum was listed among the items they could take. "Hey, get that! The most powerful handgun in the world!" He reflected that firing the gun would probably take his arm off. "Or... maybe just get me a smaller gun. I'd feel better if I wasn't walking into anything empty handed."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 08, 2014, 06:36:25 PM**

(The Heights)

Soren looked over the list. He noticed that there was a conspicuous absence of mind altering substances. Nevertheless, he just checked off ammunition for his shotgun as well as a generator. "Well, that'll do." He passed the tablet to Axel.

"Any drugs?" Anne asked.

"Nope."

The mare sighed. "Fuck it, I'll go steal some later. Not from here, of course."

Soren yawned. His supply of moziafil was gone and he fogured it might be useful. But he had little money left. He looked around. He was associating with organized crime and preparing for a vigilante mission. He shrugged; "helping himself" to some moziafil was peanuts.

(Patrick Anderson's Manor)

The Liger watched as his armed guards patrolled his house. The interior had several expensive imported marble furnishings and other high-end products.

He adjusted his tailored suit and looked in the mirror. Staring back was a Feline with the imposing mane of a Lion mixed with the stripes of a Tiger. His black business suit was set off by a dark blue tie. Two golden cufflinks made in the shape of his company logo (a microchip with a cursive P.A. carved on it) adorned his sleeve.

"Sir, are you sure this is a good idea?" a dark-skinned Human said as he watched his boss combing his mane.

"If I do not show up at my workplace, then these terrorists have won." The Liger spritzed some cologne on his suit. "In addition, this suit is my new bulletproof carbon nanotube suit. It's 200,000 creds well spent. In addition my podium has bulletproof corundum shields to protect me."

The guard sighed. "If you insist, Sir."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 08, 2014, 10:00:52 PM**

"Got it!" Tony called from the kitchen to Marita as he cracked some eggs over the first skillet and began whisking them around. He threw in the mushrooms, bacon, and sausage into the second skillet, and let those cook. Soon, as the eggs began to form, he dumped the ingredients in and let them all simmer together. He then went over to the fridge, retrieved some cheese, and sprinkled it into the fast cooking omelette. He moved it around slightly with a spatula to let the rest of the eggs cook and form up before folding it over onto itself and dumping it out onto a plate. He then turned down the heat (but kept it on just in case), and strode over to one of kitchen's many counters, and sat himself down upon the stool.

"Anyone want any eggs?" the ferret called out to the others.

"I don't deal in drugs, sorry." Don Stracci replied to Rose. "It's something I won't touch. I'm sure you could find some easily enough in Lanthae though." he stated. "Aha!" he said now, hearing Stryker report in. "Agent Lupis is at the Purifier compound, ironically enough. I'll be extracting details of its layout very soon." he informed the group.

Down below, Stryker could tell Emelina was getting a kick out of this. He withdrew the searing rod, and smirked. "Hmph... so... you get off on all this, huh?" he proceeded to tighten the skull splitter, hearing the distinct crack of bone as her cranium began to splinter under the spikes. "Just a little bit..." he muttered, noting the weight on her back was close to 300 pounds now.

He moved back to the pear, and twisted it again, causing near rupture of her rectum. "That was just sheer sadism... this next bit... I'm gonna need you to tell me the layout of the Purifier compound, and any relevant details an attacking force would need." he stated, switching on a recorder.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 08, 2014, 10:31:39 PM**

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i'll take some scarambled ' marita said. 'scrambled for me as well. 'overeasy please' rose said. marita went over tho the fridge and grabbed a gallon of milk. marie went over to an open cabinet full of glases and pulld out 4 of them, one for her, rose and marita and one for tonu..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 08, 2014, 11:00:17 PM**

Emilena felt it coursing up, the heaviness in her abdomen. Peaking, like it almost had back at the Purifier base. "Oh, oh, mmmmmm!" her moans turned quickly into a haggard scream as she felt that wave crest. What little oxygen she could get was expulsed immediately as her muscles contracted throughout her body. In one uplifting moment, she squealed shamelessly and bloodied tears poured down her face as she ejaculated loudly and was left shuddering, creaking in the chafing contraption.

"Heh...heh..." she panted heavily. "Oh man...okay......okay..."

Now that her sexual needs were sated, she realized just what a situation she was in. She also quickly learned the downside to continued stimulation after orgasm.

Suddenly she screamed, not a pleasured scream; a real, honest scream of unfiltered pain. "Oh god! Stop! Please!"

She felt it all; the screws dug into her skull, every inch of lacerated skin and shredded flesh. Her flayed burns and torn orifices. How crippled she was. "Oh, god please..." she begged, crying uncontrollably. "Just kill me already!"

Suddenly Lily arched her back and started crying. She was hit by it all at once; someone in this house was in genuine pain. She could feel all of it. And it hurt her.

Make it stop! screamed three consciences at once; hers, her parasite's, and the one assuaging her with uncontrollable fear and anguish.

She shook her head violently, trying to clear it. Her bitter tears stung her eyes. She didn't want to hear this! It was deafening!

Stop! she screamed at the other voice. *I'm sorry! But I can't take it! STOP!*

And then it stopped.

Where Emilena once hung, now lay dangling, empty manacles. The pear clattered to the floor. A pair of blood-soaked pants lay in an ever-spreading puddle of bodily fluids.

Stryker was alone in the room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 08, 2014, 11:30:27 PM**

Stryker smirked as he realized he'd finally broke her. She'd had her fun... but it was over. They always broke... and too bad too! He didn't even get a chance to mutilate her seriously yet! But then, as she started screaming and yelling for him to kill her (and he was considering doing other things, after smelling her ejaculation), she vanished. Stryker blinked. "What the... fuck?" he asked, looking around now. Where had she gone? The pear simply fell to the floor, as did her pants, the fork, and the skull splitter.

"Son of a bitch!" he shouted, moving forward now and looking rapidly from left to right.

"What? Gone?" Don Stracci asked into his headset. "What the hell do you mean gone? Well find her!" he yelled. "And alert security! Lock this place down!" he ordered. He then turned his gaze on the others. "It seems Ms. Echo... has vanished." he said, looking at Lily now, the monster clearly in some state of distress. "I'll doubt we'll find her." he clamped his teeth together and looked up at the ceiling. "Great..."

Tony smiled as a glass of milk was procured for him by Marie. "Thanks..." he said, accepting it as he dug into his omelette. "All right... I'll make your eggs soon, just want to finish my breakfast." he smiled again, chugging some milk. "Two scrambled and one over easy order... got it!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 08, 2014, 11:58:51 PM**

Soren felt a shiver run up his spine. "Emilena vanished...without a trace?"

"I'm vegetarian," Anne said.

Soren pushed the thoughts out of his head and got to work making his own omlette with vegetables and catfish pieces. Some catfish sausages and a glass of orange juice rounded off the breakfast.

The Human sat down to eat when he noticed the TV in the room. "Might as well. Activate."

The flatscreen came to life and the scene showed a Liger businessman standing in front of a well-dressed crowd. His name, Patrick Anderson and "CEO of Anderson Augmentations" appeared at the bottom of the screen.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 09, 2014, 02:52:41 AM**

Axel flicked through the list of items, but half of the things on there was stuff that he'd probably be safer staying away from. Eventually he settled on a small snubnosed revolver, and the ammo to go along with it. *Should be easy enough to use...* He almost dropped the datapad in surprise when Lily started crying, but before he could do anything she suddenly seemed to calm down. Almost simultaneously, he heard the Don speaking into his headset.

"She's *gone*?" Axel glanced down at the figure on the floor. *Did she do something?* Suddenly feeling like it'd be safer in a group if there was a potentially enraged Emilena roaming around, he bent to gently lift Lily to her feet, and started to head towards the kitchen, handing the datapad back to Stracci as they passed him. "Did... did they at least find out where Lupis is?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 09, 2014, 10:35:56 AM**

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 09, 2014, 11:23:29 AM**

"Yes... we found out he's at the Purifier compound." Don Stracci said here. "Your old buddies it seems are harboring him... or he's employing them. Either way, you get to kill two birds with one stone." It was convenient for him, as well, because this way, he could have others do his work for him. He had nothing personal against the Purifiers however, even if he considered them a dirty business. This way at least, he could avoid directly involving his family in something that had nothing to do with them.

Don Stracci regarded Lily again. "I have a feeling your girlfriend was responsible for Ms. Echo's vanishing. She certainly seems to have powerful abilities... but I wonder if she has any control?" he mused aloud.

Tony finished up his omelette now, and proceeded to start cooking the eggs for Marita, Marie, and Rose. He noticed Soren watching the TV, and narrowed his eyes to see the liger on screen. "Hey... I think I've heard of that guy." he said, beating the eggs in a bowl as he watched the speech commence. "Wonder what this is about." he murmured, pouring the whisked eggs into the pan now and beginning to move them around with the spatula. He then cracked two more eggs for the over easy batch.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 09, 2014, 12:19:15 PM**

(Anderson Augmentations)

Patrick looked at his papers. In front of him hovered several camera drones. The corundum shields that surrounded him and the armored business suit he wore along with the two armed guards flanking him should have kept him safe but a twinge of nervousness ran through him.

He took a sip of his water and cleared his throat. "As you all may have heard, I was the victim of a cowardly attack." Murmors ran through the crowd.

The Liger held up his hand for silence.

"However, I will not bow to these Luddites. My company pledges to make augmentations more affordable and more advanced. It is for the world, that I make them, to surpass our own limits! To those who would attack me over creating augments and the Augmented themselves, I dare you, tell the mother whose paralyzed child recieved a spinal cord stimulator and can now take their first step! I dare you, tell the blind man who can now see infrared when all he saw black he's a degenerate!"

The crowd watched in awe as Patrick continued to speak. "I have saved hundreds if not thousands of lives with my company's augmentations and implants!" His voice dropped to a near whisper and he glared into the camera, his amber slit-pupilled eyes daring them to challenge him. "How many lives have you terrorists destroyed? How many fathers who have to tell their children 'Mommy's never coming home'? How many police officers have to tell widowed husbands and wives that their spouse was kidnapped and later found dead? All because of your Luddite beliefs."

The crowd applauded as Patrick finished his speech. Their applause was cut short when a sonic boom echoed through the air and the sound of one of the corundum barriers breaking was heard.

The two armed guards quickly hustled their boss to safety as soon as the sound was heard. Screaming broke out as the crowd began to disperse.

One of the guards radioed for assistance while the other checked on their boss.

Patrick only gurgled as he stared glassy-eyed into the smoggy sky. The heavy steel dart, fired from a camera drone that had been gutted and had a railgun stuffed into it, had smashed through the corundum barrier and retained enough energy to competely rip through the Liger's neck, tearing apart his trachea and other vital structures before it exited through the back of his neck, nearly taking his head off in the process, and buried itself into the concrete sidewalk.

(The Heights)

The Liger's deep resonant voice echoed out from the TV screen as he made his speech. Everything had been broadcast, including the shooting.

Soren stared wide eyed at the scene. His half-eaten omlette lay in front of him. The spray of blood and tissue that issued forth when the dart ripped through the unfortunate man's neck killed his appetite.

"Did...Did I just see what I thought I saw?" Anne asked as she continued eating her pancakes.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2014, 12:29:05 PM**

Marita had only been half-heartedly paying attention, but after the shooting, her eyes were fixed on the screen. ' my gawd, that guy just got shot on live tv!" she started. '' my gawd, someone was just killed..' Marie said, her meal fiorgotten.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2014, 12:42:18 PM**

Lily was cradling her head. The lingering aftereffects of the mental trauma she'd just heeded witness to wasn't a thing to shrug off.

It was that police officer. She'd gotten a glimpse of who it was when they'd briefly connected minds. The don had obviously had her tortured, and probably planned for worse...

It left her feeling nauseous. She felt no ill will towards anyone, including Emilena. She hoped the officer hadnt been tortured on Lily's behalf. She worried about how she had stopped the pain; if she'd killed Emilena, she was hardly better than the don.

She looked nervously at the people surrounding her. These were dangerous people, quick to hate and ready to kill. Even her former friends. Even Axel...she could sense it. Something had changed in his thought patterns. To protect her, he was willing to hurt others, or look away as they were hurt. He'd lost part of the kind soul she'd seen when they first met.

What am I doing to these people? Lily wondered. *And how far will they go?...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 09, 2014, 01:55:48 PM**

Tony had to admit... the speech was pretty good. He could kind of see where the augment side of the argument was coming from... kind of. He still wasn't fully into augments, but... he could sort of see... *holy crap!*

The barrier breaking and the liger being shot on live television caused Tony to freeze. "What... the...?" was all he could say at first. "Oh my god! Oh... my... god!" he exclaimed, his paw going up to his mouth now, aghast at what just occurred. Anne finally broke the silence, followed by Marita and Marie.

"I just... I can't..." Tony shook his head, at a loss for words. "Unbelievable..." was all he could whisper. The smell of the cooking food however, brought him back to reality. "Crap!" he said, dumping the scrambled eggs onto two plates now before they started to burn. He flipped the two other eggs over gently, and waited for them to cook a tad more before he slid them onto another plate.

"OK... hopefully you girls haven't lost your appetite..." Tony said softly, shaking his head. "I uh... I think I'll get the car ready." he said in a low voice, and exited the kitchen now as he dropped off the girls' eggs "Hope you enjoy."

He headed over to his father and Axel. "Hey Axel..." the ferret tapped the rat on his arm now. "You about ready to get going? I think I'm gonna fire up the Pierce-Arrow. Want to take Lily to the garage and get her inside the trailer?" he suggested, looking down at the psionic creature now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 09, 2014, 02:46:36 PM**

Axel shook his head at the Don's question. "I... I don't know..." He had no idea what to think, but considering how panicked she'd been, any form of control was hard to imagine. *We need to get to Lupis fast...*

He turned at Tony's greeting. "Yeah, the sooner we get on the road the better. I guess the others'll meet us down there after they've eaten?" He put an arm around Lily's shoulders and spoke in a soft tone. "Hey... you ready to go? We're taking you to the garage, you can lie down in the trailer if you want."

Raising his head, Axel gave the Don a grateful smile. "Thanks for everything you've done... We would have been totally screwed. And, ah, I'll keep my mouth shut about, you know... everything I've seen here..." He trailed off as he realised that shutting up was probably a good idea. Turning to Tony, he gave a nod and started to lead Lily in his direction. "Lead the way."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2014, 03:10:40 PM**

Marita and marie pushed their plates towards Rose who quickly started eating. " I'm not hungry' Marita said. " me neither' marie nodded. ' It only took Rose a couple minutes to wolf down the eggs. " come on girls we're getting in Ton's car " Marita said.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Pterano** on **February 09, 2014, 03:27:12 PM**

"You will... if you know what's good for you." Don Stracci replied, then let a smile crease over his features now. "It was a pleasure hosting you. I hope you drop by again... any friend of the family, as they say." the older ferret said, taking Axel's hand now and shaking it firmly.

Tony approached his father afterward, smiling shyly. "Well dad... it's good to be back... truly, it is. Sorry we couldn't stay the night..."

"Hey... don't fall asleep at the wheel, OK?" his dad answered, pulling his arm now and dragging him in for a hug. Tony's eyes widened... it wasn't every day his father just hugged him, after all. He reached up, and tentatively hugged his father back. "Hey... whatever happens out there... you're my son and... I'd hate to see anything happen to you... anything." he stated.

"Yeah... I know dad... I won't... do what I did again. I'll come back... I promise."

"When you do... you'll be my underboss... I mean that." his father said.

"Really? Your... underboss? You mean that?" Tony asked, pulling back a bit.

"Hey, only if you do a good job." his father winked. "Now go... do your thing." he nodded in the direction Axel was going.

"Sure dad... take care of yourself, OK? And... I love ya, pops."

"Mm-hm." Don Stracci nodded, smiling. "Love ya too. Get going." he said again, releasing his son now.

Tony backed away, taking a good look at his father before he turned and led Axel and Lily to the garage. Flipping on the lights, he watched as they bathed the polished auto bodies in their glow. "OK... let's see..." Tony retrieved the Berline's keys, and headed for the right car (http://www.supercars.net/gallery/119513/2482/950837.jpg). It was a big dark blue 1936 Pierce-Arrow Berline with a Pierce-Arrow Travelodge trailer hooked up to the back. It sported a powerful V-12 engine that was the best in its day, and still stood the test of time even in 2037, though of course, his father had modded the drive shaft to produce more speed, and gave it a few more combat resistant features as well...

"OK..." he opened up the door of the trailer, which was very spacious and luxurious (http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2461/3536933772_74dc1d10b4.jpg) inside (http://oldtrailer.com/Images/1937-pierce-arrow-travelodge-904.jpg). "Here it is. Pierce-Arrow came up with the idea to design this trailer as something to try and boost sales during the Depression... anyway... she can stay in here rather comfortably without anyone knowing. You... gonna ride back here with her, or up front?" he asked, holding the door open for Lily. "I figure we'll swing by the front of the house, pick up the guns and the others, and get going."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2014, 06:15:58 PM**

Lily allowed herself to be led to the garage. She looked nervously at the cars; they looked clean, but she smelled age and blood on all of them.

She was still preoccupied with the second conscience in her mind. She was probing it carefully, trying to figure out what it was. Since the pain outburst, it was lying dormant, recovering.

What are you? she asked cautiously. *Are you okay?...Can we work together?*

It ignored her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 09, 2014, 10:18:51 PM**

Inside the Stracci manor, Adrian's broken body convulsed as it finally succumbed to the injuries it had sustained over the past few hours. As he flatlined, he managed the strength to grab one of the doctors trying to save him and pull the man close to him.
"T-tell...Emilena...tell her I...love her..."
He choked out, then, as his hand went limp, he managed the ghost of a smile as a single tear rolled down his face. He would later be buried in an unmarked grave, without ceremony or mourners, just another casualty of the city that he had fought for.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 09, 2014, 11:29:30 PM**

(The Heights)

Soren finished up washing the dishes. "All right, ready to roll?"

Anne wiped down the dining room table and then wiped her muzzle with the same rag. "Let's do this!"

Soren and Anne made their way to the front of the house. Along the way, they stopped by Don Stracci's office. "Don Stracci," Soren said. "I must thank you for your hospitality and help."

"I thank you for your hospitality, Don Stracci," Anne said. "Now if you'll excuse us, the Purifiers have got a date with pain."

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron finished off his catfish hash and black coffee. He looked at Marcus. "Looks like one silicon slut's out of the picture."

He tossed a newspaper to the Doberman. The headline read "Patrick Anderson, Cybernetics Magnate Shot!"

"Anyways, what about our latest assignment? We were supposed to steal some shit from an electronics factory or something."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 10, 2014, 02:01:13 AM**

Nairda nodded, clenching his fist.

"The Purifiers will have to pay for what they've done~" He mused wryly, steely-eyed and resolute in his resolve. He followed the rest of the team, chuckling softly to himself...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 10, 2014, 02:32:40 AM**

"I'll stay back here with her," Axel said, helping Lily up the step that lead to the inside of the trailer. "I don't suppose there's any radios on this thing, are there? Might not be a bad idea to have a way of communicating if we're going to come up with a plan, or if... you know, something happens." Lowering his voice, he inclined his head towards Lily. Stepping up, he joined her inside the Pierce-Arrow.

Looking around, he had to admit it was pretty comfortable. There was even a microwave hooked up on the counter with some packets of instant snacks they could use with it. To the left was a small table flanked on both sides by comfy looking seats. He walked with her over to one and helped ease her down into it, noting that she still looked like she was in some discomfort.

"Hey, you haven't eaten for a while. You hungry?" Axel asked, giving her a smile and turning to the microwave. He rifled through the cupboards above it and pulled out some of the packets. "There's macaroni cheese or..." He shifted through them and hummed. "More macaroni cheese."

Marcus shot a hand out and caught the newspaper, still hunched over the bench at his usual spot in the corner of the breakroom. He held it up and read the headline, then grunted, nodding, though his face didn't display any pleasure. "It was a long time coming."

He raised his eyes to Aaron. "Right. Four 18-G12VX Amplifiers. The closest factory's Pelvanida, so I say that's our target. The amplifiers aren't exactly precious, so they shouldn't be too hard to acquire. Rhaegson wants this job to be quick, in and out, so a small team's better. If you and me go, we can be there and back in an hour."

Rhaegson leaned back in his chair, the phone balanced on his stomach as he dialed. Halfway through, the computer screen flickered and the image came back on, displaying the files he'd been sifting through when the power had been cut. "About fuckin' time! Thank you!" Rhaegson shouted through his door, hearing his voice echo, his sarcasm traveling the halls.

On the other end of the line, there was the sound of the phone being picked up. "Hey, Lupis! Big Bad!" he exclaimed, his voice dripping with insincere amiability. "I have my guys heading down to pick up the last few... ingredients. They won't be long." Blowing out a puff of smoke, Rhaegson's voice suddenly dropped lower, hardening. "How are things going on your end?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 10, 2014, 08:46:57 AM**

"Oh yeah, let me explain a few things." Tony said, stepping into the trailer now with Axel. "First off..." He went around closing all the blinds over the windows. "Just in case, right? Don't want anyone taking a peek inside and glimpsing a psionic creature after all. Now then... this is what the rich in the 30s would've called a 'land yacht.' Towing a trailer around was a big thing then, and you've got some pretty nice amenities in here. Only 450 of these were produced, but they're equipped with hydraulic brakes, a dining area, ice box, two stoves..." he held up two claws here. "One for cooking, the other for heating the trailer, a water tank for the sinks, and fold-out beds." He pointed everything out, motioned to the comfortable couches to indicate they could fold out into beds. "You also have a radio..." He tapped above his head onto the finely polished wood ceiling of the trailer to indicate a black speaker and radio knobs below it. "The bathroom is through the door with the mirror on it." he gestured to said door now.

"And yes, my dad installed a communicator that links you directly to the Berline." He pressed the call button on a wall-mounted speaker to demonstrate. "Just buzz me and we can talk back and forth. So yeah! This is your new luxury land yacht." he chuckled, letting the rat take it all in. "Pierce-Arrow really spared no expense at making sure their customers got their money's worth. This trailer in fact cost about the same as a nice car back in the 30s. So enjoy it! It'll be a good way to move Lily around the city, and can really help fit our entire group too if we run out of room in the Berline."

He stepped out now, closed the door, and headed around to the front of the car. Getting in, he started up the big V-12, listening to it roar to life and echo around the garage. He revved it a few times for the sheer hell of it, and then threw it into gear, pulling carefully out of the row and into the center lane. The Pierce-Arrow Berline was a rakish looking beauty with four sets of headlights curving out of the front fenders in typical Pierce-Arrow fashion.

Driving slowly down the middle lane until he reached the heavy steel door, he waited for it to open before driving out and pulling onto the main driveway. Rolling around to the front of the house, Tony honked the horn for the others to join him. "Your limousine is here!" He shouted out the rolled down window, grinning at them.

Inside the house, Don Stracci warmly shook Soren's hand. "My pleasure, all right? We'll get on reconstructing your workshop at some point. I promise." he said. He then accompanied them out onto the the front portico of his house. Max was there, with metal crates containing their old weapons, and the new ones they had selected.

"Just do me a favor and put the weapons in the trunk and the trailer!" Tony called, popping the Berline's trunk for them. "Carry what you want, and stow the rest! Also, I'm gonna need someone up front with me to direct me to the compound!" He gave his dad a small wave, and his father nodded, smiled slightly, and waved back.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 10, 2014, 10:54:12 AM**

"I can direct you..." Nairda suggested darkly, striding up to the luxury vehicle and riding shotgun. "I've had...an unfortunate history with the Purifiers..." The look on his face betrayed his repressed sorrows from prior encounters with Marcus, his sworn arch-nemesis.

Lily smiled back at Axel and nodded her head. She'd quickly grown to like the cramped space and the darkness of the car interior; as an environment it was far easier to watch all exits and to know just how defensible it was from attack. She couldn't stop her new hyper-cautious prey senses that channeled through her, but she could assuage them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 10, 2014, 10:02:57 PM**

Marita, Mair and Rose climbed into the back seat all three holding onto thier possessions. ': i'll be working on finding a floor plan for the compound Lupis is in " Marita said, pulling out her computer. '; since this kind of stuff isnt easy to get it, it will likely involve some hacking..and coming up with plausible stores and covers should we try to enter the compound..delivering a shipment of army cellphones wont cut it.. 'she said to Tony.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 10, 2014, 10:33:52 PM**

"No troubles whatsoever," Lupis said grimly, not even bothering to sound truthful. He hadn't left his office, and was sitting in the exact same position Exstasis has left him. "I'm trying something...unorthodox in order to obtain our last missing ingredient."

He sat back. "Jesus, when's the last time either of us slept?" He and Rhaegson were both aware that they secretly bugged each others office; it was an odd sort of mutual trust that both followed. At this point, they could even joke about it openly. "Even if it doesn't work, it's got a good chance of teaching me *something* new. At the very least, according to Exstasis' report, they're reached the last known location without getting immediately killed. So we'll just have to wait and see."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 11, 2014, 02:26:22 AM**

"Alright. Thanks Tony," Axel grinned at the ferret as he stepped out, then turned back to the microwave. "Okay then, one healthy and nutritional breakfast coming up..." Emptying the packet into one of the bowls next to the machine, he tossed it in and closed the door, feeling the trailer shift beneath him as Tony pulled out of the garage. It was one of the expensive new makes that could cook food extra fast; after just a few rotations there was a *beep* and the door snapped open. Axel took it out and started fishing through the drawers, looking for a fork. Finding one, he walked over and set it on the table in front of Lily. "Here you go. Be careful, it's hot."

He took a seat opposite her and tried to give a reassuring smile. "Not bad, huh? I could get used to this..." Outside, he could hear shouting as they prepared to leave. After a few moments of silence, Axel met Lily's eyes. "What happened with Emilena... when she disappeared... That *was* you, wasn't it?" He swallowed. "Do you... think there's any way you can control it?"

"That we will, my friend. That we will," Rhaegson drawled. "You know, I never got why you keep using Exstasis. That moron couldn't find his own ass with a map and a GPS tracker. Still, I'll leave it in your capable mitts."

He bent forwards to tap off the end of his cigarette, then took another drag and let loose a series of hacking coughs. "Jesus, these things are gonna kill me." He sighed. "We are *so close*. We can't screw up now."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 11, 2014, 08:46:32 AM**

Lupis nodded sagely. "He used to be one of our best. He was the top dog in our partnership; the brass would give him any assignment, no matter how impossible, with his track record. Guess that sort of thing catches up with you."

He was in a pensive mood now. Clearing his throat, he shook his head to wake up and got to his feet. "I'm taking a 2-hour nap. If I don't wake up, beep whatever that infrared scanner is you installed in my Shakespeare bust."

He paused. "Glad your projects are wrapping up Rhaegson. Productivity will kick back up once I can stop focusing single-handedly on this one thorn. And we're otherwise ahead of schedule. I was thinking we should bump your public appearance forward to, say, tomorrow, to take advantage of the recent press from the Andersen murder. If you've already written the script and everything. What do you think?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 11, 2014, 12:46:24 PM**

Rhaegon scowled, his dark eyes narrowing. "What, I'm your fuckin' alarm clock now?" he grumbled. "Whatever. Not like I have anything better to do, right?"

When Lupis mentioned Anderson's murder, he grinned broadly. "I thought taking him out would get attention. Fine, tomorrow sounds good. I always did want to be on TV." Brushing the hair out of his eyes, he leaned forwards and put the main dialing body of the phone back on the desk. "Well, I won't keep you any longer. You're gonna need your beauty sleep for what comes next, right? Oh, and try to keep the snoring down - you can't even imagine how much noise the *other* bug picks up."

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 11, 2014, 02:28:31 PM**

Lily smiled softly at Axel, then daintily took the silverware in her slender hands and brought forkfuls of pasta to her mouth. She noted that her taste buds seemed relatively unaffected, which was a relief considering she'd missed the luxurious dinner.

Once she had replenished her strength, she'd try and connect with her parasite again.

"Don't worry," Lupis rubbed his eyelids. "I highly doubt two hours of uninterrupted time will pass before something urgent requires my attention."

He made to end the call. "You stay healthy Rhaegson. You've fulfilled your end of the bargain perfectly. I swear I'll finish mine, once I get a single goddamn break."

Nairda filed into the vehicle. "We'll be taking a left once we leave the forest~," he informed Tony brightly. "Hey...you know you're really cute...right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 11, 2014, 03:48:57 PM**

Tony waited for the hardware to be loaded up, both in the trunk and some in the trailer, then he also waited for either Soren or Anne to get into the Berline (the other one would have to ride in the trailer as there was only room for six in the limousine), and he looked in the rear view mirror at Marita. "Oh there's no way I'm driving this car into the compound. We'll park nearby and figure out a plan from there." the ferret commented.

As Nairda gave him a compliment, Tony's brow furrowed, and he frowned. "Thanks, but I'm not interested, nor do I swing that way." he murmured, throwing the car into gear now and taking it down the driveway as he waved to his father one last time, his dad standing on the portico and watching them go. "I would also assume I would have to get onto the Garden Parkway once we leave the road to the Heights." he commented, honking as he pulled up to the exterior gate and was allowed egress.

Shifting into a higher gear as they approached the highway, Tony let the powerful V-12 do the talking and merged into traffic, accelerating up to 80 miles per hour, which the Pierce-Arrow could drive at very comfortably without shaking or feeling like it was on the verge of losing control. It gave an incredibly smooth ride. They were heading east, back toward Lanthae proper, now. The Berline certainly succeeded in turning more than a few heads as the ferret picked a lane and stuck to it, glad he was getting some envious looks.

He pushed the button on the dash linking the comm to the trailer. "Hey Axel... this is Tony, doing a radio check. You read me? We're on the Garden Parkway now, and on our way!" he exclaimed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 11, 2014, 11:32:50 PM**

"The Purifier base is up ahead..." reported Nairda grimly. "What's the plan? If you had bothered trusting Emilena, she could have helped a lot right now..." He shook his head grimly, thinking of his love and what could have happened to her.

The transition from black to white was jarring. Almost as soon as she found herself blinded by a flash of light, it was gone and she was lying in the soggy leaves of a forest stained with afternoon dew.

Emilena didn't move for over five minutes. Nothing made sense. Her current situation didn't make sense. She couldn't be here. She couldn't even have died; it was too sudden and Stryker was a professional torturer. Torture doesn't end suddenly.

She rolled onto her back. Leaves clung to her fur, fresh dirt stained her countless wounds. Her various sources of pain had blended together and now her whole body just ached in unison.

The wind whistled through the trees above her. It played daintily across her skin. She couldn't focus on anything else.

She *couldn't* be here. And until she had sufficient time to process that fact, she wouldn't be thinking or doing anything.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 12, 2014, 01:49:06 AM**

(En Route to Purifier Complex)

Soren sat at the trailer's table, nursing a cup of steaming hot green tea. He had his HMD on and his exoskeleton was plugged into the wall outlet.

He turned to Nairda. "Trust Emilena!?" he snapped. "Are you out of your fucking mind!? She beat me up and tried to get me thrown in jail!"

He then rubbed his temples. "Admittedly, my plan for this is 'kill every Purifier I see'."

Soren then yawned as he trudged over to the sofa, replaced his HMD in its case and lay down on the sofa. "Wake me when we get to the compound." He soon fell asleep, lulled by the engine and road noise.

Anne reclined in the comfortable sealskin seat of the Pierce-Arrow. "So Tony," she said as she opened a cooler and retrieved a small can of beer. "What's our plan when we get there?"

She then visibly shivered as she saw a street sign flash by that read "Holmia – 2 miles". "Mind making a stop in Holmia? I gotta get my fix," the mare said. Holmia was a rather nice commercial district that was also home to a large open air market that sold everything from drugs to weapons to illegal augments.

(Purifier Compound)

"Might as well," Aaron said. He then cracked his knuckles. "How should we do this? We can't break into Pelvanida in broad daylight!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 12, 2014, 03:23:51 AM**

Axel watched the human walk over to the sofa. "Alright Soren, no problem." Tony's voice issued from the speaker, and he craned his neck, reaching over and pressing the button next to it. "Axel here, I'm reading you loud and clear! Hey, this thing's pretty nice - you might have to pry me out of here with a crowbar..."

His voice grew more serious as he looked around at some of the crates that had been loaded into the trailer. "Are we, ah... are we working on getting a map of this place? Just walking in probably isn't a good idea... even for a super soldier like me." He paused. "Uh... Over?"

Marcus eyed the german shepherd. "No, we can't just break in alone. But there *is* someone who can help us. We've had... dealings with someone who works there. Mr. Altyn's shift starts soon. I'm sure he can be persuaded to let us in."

Rhaegson laughed, a harsh, unpleasant sound. "I could almost believe you're starting to care about me, Lupis. *Almost*." He rolled his eyes. "And make sure you do your part. I'm all excited now, and you know I hate being disappointed." Rhaegson unceremoniously dropped the phone onto the cradle.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 12, 2014, 08:54:35 AM**

"She was leading us to an empty spot in the woods where there was nothing located. Back where I come from, that's what we call a trap. She had clearly been proven to be one of Agent Lupis's stooges." Tony shook his head here. "Trusting her just wasn't an option."

He noted Anne requested they make a stop at Holmia, that rather bustling and upscale commercial district which also boasted the open-air market. She needed her fix. Err... right. "Uh... I guess so, provided we don't stop too long." Tony stated. He radioed back to Axel now. "Well yeah... I think Marita is working on getting us a map of that place. It shouldn't be impossible, given a digital copy has to exist somewhere I would imagine, and I highly doubt they've taken all the precautions to protect their place that my dad has, nor would they have the know-how or financial capability to do so." he cracked, smiling to himself. "Sure it'll be like walking into a military base... but a base we've got foreknowledge about ahead of time. Hey... you think I should try calling them?" he asked now. "I used to know them, after all... could be a cover we could use."

He took the exit for Holmia, driving down the off-ramp and pulling onto a wide street with brightly lit buildings on either side. He roughly knew the way to the open-air market, and took a right onto another thoroughfare, heading in the direction of the bazaar. He located an extra wide parking spot on the street about a block away from the market, and eased the car to a stop. Fortunately, thanks to the trailer having its own brakes, the ride would be smooth for them in the back as well. Killing the headlights, the ferret turned to Anne, now. "OK... just hurry back. I know this is a relatively safer part of town, but I think we still have to keep moving, all the same." he stated.

He rested his head against his paw (his elbow in turn resting on the Pierce-Arrow's driver's side window), and radioed back to Axel. "We're stopping at Holmia for a bit... Anne needs... her 'fix.'" he informed them. "We'll be rolling again shortly."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 12, 2014, 10:19:48 AM**

Axel's voice crackled over Tony's radio. "What? What do you mean..." The was a pause. "Oh. Is now a good time? Can't she, like, wait or something?"

In the trailer, Axel was looking around nervously at the blinded windows. He leaned closer to the speaker. "Well... fine, but maybe make sure she hurries it up? It's just, you know... we're not exactly inconspicuous here, and we don't want anyone trying to get a look in." Anxiously, he tightened the blinds of the window next to him and sat back down at the table. The light sound of Soren's snoring drifted across from the sofa on the other side of the trailer.

"Looks like we'll be waiting here for a second while Anne, ah... looks for something," he told Lily. His eyes grew concerned. "How are you feeling? Any... any better?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 12, 2014, 02:48:00 PM**

Lily smiled softly and put her hand on his shoulder. It was really remarkable that she'd found someone who could possibly care about her despite her condition.

But she had something she had to do. *Hello?* she thought tentatively, directing the thought at the conscience within. *Are you okay?...Can you respond?*

It stirred. Curiously poked back. It didn't seem that dangerous. *Hi....* Lily continued. *Can you talk...err...think back to me? Who are you?*

It was very sudden. In a millisecond Lily felt the conscience strike out, leaping out of dormancy and making a play for control of her body. The arm on Axel's cheek spasmed as a foreign body attempted to strike out at the rat invading its personal space.

Lily gasped and refocused with panicked energy. Clenching her fist, she locked her joints and gritted her teeth, forcing the parasite back into dormancy. In less than a second it was over. But she remained spooked for several minutes.

"You just don't understand her~" Nairda shook his head sadly. "I wish I could understand her, but the female mind is a feisty and burlesque thing...But she knows more about what's going on than anyone else here. And how do you know there was nothing out there? We cannot comprehend the spirit realm. This curse on Lily is clearly something above the likes of man..."

He gritted his teeth when he saw Homia. "I have many enemies in Holmia. A life like mine tends to attract undesired attention...I will assist you in your reconnaissance, for your own protection, madam~" he offered charmingly. "I confess to being something of an aficionado for the cloudy analgesics myself. If you're ever interested, we could indulge together..."

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Lupis was not one to waste time. Upon the phone call ending, he immediately set the room's security system to a state of high alert and retired to a Spartan cot with a single simple cloth blanket. Using a rigid form of mental training, he could immediately lapse into a dreamless deep semi-consciousness that refreshes the mind at a rate double that of regular sleep.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 12, 2014, 04:11:43 PM**

Anne scowled. "I don't know you very well. I personally prefer nootropics and the classic marijuana."

She got out of the car and drank in the heady scent of Holmia Square. Surprisingly upscale bars, stores and resturants lined the area.

The mare immediately made a beeline for the florist named Corso Flowers.

"*Hola*, *senorita*!" the shopkeeper called as Anne entered. His voice carried a distinct of Canary Islands accent. The shopkeeper in question was a huge and muscular Presa Canario wearing an apron with several pruning shears and other florist's tools in the pockets.

"*Hola!*" Anne replied. Her lips peeled back in the distinct Flehmen response of Equines when the faint scent of marijuana hit her. She chewed her lip as she pondered what to buy.

The big canine chuckled. "No rush." He got to work preparing a floral arrangement that someone had called in for a funeral.

"Mr. Garc�because Mart�because nez," Anne said. "I'd like theó"

"Certainly, Ms. Phoe."

Anne shuddered. "Only cops call me that."

The Presa Canario laughed. "Then don't call 'Mr.'. I'm not old enough for that."

Anne facepalmed. "All right, Joaqu�because n. You got two 'Get Better' wreaths?"

Joaqu�because n reached under the counter and flipped a sequence of switches. Two plastic bottles of 'plant food' emerged from the small dumbwaiter under the counter. He passed them over to the mare who handed him a credit chit (the one she had gotten a while back by hocking some stolen goods).

She placed the drugs into her pocket and exited. "*Buenas dias*!"

Joaqu�because n smiled and returned the goodbye. He sniffed the air and sighed. He needed to clean out the water pool for his hydroponic flowers.

Anne returned to the car with her bag of drugs. She smiled as she found that Joaqu�because n threw in a complementary pack of rolling papers, a lighter and two tablets of moziafil (illegally diverted from a factory and thus the government hadn't had a chance to levy its 25% drug tax yet). Enough marijauna to last her for a few weeks, all for 900 creds.

"Anyone mind if I roll a joint and light up?" she asked as she grabbed one of the 'plant food' bottles.

(OOC - A Presa Canario is a large dog from the Canary Islands.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 12, 2014, 10:38:48 PM**

"It's all right... we won't be too long... plus, this district is fairly safe." Tony replied to Axel's concerns. "You just relax back there... this car does NOT stick out... trust me." he chuckled, looking around at all the contemporary limos and hot rods hovering and cruising down the street around them. "My dad sometimes shops down here in fact."

Sure enough, it wasn't long before Anne returned, and Tony threw the car back into gear again. Too bad they didn't have time to shop... Tony actually liked Holmia. "All right! Let's get moving!" he said, cruising up to the traffic light and popping a U-turn to get back onto the highway. "Ahhhh no! Sorry!" Tony quickly replied to Anne. "My dad would kill me if he smelled smoke in here! He's got that whole you know... anti-drug thing going. Best wait till we stop." he suggested, taking the left down the main street that led back onto the highway.

"Yeah well... I think we understood her just fine!" Tony mumbled back, accelerating once he reached the on-ramp and merging back into traffic. He brought the Pierce-Arrow up to speed again, and shook his head. "Anyway... we're heading east so... is it off this highway, or do I take another one?" he inquired.

He buzzed Axel again. "So Axel... you want me to ring Marcus? I think I have his number. Maybe I could I dunno... use that to try and get you guys inside?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 13, 2014, 11:56:08 AM**

Axel flinched slightly as Lily's fist clenched and a panicked expression flashed across her face. The movement scraped her claws across his cheek, though not deeply enough to draw blood. After a moment of shocked silence, he spoke up nervously, seeing how worried she looked. "Hey, it's... it's okay. We'll... just be careful about touching each other. I'll..." He was about to say more, but the sound of the car door slamming shut, as loud as a gunshot in the silence of the trailer, interrupted him. Axel felt the weight of the trailer shift as Tony pulled away. Slowly and cautiously, he reached over and touched her hand lightly. "We're going to get you back to normal. Don't worry."

Soon after, the sound of Tony's voice addressing him turned his head. "Marcus? Who's that? One of your Purifier... friends?" He considered. "Uh... I guess that could work. It's not like we can just go in guns blazing... And we don't want to risk Lupis running if he find out a group broke in looking for him. What if... you said we were your prisoners? Would that get us in?" Axel asked, not knowing how well organised the base would be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 13, 2014, 01:17:53 PM**

Aaron nodded. "Don't know him but whatever helps."

He then pulled the car off into the visitor parking lot. Pelvanida had an exhibit hall that was open to the public and consequently, it was a bit of a tourist attraction.

At the same time, Mr. Altyn's 2008 Tesla Roadster cut through the visitor parking lot on its way into the employee parking lot.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 13, 2014, 03:14:35 PM**

Fifteen minutes later, the chill draft was what finally convinced Emilena to stop spinning over and over everything in her head to understand what had just happened. Slowly and painfully, she got onto her hands and knees, and finally staggered to a standing position, leaning against a nearby tree.

She coughed up blood. She'd never sustained *nearly* this many injuries at one time; no doctor would ever advise walking in her current state. But nobody would be arriving to assist her this time; she just knew it. She'd played all her cards, and that wound her up in the mafia's snuff room.

Now that she'd achieved standing up, she wanted only to lie back down. Her skull was pounding. Blood trickled down her arms, neck, and legs. She wasn't looking forward to the next time she had to hit the head. But the pain only served to remind her that she was miraculously alive.

My life wasn't saved so that I would die out here in the forest, she thought with determination. She tried to walk, and had to wrap her arms around the tree to stop from face-planting back into the fallen leaves. Her head swam with vertigo and she quickly vomited whatever remained in her stomach.

She compromised with gravity and assumed a kneeling position. She suspected she'd be crying if she wasn't lethally dehydrated. Everything was unbearable.

Where would I even go? she wondered to herself. She had nowhere. She can't even return to her apartment, Broadstreet will be watching it 24/7. She could find somewhere abandoned, maybe hide out alone in the slums...

...I can't be alone right now, she finally confessed to herself. In her state and her confusion, for once she needed someone to talk to, to help her recover and plan her next move. And with a sinking heart, she realized there *was* one place left for her; one couple she'd never turned to. A single household with an obligation to her that they'd never fulfilled, that she'd never visited despite learning their address within seconds of being granted access to the police databases.

The possibility of a destination was enough to get her back on her feet. One step at a time, she began the long hike to the house of Emile and Lena Kibagami.

Lily smiled reassuringly at him. She was doing a lot of that recently, but she hadn't really any other way of communicating; she hated the sounds her mouth made when she tried to talk.

She'd grown incredibly introspective recently. Having another conscience attempting to take her over at the slightest provocation will do that. If she'd been more focused on the outside world, she might have paid enough attention to realize that the others were driving towards an assault on the Purifier camp, probably the last place Lily would want to go. But for the time being she was content to trust their judgment and follow them wherever they deemed the proper next step on the road to recovery.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 13, 2014, 03:55:32 PM**

Marcus inclined his head towards the Tesla as it crossed the parking lot in front of them. "There. That's him. Follow, but don't draw attention." The public would make things harder... but as long as the cyberneticist didn't try anything, getting through to the private section wouldn't be impossible.

A few minutes later, as the man was locking his car door, a shadow fell over him. "Altyn," Marcus rumbled as he turned around. "It's been a while. How's the hand?" He stepped closer, forcing Altyn to press himself against his car. A quick glance around told him nobody was looking. Turning his gaze back to the human, he bared his teeth. "Me and my associate here need a few things... and you're our way in." He loomed over Altyn. "Don't get any ideas, or it won't just be your fingers we cut off."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 13, 2014, 04:05:36 PM**

marita had broken into the Purifiers website and running through some data.. ' ok.. i'm starting to download a schematic of the base.. theres schematics of several Purifiers bases on here but Pelvanida is the one we want' She said.. 'it should be about 3 minutes before everything is downloaded."
is there any place we can stop to get some lunch/' Marie asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 13, 2014, 05:13:55 PM**

Tony nodded at the rear view mirror as Marita explained a few things. "Oh wait! We aren't going to Pelvanida anymore, remember?" he asked. "Just the Purifier compound. No need to head to Pelvanida." he explained.

"Lunch? Well..." he glanced at the dashboard clock. "It's currently five in the morning... we just had breakfast." he joked, chortling. "I can get you something if you're *really* hungry though." he stated, the sun having not risen over the horizon yet. "Oh right... you might not have eaten your breakfast..." he trailed off, remembering Patrick Anderson.

"Anyway..." he responded to Axel now. "Yeah... I'm gonna try that. It's worth a shot, right?"

Tony began fiddling with a bluetooth console on the dash that his father had installed, and which was definitely not vintage. Fortunately, it was only attached to the dash, and not grafted in. Pushing a few buttons, he opened up a digital HUD that had his contacts, and began paging through them, swiping his claw upwards until Marcus Hayton appeared. Taking a deep breath, the ferret pushed the name, and then inserted a headset into his ear as he let the phone ring.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 14, 2014, 12:05:59 AM**

After god-knows-how-long of walking, Emilena managed to relate her location in the forest to a known landmark. The abandoned robotics factory loomed through the trees, the place where she was originally kidnapped after the disastrous attempt to get ahold of a Purifier. Looking back, that was probably where things started going downhill for her.

Every step was a bit harder than the last, but she took a detour to the site because she'd lost something very important there.

It took over an hour but finally she found it in the underground passages; her heirloom katana, gleaming in the moonlight from the katana-shaped hole above it. Feeling it buzz to life in her hand stirred something in her heart; finally, there was something in her life she could count on.

She continued her journey.

At Tony's words, Nairda cockily wiped his long strands of thin hair out of his eyes and grinned at the notion of finally getting his long-overdo vengeance on Marcus. "That contemptuous charlatan will finally breathe his last on this day...I look forward to the opportunity to watch the life drain from his eyes while I stand triumphantly over his still corpse...this'll be a piece of cake~" he chuckled...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 14, 2014, 06:18:35 AM**

only 5 in the morning? geez i've really lost track of time' Marie said shaking her head.' perhaps you and Rose should get some sleep. i'll wake you if Tony stiops somewhere for breakfast' Marita said. ' she had stopped downloading pelvanida i' she said to tony as he put on his heasddphones. ' so we'll need id to get in..nformation and moved to downloading purifier information. ' the bases track who goes in and out.' she said. ' for security purposes. id is required.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 14, 2014, 11:03:47 AM**

A beeping in his jacket pocket interrupted Marcus. Seizing Altyn's shirt, he shoved him in away from his car in the direction of Pelvanida's staff entrance. "Get us into the storage area. We need 18-G12VX amplifiers. If someone tries to stop us, I'm sure you can think of something. *Move*." He turned and gestured to Aaron. "Stay close to him."

Lagging behind, Marcus pulled his cell phone out of his pocket and flicked it open. His brow furrowed at the name blinking on the screen. *He's still alive?* He hit the answer button. "Tony? Where the hell are you? Are you hurt?"

Axel drummed his fingers on the tabletop, trying not to think about the knife edge the group was balancing on. Though he was trying to keep optimistic, the fact that they were dealing with some very dangerous people kept twisting his stomach in knots. *If we screw this up...* Axel shook his head to try to rid himself of the doubts. *We won't. We can't.*

After a while, he looked across at Soren, who was still snoring, and smiled at Lily. "Sounds like a broken lawnmower." Then he snapped his fingers and jumped up. "Hey, I just had an idea! I know talking isn't that... easy for you right now, but..." He started opening the cupboards and drawers, rifling through their contents. Eventually, he whooped triumphantly and pulled a slightly worn notepad out from one of the drawers, with a pencil hooked through the wire binding. Turning back to Lily, he passed them across and sat back down. "Here. Should make your life a little easier. Not that there's anything wrong with your miming..." he grinned.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 14, 2014, 01:08:55 PM**

Tony actually felt his heart stop for a moment when Marcus answered. He was there! OK... focus... calm... do this. He steeled himself, gripping the wheel of the Pierce-Arrow tightly for strength. He gritted his teeth, then responded.

"Hey! Marcus! How ya been?" Tony asked, grinning. *Smiles can be heard*. "No, I'm fine! In fact, I got some presents for ya! Where are you now? Back at base? I can meet you there if you aren't there already." the ferret offered, letting the optimism drip from his voice. "It's just great to hear you, ya know? Thought I was a goner several times, but I pulled through."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 14, 2014, 04:23:15 PM**

"No, I'm not at base," Marcus muttered, frowning. "We'll be back soon. What are you talking about?" He picked up his pace, catching up to Aaron and Altyn and looking around to make sure they still hadn't attracted any attention. Still in the clear.

He turned his attention back to the call. "What do you have? The last time I saw you, we were under heavy fire..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 14, 2014, 11:38:51 PM**

Mr. Altyn gulped as the two burly canines approached him.

Aaron glared at Altyn. "Move," he growled.

"Give me a moment!" he snapped as he got his keys and work materials.

Aaron raised a fist to punch him, but he thought better of it. He looked around and noticed that the parking lot was pretty quiet.

The Human locked his car and looked at the two. "Okay, I can pass you off as guests or even new employees. But don't make a scene or else your asses will be on the line."

Kojuuro sighed as he drank another bottle of sake at Club Tyrell. His girlfriend from a one-night stand from a while back, was on thr barstool next to the Wolf and busy flirting with him. The images from his previous military service had surfaced with a vengeance and he turned back into his preferred drug – hard liquor.

"Man," the Gypsy Vanner stallion said as he wiped down the bartop. "It's five in the fucking morning and this is like your third bottle. Isn't that enough?"

"Gimme my fucking liquor!" Kojuuro snapped. His ears splayed back as the Pomeranian bitch licked him on the cheek. He turned to the woman. "Sorry about that."

"'S cool. 'S cool," he said. "Here you go." The stallion passed another bottle of sake to him."

A hulking Brown Bear wearing a lab coat walked in. On his lab coat, a badge reading "Bytis Industrial Electronics – Piotr Kozlov" could be seen.

"Ah, Kozlov, how was work?" the bartender asked.

Kozlov sighed. "I had argument with coworker. I need drink! Get me cosmopolitan!" he ordered in his thick Russian accent.

The bartender mixed the cocktail and passed it to the Brown Bear. He sighed as he looked around the bar. Mostly empty and frankly put, kinda gross with thin layer of grease covering the floors and furnishings. A TV playing footage of some low grav hockey game blared from the corner.

As he looked around the bar, he accidentally laid eyes on the Pomeranian bitch. Kojuuro immediately turned to the Brown Bear. "Hey asshole! Why are you looking at my girl!?"

Kozlov's eye twitched. "I was not looking at woman. I was looking at TV. She was in way."

Kojuuro got up from his seat and went over to Kozlov and shoved him. Thanks to his enhanced strength, the shove knocked the hulking Bear over.

"Sweetie, Ió" the Pomeranian began.

"Don't worry, I got this." Kojuuro assumed a fighting stance.

"You make big mistake!" Kozlov boomed.

"Why? You're just a nerd! I on the other hand, amó"

Kojuuro was unable to finish his sentence as Kozlov belted him across the face with the barstool he had ripped out of the floor. Kojuuro grunted as he slammed into a wall containing some of the bar's decorations. "So that's how it's gonna be..." He cracked his neck and howled to psyche himself up.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 14, 2014, 11:43:45 PM**

"Yeah, we were..." Tony agreed, smiling to himself. "I've got them, Marcus. The ones giving us so much trouble at the factory... the ones putting us under heavy fire. I don't have... all of them." he said now. "But I've got a few. Unfortunately I don't have the one you were after. But... maybe her friends will suffice? If she hears we have them... you never know what could happen." Tony said suggestively.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 15, 2014, 12:32:19 AM**

Lily smiled and wrote *Thanks.* She paused and kept writing.

Thanks for doing all this for me. Standing up for me even now.

She was never a very eloquent writer. She couldn't think of what else to say at the moment. Pushing the macaroni bowl away, she hugged Axel and tried to let him understand just how much his support meant to her.

Nearby, Nairda saw them and suddenly put the pieces together. "Huh. I always thought Kojurro would be a better fit for her..." he muttered to himself, watching them with barely-hidden voyeuristic pleasure.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 15, 2014, 03:35:55 AM**

Axel suddenly felt a slight chill creep up his spine, as though they were being spied on... but that was probably just the nerves of the situation.

He hugged her back and kissed her lightly on the cheek, feeling the roughness of her skin under his lips. When they broke apart, he gave her a dumb grin. "Well, I guess I did promise..." Axel held her hand. "Someday, we'll be looking back on this and... well, probably having nightmares. But it'll be over, and we'll be looking back on it. That's what matters."

"You have them?" Something in the ferret's upbeat tone set him ill at ease... but the kid had always been cocky. *And he* is *one of us. Maybe he's actually done something to back up his words this time...* "Alright. We'll talk about how you managed it later." *Especially if Naidra was one of his prisoners...* "Bring them. We'll be back soon."

He snapped the cell phone shut and moved to join Aaron and Altyn. "Move it," Marcus grunted, shoving the human forwards. "I want this done quickly." He had a bad feeling... but he couldn't think of a reason why Tony would betray them. He knew what happened to traitors.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 15, 2014, 02:56:46 PM**

"Will do! I'll see ya soon!" Tony responded right before Marcus hung up. Pulling the ear bud out of his ear, he grinned. "Well, that went well!" He turned the Pierce-Arrow onto another highway that led to the Purifiers' base. He remembered it from here, and no longer needed directions.

Pushing the button to the trailer's comm, he began speaking to Axel. "Hey Axel! I think they bought it! We're about 20 minutes away I'd say, in current traffic. So I figure we'll leave the car and trailer a ways away from the base, and I bring you in on foot. Maybe a block or two away? This way, we can keep Lily out of it, and make it seem like you're more my prisoners than my guests. Now they've got some security measures in place, but I think we could still manage to smuggle some guns in all the same, or better yet, take what they have at the base. Maybe Marita could even take a few of their defense systems offline too in a timed fashion before we get there?" he suggested.

"At any rate, I might have to place binders on your wrists to make this look legit." he warned him. "When we get there, I'm gonna try and find out where Lupis is, and we'll make our way to him after I either conveniently forget to lead you to your cells, or we simply overpower the guys taking you to your cells. Sound good?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 15, 2014, 03:46:03 PM**

Don;t worry Tony I'll take care of the defenses. but be warned, even if i do, they have backup controls which go online in a matter of minutes after they go down . so our window for action is very small' Marita warned.
' you will have to do this very quickly, if we want a real shot at him.. figure 2-3 minutes at most' She added.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 15, 2014, 04:12:55 PM**

Nairda stirred at Tony's words. "We're leaving Lily behind?" He looked at Axel, wide-eyed. "Are you to leave the sight of your true love?"

He grabbed Axel's arm with pleading vigor. "I sure wish I'd never let my true love alone...for my folly i have been punished by *never* seeing her again..."

His eyes bored into Axel's soul. "Do not make the same mistake that keeps me up in slumberless nights..."

Many miles away, a young fox was tending to his bioluminescent algae fields outside a respectable, if remote, adobe farmhouse. His particular crop was used as a garnish for specialty dinners, and one of the few nocturnal bloomers. As such it required nighttime tending.

Because of the night, and the general lack of visitors to such a distant place from the city, he didn't see the figure staggering towards him until it was less than fifteen feet away.

In a split second he'd pulled a Kriss Vector SMG off his back and had it readied at the intruder. "Don't move!" he yelled, voice commanding authority. "Identify yourself!"

The figure collapsed. Inching forward cautiously, the fox kept his safety cocked and his muscles tense, ready for an ambush. You could never be too careful...

The light flicked on in his farmhouse and a young female dashed outside, throwing on a bathrobe. She was the same age as him, and looked strikingly similar in appearance. "Emile?" she gasped, worry tinging her voice. "Who is--?"

"Stay back!" he warned her. "I'm not sure!"

Clicking a thin light on the barrel of his SMG, Emile saw an incredibly battered and bleeding woman passed out among his crops. "I...uh...don't recognize her," he reported to Lena, who had ignored his command and was rushing forward to see. "No clothing or possessions...might be a victim of sexual assault, if I had to--"

Lena suddenly gasped; her vision had always been better than Emile's. "Honey..." she knelt down and picked up the katana. "This is..."

Emile's eyes went wide. "Let's get her inside. Quickly."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 15, 2014, 05:35:55 PM**

Axel recoiled slightly as Nairda grasped his arm, gasping in surprise. *Where did* he *come from?!* Looking across at Lily, he felt his mouth go dry. He desperately wanted to go with the others... as much as the thought scared him, Axel felt he *had* to help them - if he didn't, he wouldn't be able to shake the feeling that he was abandoning them. But, in his flowery, confusing way of talking, Nairda had hit the nail on the head. Leaving Lily alone, unprotected, for however long it took them to do what they had to do...

He grimaced and turned back to the speaker. "Yeah, Tony, that... that sounds like a good plan. Look, I was thinking..." He pressed closer and lowered his voice. "I... I don't know if leaving Lily alone is such a good idea. I mean, you saw what she did back when Emilena.... well, you know. If she got scared again, this trailer couldn't hold her, and if she got out into the open..." Axel swallowed. "But if I was here to keep her calm... I'm sorry Tony, I don't want you or the others to think I'm backing out, but..." he trailed off, fearing what the ferret's reply would be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 15, 2014, 10:09:29 PM**

(En route to Purifier Base)

"Okay, so what do I do?" Anne asked as she leaned back. "By the way, if it helps, I can shoot a gun. I'm not a super shooter or anything but I know enough to defend myself."

(Pelvanida)

Mr. Altyn grunted as Marcus shoved him. "Easy!"

He then led the two to the main entrance. By now, other employees had arrived and were busy scanning their work IDs to be let in. "Ah, Mr. Altyn," the Augment Iguana said as he saw the Human.

Mr. Altyn gulped as he looked at the two thugs next to him. "Um, these two are visitors and I am taking them to my office for an introduction to cybernetics manufacturing for uh, a TV program."

The Iguana narrowed his cybernetic eyes. "Mr. Altyn, I need to have a word with you."

The two Canines didn't know it but the Iguana had implants that allowed him to discern subtle physiological changes that signaled fear.

Mr. Alytn nodded and followed the guard.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 16, 2014, 10:50:04 AM**

Tony listened to Axel's voice, and could detect the rat's feelings even without being able to see him. "Hey... that's fine." he said now. "We'll adapt. Don't worry. Just... be careful, OK? I'll try to park far enough away from the base that you won't be in danger but... if Lily really did do something to Emelina... yeah, it's probably a good idea to keep her calmed." the ferret admitted.

He accelerated a little bit once the lane in front of him opened up somewhat. The Pierce-Arrow was certainly providing one of the smoothest rides he could remember. "Anne... shooting is fine." Tony said, looking over at her. "OK... I think we should go with this. When I stop, I'll bring a certain number of you over to the base. I'm not sure if Soren should go or remain behind in his exoskeleton as backup for when our assault starts. We can decide that when we get there. We get shown in, and if we time things right, we can hit them when they're at their weakest in terms of having the most manpower spread out. I memorized the movements of some of their guards, and know that in the cell block, they have a gun gallery up above the cells that's caged. A guard usually patrols that but has to move between the two cell blocks. He typically spends about fifteen minutes in each one. Once we get to the cell blocks, there will be another guard on duty at the entrance. He'll frisk me, even though I'm one of them. That'll be our cue to strike. I'm gonna time it so that we show up when the second guard in the gallery is in the other cell block and can't see what's going on. As I'm being frisked, one of you will attack him from behind. and we'll overpower him."

Tony kept the speaker to the trailer on so the others could hear his plan as well. "Then, either myself or someone else will climb up to the gallery... I'm pretty thin, so maybe I should do this. Before we get there, we should fashion together a makeshift bar spreader, which is easy enough to cobble together with just a nut and some pipes. We'll use this to spread the bars, and squeeze through. Since I'm thin... I should probably be the one to do this." he reiterated. "I'll then wait for the other guard to start coming back, kick the door back on him as he opens it, and subdue him. Once subdued, I have access to all the guns kept up in the gallery and can start handing them out. With weapons secured, we'll be good to go. We have Marita disable the defense systems, make straight for Lupis, and try and capture him as quickly as possible. How's that sound?" he concluded, looking at everyone present in the car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 16, 2014, 03:02:01 PM**

Marcus' expression hardened, his eyes narrowing. *Dammit, he could ruin everything...* Gesturing for Aaron to follow, he stalked after Altyn and the Iguana as they walked away, his long strides rapidly catching up to them.

"Is there a problem?" he rasped as he drew even. "I was told we'd be let straight through - we're already running behind schedule." The employees who'd arrived were a problem... but if the Iguana led them to a slightly more secluded area...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 16, 2014, 06:50:56 PM**

(Pelvanida)

"Yes there is." The Iguana pointed to Mr. Altyn. "I detected that he is carrying a recording device. I will need to strip search him in private."

Mr. Altyn's mouth gaped. "What!? This is an outrage!"

"Look, I know those two coerced you into doing something. Roll with it!" he whispered, as he pulled Altyn away from the two Canines. He prayed that the TVs in the lobby and footsteps masked the whispering.

(En route to Purifier Complex)

Soren swore as he rolled off the couch. "We there already?"

(Club Tyrell)

By now, the rather dirty bar had attracted a fair number of local toughs – including members of a local hoverbike gang – who were watching and placing bets on the two brawlers.

"Told ya. The Augment always wins!" a female Golden Eagle said as she watched Kojuuro quite literally punt Kozlov through the men's bathroom door.

A Ferret biker twisted out of the way as a sink went flying through the air seconds later and impacted against a booth. Kozlov, labcoat torn and covered in debris, staggered out of the bathroom. He pointed at Kojuuro with a large pipe. "You dead meat!" he roared.

"Really? Who got thrown through the bathroom door?" Kojuuro smirked.

Kozlov roared and charged at the Wolf with his pipe. "Amateur." Kojuuro adroitly dodged the swing and knocked the massive Brown Bear off his feet with a swift leg sweep.

"Now where were we? Ah yes." Kojuuro put one foot on Kozlov's chest. He reached for the katana on his belt. Unfortunately for him, Kozlov threw a vicious uppercut to the Wolf's groin. Even though his claws tore through the outer layer of his pants, they didn't pierce the tough metallic bullet-resistant layer. Nevertheless, the impact was immensely painful. Kojuuro gasped slightly and flinched. That was enough for Kozlov to throw him into the soda fountain.

Kojuuro looked around for something to use as a weapon. Finding a vodka bottle, he threw it at Kozlov when he charged with his pipe in hand. The bottle broke upon impact, stunning the Bear as the liquor ran down his eyes.

Kojurro smirked and drew his katana. The crowd cheered, knowing the stakes had been raised.

Through stinging eyes, Kozlov could see the Wolf with blade raised. His heart pounded as he realized Kojuuro was intent on *killing* him. He silently cursed for leaving his pistol at home. He groped around and found a wooden bench.

With a grunt, he ripped the bench free and hurled it at Kojuuro, who adroitly dodged it. Kozlov rubbed his eyes in an attempt to clear his vision and saw that the Wolf was getting closer.

Lacking no other recourse, he charged towards Kojuuro at a speed that belied his massive bulk. Kojuuro swung his sword, leaving a deep cut on his left arm . Before he could swing again, he was slammed into the bar top so hard that he cracked it. And his katana went flying.

Groaning in pain, Kojuuro smiled. "That all you got?"

"I give lot more." Kozlov raised both arms overhead and slammed them down on the countertop. Kojuuro rolled out of the way just as the Bear's massive fists reduced the three inch concrete surface to a pile of rubble.

(OOC - Can someone play Kojuuro for the fight against Kozlov?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 16, 2014, 09:38:28 PM**

(i;ll take him)
Kojurro panted as he got to his feet, his privates still stinging from being puncded here. he gazed around the room, looking for his katana, which had gone flying when he had been thrown into the tabletop, his eyes scaned the area quickly, he tried t keep away from Kozlov, who looked like he was perfectly willing to kill him. surviving the fight would require him finding his kantana before Kozlow could smash a solid bench over his head. the other bar customers were taking bets on who would win the fight and calling out " i got 25 bucks on the bear! I got 50 on the Augment! Kick his ass Kozlov!' and the like. 'This is bloodsort to these folks' Kojurro thought as he tried kkeeing away from Kozlov.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 16, 2014, 09:56:25 PM**

Kozlov ripped out the minifridge that held beer and threw it at Kojuuro. He then ripped out a metal drain pipe to use as a club.

He was about to run after Kojuuro when one of the toughs broke a beer bottle over his head.

That proved to be a huge mistake as Kozlov backhanded the man, fracturing every bone in his face and snapping his neck with the sheer power of the impact.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 17, 2014, 03:09:58 AM**

As the Iguana pulled Altyn away, Marcus bared his teeth in frustration. This was already taking longer than it should... It didn't take a genius to work out the guard was planning something. His eyes flicking around the room, Marcus noticed a door set into the side of the lobby - a public toilet. As he looked at it, Marcus heard a flush. There was a click as the door was unlocked and an employee stepped out, wiping his hands on his trousers before wandering away. The path the Iguana was taking would lead them right past it...

Secluded enough. Marcus subtly moved a hand along his side, underneath his coat. "Is there anything I can do? This must be a misunderstanding," the doberman said, walking close behind the guard.

Axel turned his head at the thump as Soren landed on the floor. He grinned. "No, not yet. Tony figured we were about 20 minutes away." He glanced at the Exoskeleton that was still plugged into the wall. "That charged yet? Something tells me you'll probably need it..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 17, 2014, 03:33:06 PM**

Tony exited the highway in a less protected part of town and began driving towards the large Purifier base, which was easily visible from the main road. He pulled onto a side street and parked the Pierce-Arrow in a public spot next to the sidewalk. Bright smaller buildings flanked them, housing seedy vendors and shops. "OK... we're gonna hoof it from here on out!" Tony said, shutting the big V-12 off and taking the keys.

Stepping out onto the street, the ferret walked to the trailer and opened the door, slapping the side twice. "Hey guys! We're here!" he explained his plan to Soren now, and ran him through all the details. "So yeah... you want to stay here with your exoskeleton, or act like one of my prisoners?" he asked. "I think I'll take Nairda, Anne, and the trio, and Axel's staying here with Lily, just in case. Oh yeah! Also..." he stepped into the trailer now, and rummaged through one of the cabinets, pulling out a pipe, a nut, a wrench, and a small steel grooved rod. Shoving the rod into the pipe, he spun the nut around until it was roughly at the junction where the two met. "And voila! Ghetto bar spreader!" he exclaimed, smiling as he held it up. "I just twist the nut with this wrench, and it'll spread the two ends of this doohickey out, exerting enough pressure to bend the bars of the gun gallery." he explained.

He also retrieved some wrist binders, as part of the upcoming charade.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 17, 2014, 03:55:27 PM**

Emilena was in the waiting room of the don's mansion. A flash of light, and she felt a bullet plow through her brain.

Then she was falling, abruptly in a darkened space. Her fall ended with a splash, where the liquid ate the flesh off of her bones slowly.

Before she could even scream, she was falling again, her broken limbs and bullet-ridden body smashing into a splintery staircase waiting for her in the dark.

A second later, light stung her retinas as an electric field enveloped her. Stumbling away and *attempting to clear her head, she had only a moment before a dart embedded in her forehead and she felt herself vaporizing from the inside out...*

With a jolt, Emilena sat up, inhaling sharply. As her haggard breathing returned to normal, she realized it had just been a particularly vivid nightmare. Exhaling, exhausted, she collapsed back onto her pillow.

She was halfway back asleep when she realized she had no idea where she was. Sitting up, she took note of her surroundings. She was in a simple bedroom, a warm patchwork quilt and hand-sewn cotton sheet enveloped her in a plush four-poster bed. Pictures of a happy vulpine couple dotted the warm walls, and a plate of cookies and milk sat on a self-heating tray on the bedside table.

In seconds she'd scarfed down the whole batch. Shaking to clear her head, she became aware of voices in the next room. Climbing out of bed (and only then noticing she was clad in deer-print purple pajamas) she crept to the doorway and spotted Emile and Lena Kibagami discussing in hushed tones next to a crackling fireplace.

"Do you think she knows who we are?" Lena whispered. "Should we tell her?"

"What choice do we have? You want to kick her out?" Emile responded. "She needs medical attention and rest, and she won't find that anywhere--"

Suddenly Lena spotted Emilena as she walked into the room. Both grew silent as their daughter regarded them for the first time.

Emilena spotted her sword on a drawing table. Picking it up, she held it in a defensive position.

"You don't know how long I've wanted to kill both of you..."

Nairda gripped his fist, overcome with temporary passion. "It will be hard to leash my untamed fervor for the Purifiers' coming destruction...but I will maintain my poker face...for the good of the coming revolution~" he chuckled softly to himself...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 18, 2014, 02:00:52 PM**

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kojurro used the unexpected assist and leap to a nearby table and sweep of the steak knives lying on it, in process sending the plates covered with steak crashing to the florr ' Hety! thats my steak dinner ' one of thigs called ouit ' buy yourself another one' kojurro shot back as he held the steak knives in his hands, waiting to throw them at Kozlov. he couldnt afford to miss ' Kojurro thought to himself.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 18, 2014, 03:09:35 PM**

Axel looked at the wrist binders that Tony pulled out with something bordering on alarm. "I, ah, won't ask what *those* are doing in here." He stood up and approached the others. "Good luck guys. Be careful... stay safe. *All* of you." He nudged Tony on the shoulder, giving a nervous smile. "You've gotta make it back so you can show off more of your dad's cars to me, right?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 21, 2014, 10:26:27 AM**

Nairda kissed Lily's hand like a true gentleman. "Fear not, dear lady~" he comforted her. "We shall go and slay this proverbial beast, and you needn't worry a hair on your..." He ran his hand down her hair and a sizable chunk of it fell out at his touch. "...errr, a scale on your...forehead..."

He took this opportunity to leap out of the car. "I shall be back posthumously!" he called.

Lily blinked, puzzled. *Did he mean posthaste?* she wrote for Axel.

Emilena shuddered weakly, looking left to right at her parents. Her father, a scrawny yet muscled man, didn't seem nervous in the slightest. His farmer's tan highlighted the grime he hadn't taken the time to wash off yet. Her mother, a lithe vulpine, looked alarmed but didn't even bother to wrap her open bathrobe around her nude form. Even while talking about Emilena, they'd appeared to have been engaged in less-than-innocent behavior.

Turning away in disgust, Emilena tossed the sword aside. "Goddammit," she seethed. "You two literally aren't worth killing! You aren't worth anything! You are two most pathetic beings I've ever met!"

She whirled around. "I don't know why I even bothered to come here! You couldn't take care of a child, you couldn't keep your genitals off each other long enough to pay for a good orphanage with your military pensions, and you couldn't find anyone but your *biological sibling* who'd even sleep with you!"

Her parents said nothing as she ranted and raved and used every insult she could think of to criticize them. Somehow, the topic slowly shifted to all the crap she'd been through in the last few days, and she told them everything. By the end, she was so weak she was on her knees, and finally when she couldn't think of anything else to say, her mother got up to help her to bed.

"Stay away from me!" Emilena snapped. "At least cinch your bathrobe first!"

Doing neither, her mother unflinchingly picked her up and carried her back to bed. She was stronger than she looked.

After that both of her parents brought her medicine and re-bandaged a few wounds that were opening up from her stomping around.

"Look..." Emile took a deep breath. "We're sorry. You're right. We weren't very good parents."

"As you've guessed, you were an accident," Lena couldn't meet her eye. "We were in mourning from a good friend's death, we weren't thinking clearly--"

"--But we actually did get you the best orphanage we could afford," Emile added. "And we also paid all of your fees from the Age Acceleration program and the Police Academy. We knew we weren't the kind of people who could care for a kid, so we tried to set things up so you'd be with those who could..."

"...But we recognize that wasn't what you'd expect of us, as parents," Lena chimed in.

"Could you stop finishing each other's sentences please?" Emilena cut in. "That's really unsettling."

(OOC: I got work, I'll continue this convo in my next post. For now, everyone starting posting again PLZ)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 21, 2014, 05:57:58 PM**

Kojurro thre the first of he three knives aiming for Kolovs stomach, a smirk played across his face as the first knife hit home, and he looked around for a window or some other means of escape- stairs would be nice... still from where he was there was no windows or stairs to be found, just a few tables laid out for patrons who hadnt arrived yet..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 21, 2014, 10:07:41 PM**

(Club Tyrell)

Kozlov grunted and gasped as he saw the knife bury itself into his stomach. Luckily, his ample gut caused by his penchant for rich, fatty seal steaks and beer as well as vigorous exercise kept the knife from reaching any vitals.

The crowd roared in approval as Kojuuro landed the hit.

Kozlov roared, causing everyone to back away. "Wolf!" he roared. "When I through with you! They need plastic bag to bury you!"

He ripped out one of the heavy steel tables, held it in front of him and charged at Kojuuro, intending to crush him into the wall."

(Purifier Compound)

Heavy footsteps signaled Soren's arrival. He stepped out of the trailer with his helmet tucked under his metal clad arm. He smiled as he flexed his exoskeleton's powerful fingers. His HMD with its blue tracking laser shone over Axel and Tony. His shotgun and the rifle were attached to his back via magnetic plates. "Let's go rip up some Purifiers!"

Anne came out of the Pierce-Arrow with an automatic rifle in hand. "So now what?"

(Pelvanida)

The Iguana turned to Marcus. "This is a company affair," he said. "Now I suggest you let me do my job or I'll revoke your access to film the documentary on company property."

He then ushered Mr. Altyn into a closed, soundproof room that was indeed used for strip searches.

"Okay, Altyn. What are you hiding with those two?" he demanded.

Altyn looked around and wiped some sweat from his brow. "Those two Canines, they accosted me in the parking lot. They wanted me to go get something for them."

The Iguana nodded. "Go on."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 22, 2014, 04:36:15 AM**

Marcus stopped outside the door Altyn and the Iguana had disappeared through. From the glimpse he'd caught before the door swung shut, it looked like some form of interrogation room. *Good chance it'll be soundproofed...* He looked up and down the corridor. It was clear.

He reached back and wrapped his fingers around the grip of his revolver, keeping it under his jacket in case there were any hidden cameras in the corridor. Turning to Aaron, Marcus jerked his head towards the door. "Open it. I'll follow and take him out. We're running out of time."

Axel looked at the note Lily scribbled out and snorted. "You know, I don't think even *he* knows what he's going on about... You might want to clean that hand, too."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 22, 2014, 01:08:55 PM**

"Hey... count on it." Tony said, bringing up his paw to lightly slap Axel's arm. "We'll come back in hopefully a half hour." the ferret stated, then proceeded to slap the binders on Nairda and Anne, followed by Marita, Marie, and Rose. He took Anne's gun, grinning nervously. "Uh might want to put a clamp on that. We're sneaking our way in for the moment. I'll provide the guns once we're inside, don't worry." he held the rifle in his paws now and got them moving. "Soren... if you're gonna wear that, hang back and wait for our attack to commence. Also, wear this." he said, holding out an ear bud for him now. "I'll call that piece once I'm ready to start. All right... let's go!" he said.

His paws shook as he walked around the corner and started heading for the compound. He drew out a cigarette and jammed it in his mouth, lighting it up as they approached the base's gates. Up ahead, he could see Purifiers already starting to call out that he was returning, and with some prisoners to boot. "Hey guys!" he called, waving as they drew up towards the front gate. "I'm back!"

"Where ya been?" calmly asked a Gila monster that Tony knew as Cavenaugh. He stared suspiciously at the group, regarding each one darkly.

"Ugh... around. But I got these guys... including... Nairda!" he shoved the fox forward now, grinning. "I bet Marcus will be pleased! Where is he, anyway?"

"On an errand. Ever since that government guy's shown up, we've all been... angrier." Cavenaugh replied. "But what exactly happened to you?"

"I'll give my report to Rhaegson in person." Tony deflected the question and raised a brow. "Government? The hell do they want?"

"Who knows? Sooner he's out of here, the better." the Gila monster shrugged.

"Yeah... I actually ran into one last night... crazy fool even gave me his business card." Tony joked. "He was attacking the factory too. Agent Lupis he said his name was." Tony stated casually.

"Lupis? Yeah that's him!" Cavenaugh exclaimed.

Tony pulled the cigarette out of his mouth and exhaled, blowing out a long puff of smoke as Cavenaugh turned around. "Fascinating. I'd like to talk to him actually... in private. Know where I can find him?" the ferret inquired.

"Yup... hold on... I gotta clear you through." Cavenaugh said, and moved to open communications with Rhaegson. "Hey... Rhaegson! Tony's back. Here with a bunch of prisoners... including Nairda. Want them brought to the cell block?" he asked.

As the Gila monster was distracted, Tony muttered to Anne in a low voice. "When we get to the cell block, I'm going to be frisked. I obviously have stuff on me that'll raise a red flag... you got arguably the heaviest hands of all of us. You think you can be the one to attack the guard from behind while he's frisking me?" he asked softly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 22, 2014, 01:11:06 PM**

kojurro's smirked as he saw Kozlow rip out a table and charge, he crouched waiting for his moment to pounce. over the charging Kozlow and use his second knife- by plunging it into his back. in a couple seconds the moment came, and kojurrro managed to leap over the table and Kozlow and stuck his second kinfe deep into the middle of Kozlov's back. letting go of the blade, kojurro ran forward , skidding to a stop across the room from kozlov. he now had one knife left. ' Kozlov! He called out. ' this last one is going in your throat! He shouted.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 22, 2014, 01:32:38 PM**

Nairda held his hands behind him, leashed in the cruel bounds of captivity. Tears bitterly stung his cheek as he glared, defeated, at his captors. "Like all good vigilantes, I am now to die nobly for my cause..." he spoke with resonance, eyes facing the heavens. "I only hope that my death serves as motivation to others...to continue fighting..."

He was so good for a minute he convinced even himself.

Emile broke out in a smile. "You've grown up to be such a strong young woman. We're so proud of you."

Emilena rolled her eyes.

"You did have a big influence on our lives," Lena admitted. "After Karl's death and your birth, we realized just how fragile life is. We retired from the mercenary work and lived as simple farmers on our retirement stipends."

"We were ecstatically happy," grinned Emile. "We may have had another 'accident'..."

Emilena looked incredulous. "You had a *second* child?!"

"Oh, he was feisty," Lena chuckled. "Much louder than you ever were. I used to have to blow him to get him to stop crying."

"He ended up being too much to handle, so we had to let him go too," Emile reminisced, not noticing the scandalized expression on Emilena's face from what her mother had just said. "But we'd learned from a couple of mistakes we'd made with you; he went right back into the military, trained by a Scorched Earth veteran we both knew."

Emilena put her head in her hands. "Are you incapable of taking care of your own problems?..." she murmured, depressed. "You are the worst people I've ever met..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 22, 2014, 02:59:37 PM**

Rhaegson rubbed his eyes and leaned back in his chair, balancing it on two legs. "Tony... Tony... Who the hell's Tony again?" he muttered. After a second, he let his hand fall away. "That's the skinny ferret, right? The kid? I thought he was missing? How the hell did he manage to bring back prisoners? Especially Nairda, that fruity bastard..."

He sighed, his cigarette trembling out of the corner of his mouth. Killing them all straight away *would* be easier... but Nairda had earned a slower death, and if he was handing out torture, he didn't want to deny the others their turn. Still, something didn't sit right. "Alright, let them through. But make sure his prisoners are actually tied up. Do that where you are, out front, where everyone else can see." Rhaegson cleared his throat and rubbed a hand over his jaw. "Then get another one of your little friends and go with Tony to the cells. If Tony tries anything, blow his fuckin' brains out, then kill the others. You got it?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 23, 2014, 12:12:47 AM**

"Got it." Cavenaugh nodded, and approached Tony now. Checking the bindings, he nodded once more. "Right... well I'm accompanying you down to the cells."

Of course you are... Tony thought to himself. Riiiight. "OK... that's fine." he said, taking another drag on his cigarette.

Cavenaugh motioned for another guard, and the two began leading the group towards the cell blocks. Tony waited until they were substantially advanced, and about halfway through the complex. Glancing at his watch, he smiled. Perfect. The guards making their rounds wouldn't be in this particular hallway for another 15 minutes.

Tony shifted himself so he was next to the one guard. Cavenaugh walked slightly ahead with the prisoners. Suddenly slamming his body against the guard, Tony shoved him against the wall and then jammed the butt of his rifle hard against the guard's face, knocking him to the floor. As Cavenaugh turned around, he met the business end of the rifle right in his jaw. "Change of plans, old friend." Tony said seriously, reaching down and collecting Cavenaugh's side arm.

"You son of a bitch! Tony! What the hell!" he shouted.

"Shut up!" Tony snapped back. "Keep your voice down, or I'm knocking your teeth out! Free the others!"

"I can't do that..." Cavenaugh said.

"Then you die and they go free anyway." Tony replied simply. "It's your call."

Regarding the ferret darkly, Cavenaugh turned around, and reluctantly began to undo the bindings around their wrists. "Leave him be." Tony ordered the others. "I need him to report in to Rhaegson that everything is OK. We knock him out, he's useless. OK..." he tossed Nairda Cavenaugh's sidearm. "Anne, bind that unconscious guard with the binders. I'm gonna take you all to the armory, we'll help ourselves, Marita disables the security, and we head right to Lupis. Rhaegson just bought himself a ticket to hell for interfering with my plan, as far as I'm concerned." Tony stated angrily. "If he's with Lupis, we take them both out." He was really pissed his elaborate scheme had come undone... but oh well. He'd get Rhaegson for it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 23, 2014, 01:52:39 PM**

(Club Tyrell)

Kozlov gasped as the second knife ended up in his back.

He roared again and rushed Kojuuro, backhanding him and sending the knife flying. The enraged Grizzly Bear picked him up with one hand and slammed him into the concrete bartop, cracking it some more. He then picked up a large piece of concrete broken loose from the fight and dropped it on Kojuuro.

The crowd roared its approval and several of the spectators were grumbling about losing their creds. He panted as the adrenaline rush wore off. Luckily, the nearest hospital wasn't too far. He staggered out of the bar to thunderous applause.

(Pelvanida)

Aaron looked around in case anyone was passing by. He tried the doorknob. "It's locked. No matter." He then lifted his leg and kicked the door as hard as possible. Not suprisingly, the reinforced door didn't budge.

The German Shepherd pondered his options. He then realized that welhen he was a construction worker, he was given nearly free reign of a building. "Fuck this. We don't need him."

He then turned around and made his way to the exit. "We'll disguise ourselves as construction workers."

(Purifier Compound)

Soren waited just outside the gates for the signal to attack. Even after thirty minutes, it never came.

"Fuck this!" he muttered. He set his exoskeleton to the highest power and casually strode to the front door of the compound. The steel door provided no resistance as he ripped it from its hinges and tossed it away like an empty beer can.

"Hey, halt!" a Purifier shouted at the armored humanoid striding into the base.

Soren ignored him. A bullet bounced off his chest plate to no effect. The frightened guard continued shooting – to no effect. Soren reached the guard, picked him up with one hand and crushed his neck with no effort. He dropped the dead guard and continued on his way.

Anne had rather large fingers but the pistol fit her well enough. Being caught in binders multiple times, she was familiar enough to use them. A press of the button activated small electromagnets that rendered the binders even more difficult to break.

"Now what?" she asked. She looked around to make sure there were no other guards or cameras.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2014, 02:06:45 PM**

kojurro gasped, spitting out blood as he slowly crawled from where Kozlov had dropped him. his head throbbing, most likely from a severe concussion. blood dripped from cuts on his face, and side, dripping onto the floor. kojurro moaned, as he reached a nearby table and staggered to his feet. ' guys.. stronger than he looks ' kojuuro said.. ' call an ambulence.. would you ' he said to the spectators ' i dont think i can get to a hospital on my own in this condition

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Marita followed tony, the bonds had left slight bruises on her paws, but nothing major. 'once we get to the armory i'll undo the security defenses and give you guys a small window. figure 5-10 minutes at the most..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 23, 2014, 02:15:01 PM**

An alarm rang out as Soren's rampage continued on the lower floors.

"Shit! We've been discovered!" Anne exclaimed as her ears suddenly laid themselves flat on her head. She looked around for potential hiding places. She found a small pipe closet and got in. It was times like this she was thankful for being a Shetland Pony instead of a Clydesdale.

Soren didn't seem to have much of a goal as he walked through the lower floor. Behind him was a trail of broken bodies and other debris from his metal fists.

A piece of rebar ripped from the wall flew through the air like a javelin as the enraged cyberneticist hurled it at one of the Rottweiler guards who had rushed to meet the disturbance.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 23, 2014, 02:22:29 PM**

"We head to the armory! As Marita just said, she'll drop the security when we get there, and we head straight for Lupis! You're gonna take us there, Cavenaugh... fast, or the last thing you'll be experiencing will be what it's like to get shot in the head... got it?" Tony said, pushing the barrel of his rifle against the back of the lizard's skull.

"You'll burn for this Tony! I thought you were one of us! How could you just betray us! You don't know how you're dealing with!" Cavenaugh protested as Tony shoved Cavenaugh out in front and none too gently prodded him every time he slowed down.

"Shut up and move!" Tony ordered, taking the group down a side corridor that bypassed the patrols (it was mostly used for maintenance). As they emerged from this corridor, Tony took them around a bend and stepped out from behind Cavenaugh. "Hands and paws in the air, gentlemen!" Tony called, leveling his rifle at the two guards on duty outside the armory.

"What the...?" one asked, seeing the situation. Tony shoved Cavenaugh forward towards them now.

"I said raise 'em high! Move up against the wall!" the ferret reiterated, pointing with a claw where he wanted them to stand. When one was particularly slow to move, Tony fired a single shot at his feet, causing him to scamper out of the way. "All right..." He glanced at his watch. "We've got five minutes till security discovers that guard we left bound behind us. Marita, if you would kindly take security down so that we can access the armory. You'll find a terminal over there on the left wall." He pointed to said terminal. "Pass code to access it is 'Shining Bright.' I say again, 'Shining Bright.' You should be able to do your magic from there. The rest of you... take what you want, grab me a sidearm and a non-projectile rifle if you would, and I'll cover our friends here! Hey! Don't think I didn't see you move!" Tony added, pointing at one of the guards.

As Tony covered them, Cavenaugh looked at him. "It's not too late, Tony. You can still rejoin us... kill your friends, and we'll forget this whole thing ever..."

"Not interested." Tony cut him off. "In less than five minutes you're gonna be showing us up to Lupis's quarters. If you don't move fast enough, there's gonna be pain, I guarantee you. Marie! Bind the two other guards' wrists on your way out!" he called into the armory and with his free paw tossed the binders her way. He then pushed the button on his headset to dial Soren. "Soren, do you read? It's Tony. Hit the place now! We're about on our way to Lupis!" he requested, unaware the human was already on his way inside.

It was then the alarm sounded...

"What... the hell?" Tony asked. "Marita, shut that thing off!" He shouted, getting a bit nervous now as he occasionally let his eyes dart down the other side of the corridor. Intruders in the base, huh? Did Soren actually jump the gun and almost get them all killed? Well... at least he hadn't... otherwise, Tony would have some serious issues with that, even if he was dead. But if it was Soren jumping the gun... this could work in their favor. It meant security would be swarming all over whatever was setting off the alarm... meaning the rest of the base would be undermanned, and they could move about relatively safely.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2014, 02:49:43 PM**

Marie went tp work tying up the guard, while rose looked. On it " Marita typed in the password, which was accepted, and began working on ways to shut down the security. her caws were a blur over the keys, and in less than a minute the armory doors opened. ' there you go Tony' Marita said and began working on shutting off the alarms. this was easier than opening the armory. and in a few seconds the alarms stopped screaming ' ok. they're off. lets move everyone.! "

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2014, 03:01:45 PM**

Outside the Purifier base, Lily was growing restless. She sensed heightened alertness around her; whatever her allies were doing, it was attracting attention. The parasite within her was stirring; it knew it was in danger and wanted to flee.

She took some deep breaths. *Calm down...* she told herself and the parasite. *We're safe in the van...we're not part of this...*

Then she and the parasite realized something at the same time; there were Purifiers running towards the car. Pumped on adrenaline and prepared for a fight.

In her moment of shock, the parasite struck out. Lily felt herself get mentally assaulted in another grasp for power, and this time it won. Independent of her own desires, her body blew the door to the car open and sprinted out on all fours towards the back alleys of the Purifier base.

The guards, who were actually running to reinforce the ones that reported the breakin, didn't notice and continued to head for the base entrance, to surround the Exoskeleton-wearing intruder that was reported.

Nairda grinned as his shackles were removed. "Let us sound the bugles of war!" he crowed. Darting out a door and down a hallway, he leaped onto the ceiling and hid as guards ran underneath him. Chuckling softly to himself, he dropped down and combat-rolled into the nearest room, which turned out to be a broom closet.

He turned to leave when the guards from before kicked the door down. "I told you I heard something chuckle!" one told the other.

Five minutes later, Nairda left the broom closet with an incredibly bloodied broom handle and the equipment from both of the guards.

"I've got two p90s, two Glocks and pair of combat knives~" he reported gleefully. "First come first serve!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 23, 2014, 03:54:24 PM**

Rhaegson stared up at the blinking light on the ceiling as the screeching alarm suddenly stopped, his ears ringing in its aftermath. The small light kept flashing, intermittently bathing the room in a soft red glow. After a few seconds, that stopped too. Rhaegson exhaled and pursed his lips. "Godammit, what now..."

From somewhere in the distance, he could hear faint rumbles. Standing up, he cocked his head to listen more closely. Sounded like it was coming from the northern side of the compound... Leaning over his computer, Rhaegson switched to CCTV, and flicked through the cameras in the north section. His finger froze over the keyboard when a hulking figure in a suit appeared on the screen, broken bodies and destruction behind it. "The fuck is *this*?" *Was someone stupid enough to openly attack the compound like that?* Rhaegson slammed his palm down on the button linked to the speakers. "Intruder in section B2. All members of security not with their thumbs currently up their ass, get over there and take him out! He's in an exo-skeleton, so engage from a distance!" Rhaegson paused. This attack, just when the ferret brat arrived with his prisoners... "Any security near the cells, search the area. If you see any one who *isn't* one of us, take them out."

Axel flinched when he heard the gunfire in the distance. He pulled the blinds aside slightly, peering through the window, but from this distance he couldn't see what was happening. "Ah, crap! Lily, you should..." He was interrupted by a loud crash, and he spun around to catch a glimpse of Lily tearing through the door and vanishing outside. "No! Nonono..." he spluttered, snatching up the snub-nose he'd picked from the Stracci mansion and dashing out after her.

Stepping outside, his eyes widened when he saw a couple of heavily armed men running past... but their attention seemed focused on the Purifier base and they didn't pay him any attention. A grey blur in the corner of his eye caught his attention, and his heart sank when he saw it was Lily heading straight for the base. "Oh *jesus*... Lily! Wait! STOP!" Clutching the pistol, he sprinted after her, trying desperately to catch up.

"Construction workers?!" Marcus snarled. He turned his head to look at the locked door, and reluctantly slipped his revolver back behind his jacket, grinding his teeth. *I'll be seeing you later, Altyn.*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 23, 2014, 07:24:22 PM**

"I said NON-projectile!" Tony said, sighing at Nairda's choice. "But fine, whatever, give me a Glock and one of the P90s." he ordered, slinging the P90 around his shoulder and holding it out in front of him while he stuck the Glock into his waistband. "All right, Cavenaugh! Let's go! Take us to Lupis! Good job on disabling the security." he complimented Marita as he once more pushed Cavenaugh out in front of him. That annoying alarm was now off, so good riddance.

It wasn't too long however before they ran into one of Rhaegson's patrols. The patrol rounded the corner ahead of them, and Cavenaugh immediately dove in front of them, hitting the deck. "Heads up!" he shouted.

Tony ground his teeth together, and raised the P90. Time once more seemed to slow as he fired off a burst from the personal defense weapon. One of the goons immediately dropped with several bullets in his chest, his arms splaying up in the air as he cried out and fell hard upon the floor behind him in a disheveled state. Tony suddenly froze gawking at what he'd just done. He'd never... *never* killed anyone before... and for a few seconds, all the ferret could do was stare at the prone body on the floor in front of him. The guy was dead... dead by his paw, his limbs twisted and arrayed in a strange fashion as he lay like a broken pile of jacks in front of the ferret.

Staring aghast at the corpse, the ferret was snapped out of his reverie by the return fire of the small squad. Bullets whizzed by his head, buzzing the fur on his left cheek, and he was yanked out of his trance and back into reality. Squeezing off another burst, he shot another one ahead of them. "Let's take these guys out!" he commanded, throwing himself against the wall and trying to present as narrow a profile as he could as he recommenced firing on the patrol.

What the hell had happened to him? Why had he frozen up like that? *Come on, Tony! It's kill or be killed! You know that!*

Up ahead and in the crossfire, Cavenaugh kept close to the ground and began crawling forward slightly towards his compatriots, knowing this was most likely futile, as he risked taking a bullet more than reaching his friends, as there was a greater chance they'd be dead in a matter of seconds anyway.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2014, 08:53:50 PM**

Marita had in the meantime grabbed a few weapons for herself, marie and Rose. marie took a MP7, while Rose and Marita had p90s. Marie's weapons had 40 rounds of ammo, Marita's and Rose's 50, so they would cover her if she ran out. the three of them hurried after Tony, and provided cover fire after he shot one of the guards. none of the girls were particularly well-trained in forearms, but their accuracy was good enough to hold the guards from advancing on them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 24, 2014, 09:12:53 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Anne's heart hammered in her chest. Swallowing, she opened the door – and caught one of the Purifiers with the door. Taking advantage of the shock, she crushed the man's skull with a piece of pipe that a repairman had left behind.

Grabbing the dropped Skorpian SMG, she joined Tony and the other two in returning fire.

Soren's suit was nearly bulletproof but with his fingers too large to operate the triggers on his two firearms and the guards exploiting their greater agility, he had no choice but to try and flee the group of guards. As he ran, he trampled one of them underfoot and his arm smashed another against a wall.

"Tony," he said into the headset as he ran. "Yeah, about my suit. I can't use any of my guns. Can you get me something like a gatling gun or something heavy that you could mount to my suit?"

He lowered his shoulder and crashed through a bathroom door, startling two Purifiers who were on the toilet. They reached for their sidearms but the cyberneticist simply picked them up and smashed them against the toilets, killing them.

"Fuck. Now what?" He then noticed a large water pipe linking all the sinks' taps.

(Pelvanida)

Aaron nodded. "Well first off, we need some props. Toolboxes, uniforms and all that shit. Once that's done, we pretty much have free reign of the complex."

"Luckily, there's a construction site nearby." He pointed to a crane erecting a new section of an elevated highway just a few blocks from Pelvanida.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 24, 2014, 10:13:09 PM**

Tony heard Soren in his ear as he downed the last Purifier. It was only now he noticed his paws shaking horrendously. The adrenaline high he was currently on was not helping his current disposition. "Get up!" he ordered unsteadily to Cavenaugh. "NOW!" He yelled, causing the Gila monster to rise slowly to his feet.

"Soren... I can't get you a gatling gun myself because there's no way I could carry it, our-their units are so huge, but... the heavy ordinance is stored in unit 319 across the compound. If you could break in there, you'll have all the heavy vehicular weaponry you could dream of, and then some!" the ferret informed him. "Unit 319!"

Running forward, he tried to avoid stumbling, and probably looked incredibly clumsy as he pushed Cavenaugh out in front of him. "Let's go! We're going to Lupis! We got some minutes before their security system recycles, so let's go! And keep in mind... I know this place... if I even sense you aren't leading us remotely in the direction of the guest quarters or the administration block, you die!" Tony said, feeling like he could collapse from the rush. He hated these adrenaline highs; they did nothing but hype him up and make him ridiculously nervous and ready to fight or flee, and right now, he either needed to shoot something or hide himself until this passed... and he knew it wasn't really a choice at all.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 25, 2014, 05:02:29 AM**

Marcus looked at the construction site in the distance and scowled. "This was meant to be fast..." Playing dress up didn't appeal to him either. Still, if it meant they could find what they needed and get out quick, it was worth a try.

He nodded brusquely at Aaron. "Let's get this over with," he muttered.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 25, 2014, 12:25:32 PM**

Nairda flipped over the hail of gunfire, having been left only a single combat knife from the arsenal he'd returned. Dodging fluidly through the gunfire, he sliced one assailant's throat and dodged a bayonet thrusted by another. "You'll have to do better than that~" he smirked, sending the knife spinning into the assailant's eye. "I'm the devil of five floors deep..."

Lily was at a breakneck sprint, racing on all fours through the back alleys of the Purifier base. *Run faster* her body screamed at her, *they're gonna catch us! Run!*

They're not chasing us! she thought back frantically, *Stop! We're heading deeper into the Purifier base!*

But her direction and her actions were out of her hands. Vaulting over a chainlink fence, she rolled out the shock and came to a snarling bear on a group of Augments who were startled to see her.

"What the hell is that?" gasped one, before Lily sent a psionic pulse echoing out of her body like a sonic boom, sending all of them flying backwards. Some of them had started shooting before their heart stopped working, and suddenly host and parasite were in agreement as they ran through the open door into the Purifier backrooms.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 25, 2014, 03:24:33 PM**

Axel slowed his pace as he entered the alleyways, completely aware of the fact that if he stumbled into a group of Purifiers, chances of him surviving were slim to none. Though from the rumbles and gunfire in the distance, it sounded like the Purifiers had their hands full. *What happened to doing this stealthy...*

Jogging lightly down the twisting passageways, Axel's ears were pointed out, trying to catch the sound of footsteps, voices, anything that could tell him where Lily was. Nothing. The hand holding the pistol trembled, and he tightened his grip, using his other hand to steady the weapon. All of a sudden, there was a dull *boom* from somewhere up ahead, accompanied by shrieks and the sound of gunfire. He jolted in shock then quickened his steps, trying to fight the panic from rising. Nearing the corner where the noise had come from, he hesitated, then stepped out, raising the gun... and gasping at the group of bodies sprawled in front of him. "What the hell..." *Did she do this?* From the expressions on their faces, it looked like their deaths hadn't been pleasant.

Axel looked up, past the corpses, and felt a wave of fear wash over him when he saw the open door leading into the main building itself. He glanced around, but knew he was trying to fool himself. *She's gone inside...* Trying and failing to control his panicked breathing, Axel nervously followed her into the compound.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 26, 2014, 08:12:59 PM**

Nairda spun and beheaded the last guard. "Let's move~!" he warned the others.

Leading the way down the hall, he noticed Lupis' office. Smirking, he jammed the knife into the lock and picked it with the skill of a professional.

After hearing a light click, he kicked the door down and combat-rolled into the room. "Hands up government spook!" he announced bravely, knife held out menacingly.

But Lupis wasn't in his office. A few seconds later Nairda was hit by over a dozen incredibly painful traps involving electricity, acid, fire ants, razor blades, razor blades that are on fire, and lemon juice.

Lily darted down hallways, miraculously alone. Most of the personnel had apparently headed to reinforce more active sections of the base.

where are we going? she begged of the conscience controlling her body at the moment. *Why aren't we running AWAY from here?* But the parasite had no reason to bother speaking with her.

After a few minutes, she approached a heavily barricaded titanium-reinforced steel blast door. A mere glance would reveal that there was no possible way inside. Pressing her body up against it, she tried and failed to pry the doors open; even her psionic abilities wouldn't work here. She could sense it.

She could feel the parasite's mind reeling. It desperately needed to get inside...

Lena smiled and brought Emilena another plate of cookies. "Enough about us. We haven't seen you in over seven years. We want to hear about you."

"You heard about me," Emilena grumbled. "I've burnt all my bridges. My allies don't trust me. The police are after me. It took a literal act of god to save my corpse from rotting in the torture dungeon of a mafia interrogator."

"Is that where all the wounds came from?" wondered Emile. "Some of those were remarkably unlikely, especially the sphinter being--"

"I have a habit of murdering men who tell me medical diagnoses," Emilena cautioned. "Don't add yourself to the list."

Lena mopped Emilena's forehead with gauze. "Well, none of your past matters. You're safe with us now. We'll protect you, we have more than enough to eat and survive out here. And its very remote, nobody will find you."

Emilena tried to force herself out of bed. "Oh no. Oh no no no no. I'm not staying here. You two will probably sell me to some slavers when you realize what awful caretakers you're destined to always be."

"At least stay the night," pleaded Emile. "Where have you to go? It'll let your body rest."

Emilena looked at him suspiciously. She literally could not think of anything they wouldn't conceivably do to her in her sleep. But she conceded to herself that she had little choice "...on second thought, I spoke too soon. I should stay here indefinitely." If they believed it, they wouldn't try to impose the decision on her through their own devices. She hoped... "I've never let anyone take care of me. Perhaps that's been my main mistake my whole life."

Her parents beamed. "That's wonderful to hear!" Lena hugged her, causing Emilena to stiffen up and grumble in protest. "We'll make up for all the years we abandoned you," she whispered softly. "We promise."

Emile nodded. "We'll tell you everything you missed out on. Make up for the huge gap in your life. I'll grab the picture books; we've got video evidence of any 'firsts' that happened in two months before we gave you away, including crawling, temper tantrum, and bowel movement."

I've got to get out of here.... Emilena thought to herself in equal parts horror and despair.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 27, 2014, 02:27:11 PM**

Axel crept his way along the tight corridors, uncomfortably aware of how his trainers scuffed slightly on the floor, the sound bouncing off the thick walls. Occasionally he'd come across a metal door leading off from the main path, but since they were all closed, he ignored them.

Eventually, he came to a crossroads in the corridor, the hallway branching off in three different directions. Axel stood indecisively in the middle, clutching his pistol with both hands. Chewing his lip hard enough to break the skin, he glanced up and down the possible routes, then tried calling out softly. "*Lily, where are you?! Li-*" He was interrupted by the sound of raised voices and heavy footsteps coming from the corridor to the left, heading directly towards him. A small moan escaped him, his legs suddenly feeling as though they were made of rubber. Stumbling forwards, he impulsively chose the path that led straight on. Reaching a right hand turn, he rounded the corner and pressed his back to the wall, holding his breath as he listened intently to where the group of Purifiers was heading.

"... enough bullets, that son of a bitch'll go down eventually!"

"Are you kidding? Have you seen how much shit we've thrown at him?!" The voices grew louder as the group moved past where Axel had been standing seconds before.

"Yeah, well, you know what they say. Bigger they are, the... uh... The..."

"Harder they fall, moron."

"Whatever, I didn't ask for your shit, Xander..." The noise of the argument began fading as the Purifiers drew further away from him, the clumping of their feet growing quieter.

Axel released his breath in a shudder. *Thank you... thank you...* After taking a second to wrestle his nerves into submission, he looked slowly to the side and continued on.

Rhaegson paced his office, dragging on his cigarettes like a drowning man sucking for air. Whoever the hell these people were, they were proving a bigger problem than he'd first thought. He paused mid step. *This douchebag in the suit... Nairda...* There was a good chance more of them were using electronics too...

He sat back down and snatched up his phone, dialing to a separate part of the compound. After a few seconds, a nervous sounding voice answered. "Yes sir?"

"Get it heated up. We're going to give these sons of bitches something to think about."

The voice on the other end paused. "Um, well, it's not exactly ready... we're still waiting for the amplifiers and..."

"Well, shit, you think I don't know that?!" Rhaegson snapped. "Just shut up and..." His voice trailed off when he glanced up at the monitor. He grinned to himself. "Holy... Just get it ready. Don't set it off before I tell you."

Hanging up, Rhaegson dialed Lupis, still staring at the screen. "Hey, big bad... Guess what I have my beautiful blues set on? I'll give you a clue - it's ugly as shit, and you've been chasing it for who the hell knows how long. And, this is the best bit. It's waiting right outside the labs..." He slouched back in his chair, his grin broadening. "I guess good things come to those who wait, huh?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 28, 2014, 12:04:39 AM**

(Elevated highway construction site)

The construction site was an utter cacophony of noises as workers continued their arduous task of constructing the elevated highway. Flying frame equipped laborers flitted about with high powered welding lasers or rivet guns as they secured the steel beams in place.

Aaron led Marcus into the portable dressing room and opened the door. He curled his lips at the odor of unwashed manual workers that permeated the grungy room. Dirty laundry was tossed haphazardly on the floor. For obvious reasons, those clothes were *not* an option.

"Fuckin' nasty. My supervisor would rip us a new asshole if we shit up the locker room like this," he muttered.

He opened a locker and grabbed two blue jumpsuits emblazoned with the company's name (Syberis Road Works) and tossed one to Marcus.

The German Shepherd quickly donned the suit. "Okay, let's get out of here and back to Pelvanida!"

(Purifier Base)

Soren heard Tony's transmission. Smirking, he backed up and charged straight through the thin wall of the bathroom. Only to stumble upon a group of armed Purifiers.

"There's the fucker! Get him!" A hail of gunfire went his way.

Soren felt his sphincter tighten as he heard the bullets ping off his armored suit. A sharp sting in his arm made him swear. They were using mag-guns, which fired a solid metal dart at velocities high enough to pierce armor. This one was just a glancing hit but a perfect shot could kill. He sprinted back into the base with the irate Purifiers charging after him.

"Tony! Where are we going!?" Anne asked as she rounded a corner and found a surprised Purifier. Thinking quickly, she exploited her short height and shoved her horn into the Percheron's throat, causing him to clutch the wound and fall to the floor with a series of wet gurgles. A short burst from her SMG silenced him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 28, 2014, 12:22:47 PM**

Lena was doubled over on the carpet laughing, Emile was clutching the support of the couch and tears were running down his face. Both were busting a gut watching a shaky-cam of a diapered baby Emilena trying desperately to climb down from a very tall tree.

"So we had, like, *no* clue how you got up there!" Lena wheezed, "And you're like, halfway to the top--"

"Oh, here's the best part!" Choked Emile on his own saliva, struggling for breath. "You knock down this nest of eggs, that's what that was, and here a fucking hawk shows up and starts--!"

Emilena clicked the TV off. "That was hilarious, really it was. I always wanted to know where my fear of heights and birds came from. But I really must be going to sleep."

Lena wiped a tear from her eye, grinning. "We understand, sweetheart..." she chuckled. "We're so glad to have you back."

"I'm glad I came back," Emilena answered honestly. "I learned a lot I hadn't realized."

"Well, you'll learn more tomorrow," smiled Emile. "We've got at least a hundred hours more of footage to show you. And then we have stories we didn't capture on tape--"

"--certainly something to do tomorrow..." Emilena plastered a smile on her face. "Let me go to sleep now..."

She had indeed learned something very important. If this was the life she could expect by running away, then she had to return. She didn't want to face her comrades after being outed as a spy in front of them, but if the alternative was a life with the two least-likeable people she'd ever encountered, she could swallow her pride.

Lily shivered as she glanced at the retinal recognition scanner. Hardly understanding why she was even trying it, or whether she hoped it would even work, she placed her eye on the scanner. It beeped and the door opened.

In the next room, she walked into a whitewashed room. She immediately recognized it as the site of her dream from when she was in Soren's house. Large chambers housed green liquid, computers were running, and a single chamber at the end housed a lifeless being looking remarkably similar to her. It was missing its hair, was more hunched over and muscular, and had lost all remaining human features, but its slumped-over polydactyl form was a familiar face she'd never even considered could exist.

"Hey! You!"

A voice cut through the gunfire around Soren, and a hulking rhino agent lumbered out of the ranks. He had triple-reinforced armor and carried a huge circular saw with a cannon strapped to it.

"What the hell do you think you're doing in here?" He growled angrily, revving the saw to life. "You shut that suit down and I MIGHT let your sorry ass live!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 28, 2014, 04:46:33 PM**

Tony slapped his paw hard on the wall as he noticed Lupis wasn't in his office. "Dammit! We were supposed to nab him!" He shouted, realizing the plan was rapidly falling apart. Without Lupis, this whole attack was meaningless! "Soren! Lupis ain't here! We're gonna get overwhelmed if we stay here any longer... suggest we withdraw and regroup... hey!" Tony shouted, noticing Cavenaugh dart quickly into Lupis's office now, the ferret having taken his eyes from him for too long a period of time.

Chasing after him, Tony was met with a flash of steel in front of him as the Gila monster had retrieved a sword that had been mounted on the wall of the office. More specifically, it was a katana. Tony felt his shoulder erupt in pain as his paw immediately shot up to it, clenching down as blood droplets sprayed onto the floor. "Dammit!" Tony uttered, backing away as the air whistled in front of him as Cavenaugh sliced towards the mustelid's neck, which Tony just barely avoided.

"You really shouldn't have betrayed us, Tony! Now you'll pay!"

Tony lifted the P90, but it was batted down by another swipe of the sword, yanking Tony's arm in an unpleasant fashion as he continued backing up down the hallway. "Oh no you don't! I'm not giving you that chance!" Cavenaugh exclaimed as he continued to advance on the ferret and violently swung the katana mere inches from his flesh.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 28, 2014, 07:56:30 PM**

A shot rang out from behind tony, and marita stepped forward her paw holding the gun she had fired at cavanaugh.. ' while wasnt a crack shot, it didnt take a great shot in order to do serious damage with a gun. her shot struck cavenuagh hard in the left should and ripped through his shoulderblade before exiting out and hitting the far wall. ' run Tony" She called to the ferret.' i'll cover you' she said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 28, 2014, 09:38:42 PM**

Nairda staggered to his feet, resolution fueling the fire between his eyes. Sending his combat knife spinning through the air, he struck cavenuagh hard in the left shoulder, ripping into his shoulderblade and then bisecting Marita's walled bullet. "Run Tony~!" he called out, "Marita will cover you!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 28, 2014, 10:20:33 PM**

Anne charged into the office. She snatched the katana from the floor and a pointed both her SMG and the katana at Cavenaugh. "Where's Lupis!?" She didn't seem to notice or care that there was dried blood visible on her metal horn.

She then noticed Nairda and Marita. "Someone watch Tony and this fuckwad"óshe pointed at Cavenaughó"I'll go get a first aid kit."

The mare looked around the room. Bland minimalistic style with lots of stainless steel. The one incongruous thing was the "wall hanger" katana that just now proved itself to be no mere decoration.

She opened a drawer in the desk and found a pack of moziafil. Anne smiled as she pocketed the drugs. Papers, pens and even keepsakes were tossed on the group as she searched for a first aid kit.

"A little busy!" Soren said as he ran away from the Rhino. His suit was tough but testing it against someone armed with a a diamond coated saw and large caliber cannon was not something he fancied.

Thinking quickly, he ripped a set of lockers off the wall and threw them in the path of the pursuing Purifiers.

"Shit! I'm fucked now!" He considered sacrificing his suit to throw them off his trail but if they caught him without the suit, the hail of bullets would have most certainly killed him by now. A hole suddenly appeared in the concrete wall by his head as a Purifier with a mag-rifle took a shot at him. The pursuers either shot at him from behind the barrier or they vaulted and climbed over in an attempt to catch him

Soren got up and continued running away. He was thankful for the mag-rifle's slow rate of fire due to its need to charge its capaciters.

"Damn it, I can't keep running forever!" he muttered. He stopped for a moment to catch his breath.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 01, 2014, 05:56:01 AM**

A tinny beeping from further up the corridor caused Axel's ears to twitch, and he picked up his pace. Rounding the corner, he was met with large blast door. It was already open. Apart from the door, the corridor was a dead end.

Axel stopped at the threshold, his heart pounding in his chest. It looked like the entrance to a tomb, and everything inside him told the rat that going inside was a bad idea. Suddenly, there was a metallic creak, and Axel realised with a jolt that the door was closing again. "Aw, crap..." Swearing under his breath, he quickly ducked through... and found himself in a bright white room with Lily.

"Lily! Come on, we've got to..." Axel's voice trailed off when he noticed what the room contained. Gazing around, his mouth gaped open in confusion. When he saw the lone chamber at the end, his face twitched and the hand holding the gun tightened involuntarily. "What... what the hell is this..."

Marcus' face was even grimmer than usual as he pulled on the jumpsuit. "My one isn't washed," he grumbled. Bending down to pick up a toolbox that had been left behind, he nodded at Aaron. "Let's go."

Arriving back at Pelvanida, Marcus led them to the public entrance this time. A human guard at the end of the room stirred at the sight of them, and approached. "Hold it! What's the problem?"

Marcus cleared his throat. "Repairs."

"Repairs?" The guard looked at the company name on their jumpsuits. "Then how come that says road works? There's no roads in here."

"Syberis is branching out. We now provide more services so as to further assist the community, and our esteemed customers."

The guard blinked. "Oh. Alright then." He stepped aside.

As they walked past, Marcus spoke lowly to Aaron. "We should use these suits more often."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 01, 2014, 12:41:58 PM**

Tony could only back away slightly as Cavenaugh's left shoulder was hit by Marita's shot, causing the Gila monster to bellow in pain, and even more so when the knife struck it. The ferret was breathing heavy now, knowing he was losing blood. Cavenaugh soon had a gun and the katana pointed at him, though Anne quickly moved into the office herself, leaving Tony to raise his P90 once more to cover the lizard.

"What are you gonna do?" the reptile challenged. "Kill me? And I don't know where Lupis is! This is where he was last I saw him!" he shouted back.

Tony's paw trembled a little, and he narrowed his eyes. He couldn't shoot someone in cold blood like this... it just wasn't in him, despite how much he wanted to. His stomach was doing flips and turns, churning violently as his mind battled with his heart over the proper course to take.

"We-we need to get out of here!" he stammered breathlessly. "This isn't going to work! Soren's in trouble, Lupis isn't here, I'm wounded... we gotta go! We'll regroup, get some supplies, and... rethink this!" he said, started to back down the corridor now, but keeping his gun trained on Cavenaugh as he waited for Anne to rejoin them. The easy way out would be the service tunnels under the compound. He knew the code to access them, and it would take them straight out and onto the street. Once outside, they could pick up the car and trailer, and get the hell out of here!

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 01, 2014, 12:54:05 PM**

Lets go then' marita said ' as she started moving towards the exit., while keeping her gun trained as best she could on Cavenaugh. marie and rose ran up to her as she exited the door.' come on tony! Rose said, as alarms began to blare.."The security is back online' marita said to Tony' We need to get out of here.. now! there will be guards in this area in 5-10 minutes tops.. and they'll be of the shoot first, ask questions later type/.//

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 01, 2014, 03:36:35 PM**

"Ugly as hell, isn't it?" asked Lupis softly, as the blast door whirred shut behind them. "Is it a Pelvanida experiment gone wrong, from their bio-augmenting in the 2010s? Is it a horrible mutated being? The government thinks its an extraterrestrial life form. Me, I don't waste breath guessing."

Lily bared her teeth in a feeble display of fright at the sight of Lupis. Even though she didn't recognize him, the parasite did and was hyperventilating with fear. Before she could run or do anything else, Lupis flicked a switch on the wall and an ultrasonic frequency rang through the room. To Axel (and most others) it would only be a faint buzz; to Lily it sent random pulses shooting throughout her nervous system, and she collapsed in a heap, twitching and struggling to collect her thoughts.

"I wouldn't go near her if I were you," Lupis warned Axel. He didn't appear to be armed, but he showed no fear of Axel's firearm. "I don't know who you are, but I can add 2 and 2; you must care about Ms. North to possibly follow her this far. I think you've earned the right to know the truth."

On Rhaegson's security monitor, Lupis entered the subterranean laboratory and sealed the blast door behind him. He (and anyone inside the laboratory) would be immune to the pulse. While Lupis could not inform him directly, it was all-but assured Lupis wouldn't mind if Rhaegson fired when ready.

Her parents having finally left her alone, Emilena debated going to sleep. She half expected to wake up chained up in the basement, or worse, if they didn't want to risk her leaving. *Wouldn't be unusual behavior for someone to do to me at this point...*

But her exhaustion finally won out and soon she'd settled back into a fitful sleep.

Immediately, she found herself balanced precariously in a tree. For a second, she thought that the family video was coming back to haunt her, until she registered Axel on top of her. Seconds later, she realized what they were up to, and in disgust and confusion could only look him in the eyes until he ejaculated inside her.

Then she was outside Soren's house, with a German Shepherd guard tensely watching the road. Then she saw a Vulpine police officer, a very familiar one, jump at her companion with drawn blade. Before she could call a warning the Vulpine had decapitated her ally. Seconds later a high-caliber bullet embedded in the back of her skull.
The deaths continued...

The Rhino set his chainsaw whirring and plowed effortlessly through a wall. "You aren't getting away that easily!" he roared, pursuing the exoskeletoned man. "You can't run forever!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 02, 2014, 03:39:28 AM**

Axel whirled at the voice behind him, and when he saw the wolf standing there his eyes narrowed with hatred. "You..." He could hear Lily struggling on the floor, and he moved in front to block her from Lupis. "The truth?! I think I've got a pretty good picture," he spat. "*You* did this to her, you son of a bitch..." He brought the gun up to level it at the wolf. The barrel shook, but this time it wasn't from fear. "And you're going to turn her back. *Now*."

Rhaegson watched as Lupis followed the skinny rodent into the lab, rolling his eyes as the door swung shut. *You always were melodramatic... At least that's one problem dealt with.* He tapped the keyboard, switched the view between the group retreating from Lupis' office, and the lone man in the exoskeleton. The way things were going, the pulse probably wasn't necessary... but they were going to have to test it sooner or later. *And it never hurt to have a* *little fun*.

He leaned into the speaker. "Everyone trying to take these clowns out, your job's about to get a lot easier. Lucky you." Rhaegson snapped his phone open. "Hit it."

A few moments later, a low hum started to reverberate around the compound. It built up, getting louder and louder, enough to set teeth on edge... and then, abruptly, it stopped. From the center of the base, a light blue haze spread out, spilling into the corridors. Within moments, it had washed through most of the building, rushing towards the intruders even as it started to lose its intensity.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 02, 2014, 01:09:37 PM**

"Can't exactly follow while I'm bleeding out!" Tony exclaimed through gritted teeth. "And what are you leading for? Do you even know the way out of here?" he chided Rose. "Ugh... never mind... we gotta get moving." he said, breathing heavy as the alarms went off. He was hoping for some more time, but he kept his gun trained on Cavenaugh as he backed up towards a door in the hall. "There's an easy exit out but you're gonna have to..." He broke off, hearing a noise that jarred him a bit, leaving him just a tad shaken as it died down.

He paused now, seeing a blue mist driving right towards them. Blinking the ferret shook his head. Was he hallucinating from blood loss? No... he wasn't *that* weak just yet... the mist flooded down the hall like an incoming tide, and was soon enveloping them and then moving beyond, like a brief blanket that didn't have to time to stay. "What the... hell?" Tony asked, noticing he felt... no different. "What was that?" he asked, looking as it moved on down the hall. Cavenaugh was just as surprised to see it as Tony, getting a little nervous as it moved about his scaled body, but neither really showed any ill effects.

Down below, his eyes opened. Blinking a few times, he could tell he was in some sort of fluid... but not water. A noise had awoken him... a humming, which had rattled his brain and forced him into alertness. His long sleep was finally over. He could hear voices now.

The orange eyes gazed out of the film that was around them and studied the three in the room. One was a stony like creature, more a living rock than an organic being, but organic it was. The second was a white-furred rat with odd metal limbs. Injury of some sort? He was rather angry... he was threatening the third, a wolf, who appeared calm and confident. Hmmm... what was this about?

He slowly felt his strength returning to him, but decided to listen in for the moment until it fully returned. He was in one of the numerous tanks in the room, and while most of them were empty, his was not. Damn white light... at least it made him blend in well, given his body's coloring. Strangely, he now noticed he was capable of breathing in this aqueous environment. Curiouser and curiouser...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2014, 05:34:07 PM**

"We did nothing of the sort." Lupis narrowed his eyes. "To be honest, I can only guess at how Ms. North became wrapped up in all this. Here in the psionically sealed labs, my top scientists had been studying that creature in that tank, hoping to learn more about its psionic powers. We underestimated its abilities, and in a moment of weakness it possessed one of my agents and used him to break the laboratory seal. Its conscience then escaped our labs, and we've been trying to get it back here ever since. Your girlfriend was just the unlucky person it happened across first, I'd wager."

He stepped forward. "I harbor no ill will towards Ms. North, and I'd like just as much as you to free her from her bondage. It's as simple as forcing the rogue conscience from her mind. And we'll never have a chance like right here, right now in this sealed laboratory. If you would be willing to work with me...we could save her."

"We can't retreat now~!" Nairda let out a rallying cry. "We've got to persevere! The eve of the Purifiers is upon us! The sunshine patriot and the summer soldier may shy from hardship and inhospitality, but it is the *true hero* that--"

At that the pulse hit him and shut off all his augments, including the ones in his brain. Luckily, his body was still capable of keeping alive, but he blacked out and crumbled in a heap.

The pulse rippled through the Purifiers, who all cheered; being Purifiers, they had no internal augments and so could quickly resume the chase of Soren Almaya.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 02, 2014, 05:36:32 PM**

marita tried to use her computer then sighed ' that was a emppulse. knocked out anything electronic.. so my computer doesnt work, neither will any of our phones..' Marita said.Shee turned to tony and saw a splosh of red on his shoulder. ' we'll neee to stop the bleeding before you pass out from blood loss.. 'i''ll teartear a strip off the right part of your shirt.' Hold on she said walking over to him and ripping off the bloodied part of his shirt revealing the shoulder wound. yuck' she inhaled. ' he got a good nick in Tny ' she said to him. ' she threw the bloodied cloth to the ground. ' she then moved to his right should and ripped off the sleeve with a clean tug. tonys shirt was basiccally sleeveless now, but the more important point and binding the injury then commenting on fashion sense. marita turned the sleeve into and bandage and wrapped it tightly around tonys injured shoulder. " ok, just grit your teeth until we can get out of here.. ' she said as applying the tourniquet." theres a door staircase three doors down. it leads to the ground floor and to our exit point. we need to move now if we are going to avoid capture. All we have to do is go the opposite way of the way we came in, backtrack if you will..Move it guys' She said to Rose and Marie who were still armed.' the three girls headed towards the staircase.' marie opeed the door and held it open for tony.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 02, 2014, 06:48:18 PM**

Axel hurriedly took a step back as Lupis approached, a side of his mouth bared. He glanced quickly down at Lily, at the figure in the chamber behind her, then swung his eyes back up. He didn't lower the gun. "That *thing's* consciousness? You actually expect me to..." Suddenly, what Lily had said before came back to him - *Every time my mind leaves my body, it takes a little longer to come back...* Axel's ears flattened, his breath hissing between his teeth as he tried to think clearly. He didn't trust Lupis for one second, and part of him was screaming not to listen... but Axel knew he had no idea how to help Lily, and if there was a chance the wolf was telling the truth... *Fuck, what do I do?*

He started to lower the pistol, though not relaxing his arm completely. "How... how the hell am I supposed to trust you? You could just be making it worse!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 02, 2014, 06:59:50 PM**

(Purifer Base)

Soren fell face first as his suit's electronics were scrambled by the pulse. His HMD shut down as well.

He struggled to free himself from his now useless suit. Luckily, a quick release feature allowed the suit to easily fall away from him in pieces.

Footsteps and shouting got louder as the enraged Purifiers closed in on him. Grabbing his shotgun, he took aim and shot out a large pipe that carried live steam for the steam washers (hinting at the base's former life as a heavy equipment factory).

He followed an emergency exit sign as the hallway began to fill with scalding steam.

"Great, what else could goó" Anne never finished her sentence as the EMP hit. Her eyes rolled into the back of her head and she collapsed, her horn sparking with induced electrical currents.

(Pelvanida)

The duo finally entered the warehouse. Two armed guards stopped them.

"You must be the repair crew the front desk told us about. Anyways, credentials please."

Aaron fished out an ID from the pocket of his uniform. The ID was one of a Belgian Malenois but to the average person, they looked close enough to German Shephards that they could pass.

"I see, well, you may pass," the guard said, nodding as she looked at the ID and Aaron.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2014, 09:19:22 PM**

"We need to get the conscience to leave Lily's body," explained Lupis. "The best way to do that is to make it think the current host is about to die. But it can read minds, so when you shoot at Lily, you'll have to convince it that you're aiming for a lethal shot. Once it flees Ms. North, it'll be looking for a new body to possess. If it picks its old body, it'll be trapped again inside the pod."

He stepped forward. "Of course, first its going to try to possess your mind. Or mine. I have years of training, I'll be able to fight it off. Will you? You could wind up just like her. If you don't think you can handle it, give me the gun and get out. I have no motivation to kill Ms. North; its in my best interest to keep her alive and that creature back in its own mind."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 02, 2014, 11:42:58 PM**

"We can't go back the way we came in." Tony shook his head here. "That's out the front gate, and they would've locked it down by now. We have to... dammit!" Tony said, noticing Anne collapse, as well as Nairda. "What the hell is this?" he asked, shocked as he looked around at the pulse's effects. "What did it... the augments!" he exclaimed now, his mind making the connection. "Crap! We gotta get them out of here!" Tony said, biting down as the tourniquet was applied. "Agh! I'll take Anne... try to take Anne... you three help Nairda!" Tony ordered. "And thanks for the patch up!" he grunted as he took Anne's armpits and tried to hoist her up. Pony weighed some...

"Anne! You gotta get up!" he groaned as pain shot through his arm, the strain not good on his shoulder wound. "Ugh! Dammit! Come on Anne!" He said, slapping her face lightly to try and bring her around as they made for the stairs. "We have to get down to the service tunnels!" he ordered the girls as he pulled Anne into the stairwell now and began making his painful way down the steps, trying not to drop Anne and hoping she'd come around soon. It would take a long time to exit like this...

He felt at this point he'd heard enough. It was clear the rat didn't trust the wolf, and why should he? The wolf was not trustworthy, no matter how you sliced it. This he knew... inherently. He wasn't sure how... but it was there. This exchange wouldn't end well for the rat... perhaps it was time to do something.

Concentrating on the barrier in front of him, he began focusing... focusing what he wasn't sure, but focusing all the same. The tube he was in suddenly started shaking violently, and without much further warning, shattered in a cacophony of exploding glass and cascading fluid as it blew outward. The creature tumbled out onto the floor, and rolled up to standing.

A creature he was, for he was very unusual. Pure white skinned, he was mostly gecko in appearance, but his eyes were wide, and brightly orange in color. Two rows of white feathers stuck out the back of his head, forming parallel rows that swept back and then curled up slightly at the end, almost like a headdress of sorts. He was short... only about four feet in height, but he was possessed of a very serious countenance.

"Surrendering your sidearm would not be wise." he spoke, his voice deep and resonant. If a cave could perhaps speak, this would be it. "You are correct... you can't trust him." Of course, his explosive exit and speaking probably provided just the right amount of distraction needed that Lupis had been looking for...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 03, 2014, 02:30:27 AM**

"Don't come any closer!" Axel warned, stepping to the side so he could see both Lupis and Lily. "There's no way I'm leaving you alone with her, and I'm sure as hell not gonna give you the gun." He looked to the left at Lily. What Lupis said made a horrible amount of sense... Every time she'd been in danger, Lily had been able to see things she shouldn't... He bit his lip, and was about to say something when the glass of one of the tanks across the room exploded outwards.

Axel recoiled in shock. He started to swivel the pistol in the small creature's direction, barely registering that it had just spoken, when his trainers skidded in the green fluid that was pooling across the floor. He lost his balance, falling back and landing painfully, the small of his back slamming against the lower metal rim of the tank behind him. The pistol fell out of his grip and skittered across the floor.

The guards turned to look at Marcus. "And your credentials, please?"

"Of course." Marcus reached into the pocket of his jumpsuit, grabbed the ID card nestled in there and pulled it out. His mouth tightened as he saw the face on the picture. It was a poodle.

"Well? Come on," one of the guards urged, reaching out a hand and snatching it from Marcus' fingers. He cocked his head as he looked at it. "Uh... this isn't going to..."

The toolbox swung in the air and slammed down solidly on the top of the guard's head, dropping him to the floor. Startled, his companion started to raise his gun, but Marcus heaved the heavy metal box to the side. It connected with a dull *clunk* across his face, sending him spinning to join the other on the floor. Bending down and grabbing the front of their uniforms, Marcus heaved them to the side and packed them on one of the shelves storing various cybernetic equipment. He pulled a large crate in front of them so they were more hidden, then tossed the guns they'd dropped up to a higher shelf. Straightening, he looked at Aaron. "Come on. We need to move it."

Crossing the warehouse, Marcus looked up and down the aisles, finally turning right and stopping in front of a crate with 18-G12VX printed on it. He pried open the top to reveal a number of rod like objects stored inside, each about 12 cm long. Emptying the contents of the toolbox, Marcus reached in, took several of the amplifiers and put them inside the metal container. He turned back to Aaron. "Let's get out of here."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2014, 09:13:31 AM**

Marita picked up Nairda, like she would a sack of Potatoes. Rose and marie ran back to help carry the unconscious Anne. Rose was grateful she was a large dog and had a good amount of strength.' Quickly' Marie said as she lifted up Anne's Hind flank. ' Lets move it Tony! We've got her. you need to rest that shoulder. Whats the quickest way out of here?'
marita headed down the steps as quickly as she could. Her quick mind think of a solution. " tony! any other way out of this place?' she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 03, 2014, 10:48:46 AM**

Well, it wasn't the opportunity Lupis was expecting, but he'll take what he can get.

Darting forward, Lupis grabbed the pistol and whipped it across Axel's face. He aimed for the eye; partially-blind opponents are half as threatening as they used to be. He'd kicked his shoe off at the same time, and now his lower left paw was slashing across Axel's stomach, deep enough to draw blood if not openly expose internal organs.

He levied the pistol at the newcomer. "Get back in your pod, or get out of here," he narrowed his eyes. "You never worked out anyway, though I can thank you for how patient and cooperative you were. You earned one chance to walk away."

At the same time Lupis tried to kick Axel to the side and approach Lily, who had curled into a shivering ball and was pressed against the wall furthest away from the trio.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 03, 2014, 11:29:22 AM**

Tony gladly let Rose and Marie carry the unconscious Anne for him, as his shoulder wasn't doing him any favors right now. "Thank you!" he gratefully told the girls. "OK... we're going out via the service tunnels! They'll take us right out to the street, and we'll head back to the car!" he explained. He led them down the stairs, and out into another corridor. Poking his head around the corner, he looked both ways to see the area clear, and then darted down the hallway, motioning for them to follow while he covered them with his P90.

"It's out here!" he said, inputting the code to override the lock on the door, and let it slide open while he waved them on. The door led to a concrete staircase, which in turn led downward into a concrete tunnel. It led under the base, and had been used by maintenance back when this place was a factory to quickly transit from one side of the base to the other. Tony knew about it because it was one of the Purifiers' escape routes, as well as sneakier methods of attack. "All right... we're almost out of here! Just straight down this tunnel, and we're out on the streets and home free!" he exclaimed. "I don't think that pulse fried the car... it's all analog after all, and no real circuitry, so I think we're good, plus I parked it a block or two away, and I'm glad I did!"

The creature was surprised at the result of his intrusion. The rat was swiftly attacked and downed by the wolf, who then proceeded to call him a... failure? Brief flashes of something played through his mind, and he narrowed his eyes now. Failure? That couldn't be so... last he remembered... but he couldn't remember anything before this. There were a few memories... bu they weren't connected to this place at all.

Without saying another word, the creature concentrated on the gun the wolf held at him. "I've got a third option." he replied, and suddenly, Lupis would've found it insanely difficult to move his arm, much less squeeze his trigger finger. His whole arm began to shake in fact, and the lupine agent would soon find himself lifted clean off the floor and up into the air, hovering and completely immobile as the strange reptile held him bound with seemingly just his mind. "How's this for not working out?" he asked as Lupis was flung hard against the far wall, smacking into it with enough force to do some pretty serious damage. He had been thrown as easily as if he were a doll, but the creature had no idea how he'd accomplished that. He felt a tad weaker, but not to the point where he couldn't do that again if needs be.

Breaking his concentration, he moved over to Axel now. "I don't think we should remain here." he said. "I didn't want to hurt him, but I didn't see much other choice." He held his hand out for the rat to take now. "Are you hurt? I'm afraid I can't do anything about that if you are, but perhaps I can assist you in getting out of here.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2014, 11:53:29 AM**

Marita rushed along Carrying Nairda with one paw, her other holding her gun, Rose and Marie were moving as fast as they could, both were struggling a bit with Anne, as she was quite heavy.. " so far luck was with them as they hurried down the tunnel. a light ahead showed them the exit, and Marita reached it and opened it. she turned her head one way then the other. ' all clear lets move' she said holding it open so Marie Rose and their passenger could get out first then closed it after Tony got out. the sextet managed to reach Tonys car without problem, now it was a matter of Stashing Anne and Nairda in the back, squeezing in, and getting the heck out..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 03, 2014, 12:21:12 PM**

Axel propped himself up on his side, dazed from the pistol-whip, and tried to look at the short white creature standing over him. The gun had struck him directly over the eye, and the skin above was torn open and bleeding, making it virtually impossible to see out of his right side. He managed to focus on the hand the creature was holding out and hesitantly reached up to take it. *At least it's not me he's throwing around...* "I'm doing great," Axel wheezed as he was pulled up, hissing in pain as he straightened. His stomach felt like it was on fire, blood seeping through the ragged strips of his shirt. "*Jesus*..." He sucked in a breath and looked down at the reptile-type animal that he now towered over. He thought about asking who... what he was, but that could wait for later.

Nodding, Axel limped across the floor to where Lupis had dropped the gun, his trainers splashing in the liquid. "I'd appreciate the help. This whole thing's gone to shit..." Wincing, he bent to pick the weapon up then called over to Lily. "Come on, we're getting out of here, Lily." He looked at where Lupis had been thrown. "You're coming with us," Axel snarled.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 03, 2014, 08:26:39 PM**

(Pelvanida)

Aaron looked around to make sure there were no cameras. He swallowed. The noise that

Marcus's assault had made was masked by the sound of laborers stacking crates and other goods.

"A bit more violent than I would have preferred but hey, it works. Now let's scram before someone sees us!"

As the duo made their way to the parking lot, they were unaware that the assault and theft had been caught on camera and some guards were already en route.

(Purifier Base)

Soren took a deep breath of the grimy Lanthae air as he burst through an emergency exit with his shotgun in hand.

Seeing as he had a little bit of time, he shoved a small piece of metal into the doorjamb. He smiled at his handiwork but the shouting and curses of the enraged Purifiers reminded him that he needed to keep running. A bullet ripping through the door narrowly missed him as he ran towards the front gate.

After a full-out sprint, he met the others in a deserted roadway. Bits of industrial detritus lay along the disused factory road. He bent over, hands on knees as he tried to catch his breath.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 04, 2014, 12:20:25 AM**

Lupis hit the wall with a *crack* and the sound of breaking bone rang out sharply in the air. He hit the ground in a pool of his own blood. He wasn't moving.

Lily darted to her feet in fear. The orange gecko had demonstrated extreme power but little loyalty, and for once parasite and host were in agreement that they wanted nothing to do with this creature. Hissing and baring their teeth in a show of force completely ruined by uncontrollable shivering and unmistakable panic, Lily skittered backwards into the furthest corner of the room to get as far away from the surprise guest as possible, retracted claws feebly bared in front of her face.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 04, 2014, 01:14:04 PM**

As they exited the tunnels, Tony could see much to his relief that the security detail usually posted outside wasn't present, most likely because they had been recalled to deal with the threats at the base. He moved out onto the street, and headed for his parked car and trailer. Reaching the Pierce-Arrow shortly after, Tony threw open the door to the trailer. "Axel!" he called to within. "Axel?" Looking around, the ferret could see the Travelodge trailer was completely empty. "What?" he asked, looking around. "Where are they? Why would they leave? Have... have we been betrayed?" he asked, glancing around the small space.

"Dammit! They aren't here! Neither of them!" he said, stepping out of the trailer now and slapping the side of it hard. "Dammit!" Leaning his back against the Travelodge, he closed his eyes, feeling tears welling up within them. Where were they? Anguish crossed his features as his arms pulled in close against his chest, the torment evident as the ferret tried to hold himself together. "Get Anne and Nairda into the trailer..." he ordered the others sadly. "Dammit..." he breathed again, attempting to get a grip on the situation. "Where the hell could they have gone to?"

The white gecko could tell the creature was irrationally afraid of him, but most non-sentient creatures probably would be, after seeing a display like that. After all, irrationality was why it was here in the first place, but of course the mutant gecko had no idea about that. Giving Lily a sad look now, he didn't approach her, but instead took a knee, bowed his head, and closed his eyes, making himself vulnerable to her.

"Apologies for the force I had to exert." he said softly. "I didn't kill him... and I'm still trying to figure out what I am... and why I'm here. I don't... understand this situation. I don't even know how I did what I did. I can only hope to learn as time passes. Forgive me. I let my emotions run away with me there, and it shouldn't have happened." he said, his tone even and calm, though there was sorrow in it as well. "You two should probably go." he said, not directly addressing Axel or Lily. "The wolf is in no condition to move. I can open the door for you if you want, but security will be swarming this place soon anyway, so I would make up my mind quickly if I were you." he stated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 04, 2014, 01:34:19 PM**

Marita pushed Nairda inside the trailer then helped marie and rose get anne in as well. ' calm yourself tony'' marita said coming up to him. ''Axel would do anything to protect lily, you know that, i know that. the guys in love with her. i dont think he betrayed us, in fact i think he'd rather die than do that.. just a girls hunch' she said to him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 04, 2014, 02:55:58 PM**

Marcus walked briskly back through the corridors leading away from the warehouse. Before they reached the main lobby, he saw a green sign above a door to their left - a fire exit. He gestured to Aaron and led them through it.

The pair stepped out into an alleyway, stretching along the side of Pelvanida. Marcus started to head off to the right, the direction that would bring them back to the parking lot. "Wish I could say that went easier than I expected, but..." Marcus' grumbling was interrupted by the sound of the fire exit door slamming open behind them, and footsteps sprinting up. "Hold it!" someone shouted.

Marcus stopped, a scowl plastered across his face, and turned slowly. Three security guards stood in the alley behind them, aiming taser pistols. "Put the toolbox on the floor, then kneel down and put your hands behind your head!" The one in the middle, a fox, commanded.

Marcus sighed then nodded at Aaron to do so. Kneeling down, he dropped the box on the floor then positioned his hands as instructed. The two guards on the left and right moved forwards, the one in the middle remaining where he was, training his taser on the two Purifiers. Marcus waited for the guard heading for him to get closer... then shot out a hand and grabbed his wrist. The guard squeezed the trigger, but Marcus forced his hand up and the electric dart sailed off somewhere above. In a fluid motion, he twisted the guard's wrist, feeling the *snap* as he broke it, then stood up and slammed an elbow into the nose of the man apprehending Aaron.

Turning his attention back to his guard, he grabbed him around the neck as a human shield and seized his taser pistol, bringing it up to aim at his hostage's eye. "Drop it!" Marcus shouted out to the fox. After a pause, the fox did as he was told, letting his pistol fall to the floor with bared teeth. Marcus shot him in the face with the taser, then snapped the neck of his hostage.

Axel stared down at Lupis for a few more moments, but the gecko was right - it didn't look like he was in any condition to move, and dragging him out was impossible. *We could have used him as the new host for whatever's in Lily...* "Goddamn it!" he spat, then turned around, leaving him to bleed. He crossed slowly to the door and ran his fingers along its edge. There was no way he'd be able to force it open. Axel turned to face the gecko uncertainly, blinking as blood ran from the gash on his head into his eye. "Alright, if... if you think you can get this open, do it," he said, wiping a hand across his face.

Passing the gecko, he headed over to the corner of the room where Lily was cowering, then knelt down to her level, grunting in pain. "Look, Lily... and.... and whatever else is in there," he started, feeling sick as he said it, "If we stay here, we *will* die. He's the only way we can get out of this room before they find us, so we're going to have to trust him. Okay?" He held out a bloodied hand to her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 04, 2014, 08:17:44 PM**

Lily was not convinced; for one, she had no reason to trust this creature, and the only two things she knew about it were it's powers and its hair-trigger temper. To be honest, he reminded her of Kojurro, and she couldn't bear to travel with somebody that reminded her of him. The parasite wasn't helping; having followed it homing instinct back to this room, it held an irrational sense of security having reached it, and was not keen to leave or relinquish control of Lily's body.

At that moment, the door blew off its hinges, and Exstasis roared into the room. "Lupis!" He gasped in horror. "I'm sorry, I got distracted!"

"That's...quite all right John..." Lupis got to his hands and knees wincing. Miraculously, his back appeared to be only sprained now, and in real time the crack in his skull was slowly sealing shut, the flowing blood stopping of its own accord. "Make up for your tardiness by teaching Mr. Speicher what happens when he passes up a free chance to walk away."

Exstasis revved his saw to life. "You!" He roared. "Don't you dare think of harming Lupis! You'll pay for this!" Firing the cannon strapped onto the front of the saw, he bounded forward and swung the spinning blade in a wide arc at his foe.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 04, 2014, 09:37:23 PM**

(Purifier Compound)

Soren looked around the industrial road. "Hey, where's Lily and Axel?"

He then noticed Anne passed out on the trailer's floor. "Is she...dead?"

A groan and some faint movement from the unconscious mare indicated she was still alive.

(Pelvanida)

The elbow merely stunned the man apprehending him. But that was all it took for Aaron to throw a vicious uppercut that knocked the man unconscious.

The German Shepherd shook his head. "Well, let's get out of here!"

He kicked the remaining guard in the head to silence him and then bolted for where they had parked the truck.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 04, 2014, 09:43:44 PM**

"And what if I don't believe you?" Tony asked, glaring at her now. "What if this was all just a big trap? They could be coming for us next!" he pushed off from the trailer now, the pain he was experiencing worse than any he'd felt in a long time. "This was a mistake coming here... I never should've gotten involved in this!" He walked around the front of the car and opened the driver side door. "I'll drop you all off at a safer part of the city, and after that..." He was trying hard not to completely break down here. "I'm going back to my family. I never should've left them!" he insisted, sliding behind the wheel and turning the key in the ignition, bringing the big V-12 to life. Good! It hadn't been fried! Revving up, he snapped the Pierce-Arrow's headlights on. "Well? Are you coming?" he asked Marita.

Tony noticed Soren approaching, and shook his head. "I don't know! I was hoping maybe you had run into them at some point, but I guess not. I'm all for getting out of here right now! I don't know where they are, or if Axel was even trustworthy to begin with!" the ferret added, fighting back the tears. "Anne's alive... that pulse did something to her though... her augmentation." he sighed.

The gecko was snapped back into awareness by the bursting of the door behind him. His eyes widened as Lupis began to get back up. Impossible! But he didn't have time to contemplate it. The rhino attacked him immediately, and it was all the gecko could do to avoid it, making use of agility as he flipped to the side, turning in the air and landing back on his feet. "I have no quarrel with you!" he insisted. "I reacted to save lives! I have no intention of taking any today!" he ground his teeth. He was defenseless, with no weapons. A quick scan of the room indicated there was nothing he could use to remedy that. The cables from the ceiling would only stretch so far after all... and there was nothing on the floor that was of any use.

Pursing his mouth shut, the gecko thought fast as he dodged another attack by spinning away. He could only keep this up for so long before he'd start to tire out... he could escape, but that would mean leaving these two, and for some reason... something in him told him not to do that... but not like he really had a choice. He was trapped in this room for the moment anyway, and his life was now being measured in seconds as opposed to years, and there was barely any time to think on his feet as opposed to just reacting now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 04, 2014, 10:08:07 PM**

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its a little too late to back out now Tony' Marita said coolly. ' its too late for any of us to back out now.we're all involved in this, for better or worse.. if both of them are dead in there, thats one thing. we mourn their loss and get out to fight another day. but if they are alive, thats another thing entirely. reverse the roles for a moment. suppose it was you in there and me behind the wheel of that car. do you really think i'd drive off and leave you to your fate? what kind of a friend does that?' she asked.
- we should go marita' Marie spoke up.' we barely got out of that place1" Yeah I dont want to spend any more time here' Rose agreed.'ni'd prefer a much safer pklace. one where folks arent try to take my head off..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 05, 2014, 08:50:46 AM**

Marcus snatched up the toolbox then followed close behind Aaron as they tore down the alleyway and into the parking lot. As they wound their way through the maze of cars, he looked back at the building and couldn't see anyone else following.

Aaron had the keys - when they reached the truck Marcus swung into the passenger seat and waited for him to start the engine, tossing the toolbox into the back.

Axel scrambled back as Exstasis barreled into the lab, the door flying across the room to slam into the wall. His eyes widened. *He's the one who broke into Soren's home... how is he still alive?!* A familiar voice from the side drew his attention back, and he gaped in horror as Lupis picked himself back up, the wolf's injuries healing before him. "What... what the hell..."

The mechanical scream as Exstasis started the saw snapped him out of his shock. The rhino seemed fixed on the gecko, so Axel scrambled to his feet and fired a shot at Lupis - but with his vision compromised, the bullet went wide and smashed into one of the empty tanks. The glass exploded, showering the lab with more green liquid.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 05, 2014, 01:40:29 PM**

Exstasis fired the cannon again, narrowly missing the geckos head. With no regard for tact he stomped forward, using offense as his preferred defense. With every step he swung the giant saw again.

The green liquid from the broken chambers stained the floor. The shot from the plasma cannon flew right at Lily. She screamed and tried to get out of the way, but slipped on the fluid...

And suddenly she was free. The plasma charge singed her upper body yet only collided with the wall above her. But it had fooled the parasite, who fled her body in horror.

Blinking and coming to her senses for the first time since Stracci manor, she staggered to her feet and stumbled towards Axel. She tried to call his name but a twisted squeak was all she could manage. *I have to get Axel to safety...*

The parasite, meanwhile, assaulted Lupis' mind, who reacted quickly and expelled it with his training. Shooting across the room, it attempted to implant and take over what it thought was the most powerful creature in the room...the orange gecko.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 05, 2014, 09:50:39 PM**

(Pelvanida Outskirts)

Aaron started the engine and drove off. He seamlessly merged with the dozens of other cars that milled about this ground level industrial zone.

"Well, let's hope everything goes better from now on." He noticed his pistol sitting in the center console. He chuckled. It was a miracle that his truck hadn't been broken into or a cop waiting by the vehicle to bust him.

(Purifier Base)

"Axel's my best friend. He would never do anything like that." Soren picked up his shotgun. "I'm going back in there and getting him out."

He then turned around and marched back into the base.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 06, 2014, 12:18:28 PM**

Tony looked down as Marita spoke to him, and he sighed. "But we don't know... anything." he said now, shaking his head. "I don't even... but yeah... you're right. He really did care about her. And... he is my friend..."

It was then Soren decided to grab a shotgun and head back for the base. But why? How did he even know Axel and Lily were in there? "Uh... what the hell are you doing?" Tony asked, stepping out of the car now and calling over its roof. "You don't even know if they're in there! Last we saw them they were in this trailer! What if they're somewhere on the streets?" but Soren was already heading down the road to the base it seemed. "What the hell is he doing? He's going to get himself killed!" Tony said, shaking his head and sitting back down in the driver's seat. "For all we know, Axel and Lily could be on their way to Timbuktu!"

Shaking his head, he thought about what they could do, but what *could* they do? Going back into that base was suicide at this point. It was on high alert, and the Purifiers would be swarming anyone who would come back in. He sat behind the wheel of his car, then got an idea. "I'm gonna start circling the blocks!" the ferret suggested. "Maybe Axel and Lily are outside, and in trouble. If they are, I'm gonna look for them. I advise you get in if you want the ride!" Tony said before throwing the car into gear.

The Pierce-Arrow moved forward, and Tony turned onto the street that went around the perimeter of the base, hoping to find some trace of his friends...

Cavenaugh was patching his shattered shoulder up. He was gonna need extensive care, but for right now, he was all about killing these intruders. He was supposed to be the gatekeeper after all, and Tony had completely humiliated him! Hearing a report over his radio, he grasped it with his good hand and brought it up to his mouth. "What?" he demanded.

"Sir, it looks like that human who was in the exoskeleton is coming back!"

Growling, the Gila monster picked up an MP7. "Urrgggh I'm so sick of these assholes! All right boys! Let's go kill ourselves some trespassers! Head him off!" he shouted, heading for Soren's reported entry point.

Deep down below in the bowels of the facility, the gecko narrowly dodged another shot aimed at his head, starting to pant as he tried to think of something. Suddenly, something entered his mind... foreign and invasive, and definitely not indigenous. "What?" he asked, but there was another presence in his mind as well... the parasite would quickly find that Vergil's (the gecko's) mind, despite being mostly empty, was in fact a very crowded place. There were things that simply didn't belong in there, and how they'd ended up there was a mystery.

Vergil had to focus though, and suddenly, an idea struck him. He had no idea where this inspiration came from, but time seemed to slow as he noticed Exstasis sloshing through the fluids on the floor. That was it! Leaping up onto the tube he'd broken out of, he yanked off one of the wires that led into its base. A single thought later, and Axel and Lily would've found themselves thrown off their feet and out of the puddle of fluids as they slid across the floor. It wasn't a hard landing, nor a particularly hard push, but it would save their lives.

Once the two were out of harm's way, the gecko tossed the now live-wire down into the fluids, and electric bolts were soon shooting all across Exstasis's body, frying every internal augment he had, and thoroughly cooking him as his flesh seared and even caught on fire in several places, his thick hide being no match for the amps coursing through it. As the rhino screamed and collapsed into a burning heap on the ground, Vergil gave him a sad look. "Forgive me... I'm so sorry..." He said softly, looking with regret down at the charred rhino. If only he'd listened to him... and where had he gotten that idea from, anyway?

Looking over to Axel and Lily now, Vergil nodded. "Are you two all right? I'm sorry I had to do that, but it was the only thing I could think of in that time." He halted his speech to see if that foreign presence was still there in his mind... it didn't feel like it... so perhaps it had fled?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 06, 2014, 12:32:48 PM**

marita Rose and Marie had jumped in the car before Tony had started it. all three of them were in the back seat. marie took a few moments to rest against the soft cushioning of the seat.' is this car armored? Marita asked how about the windows? are they bulletproof?" ' i'd imasgine the don put in some defenses for his cars, i mean hes not stupid' Rose said, wrapping her arms around herself as she lay back against the seat. marita tried to get her computer working again, but no luck.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 06, 2014, 01:06:16 PM**

"Where else would they be!?" Soren snapped as he paused mid stride. "This area's a deserted industrial zone!"

He then decided to route around the perimeter, hoping that the loading docks were unsecured and still open.

At this time, sirens rang out across the base as the Purifiers armed themselves and got ready for action.

Anne regained consciousness and rolled out of the couch she had been placed on. "Ugh, what happened? And why the fuck are my pants wet!?

She pulled herself to her feet and noticed a strong metallic taste in her mouth. Pouring herself a cup of water to rinse her mouth out, she examined her horn. No damage.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 06, 2014, 01:14:45 PM**

Axel groaned as he sat up, leaning on one arm to support his weight. He stared across at Exstasis' smoking corpse, then nodded at the gecko. "Don't... don't be sorry," he panted. "He had it coming. Thanks for not... letting us get fried."

He quickly looked over at Lily. "Are you..." Axel paused when he looked into her eyes and saw that they seemed different, clearer than at the Stracci mansion - more like the eyes of the girl he'd met only a few days ago. "Lily? Are you alright?" He got to his knees and clasped her shoulders, hardly daring to believe it. "Is it you? Just you?!"

Rhaegson's monitor flickered back to life, and he cracked his knuckles. He flicked the button for the announcer. "And we're back, ladies and gentlemen! I hope you all got some killing done..." One of the cameras situated on the outside picked up Soren as he wandered around the perimeter of the compound.

Exhaling, Rhaegson rested his chin on his hand as he realised it was the same man who'd sported the exoskeleton. *Least he's man enough to stop using his little toy...* "Looks like one of our friends is going on an easter egg hunt around the eastern side of our grounds. He's not in his suit anymore, so all of you take your balls outta your purses and kill him already." His voice echoed around the compound. As an afterthought, he added, "Why isn't he dead already?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 06, 2014, 02:17:59 PM**

Lily panted as she got to her knees. The sudden knockback was unexpected...but she couldn't help but smile when she saw Axel standing before her. If only she could reply and tell him how happy she was...

Then she saw the wolf sneaking up behind Axel and her eyes went wide with horror. Before she could even cry a warning Lupis struck, raking his claws across the left side of Axel's head, aiming for the ear. At the same time, his knee dug into the rat's back; had his own back not been partially sprained it could have snapped his spine. His remaining fist buried itself in Axel's neck.

At that moment, Lily jumped to help, but she suddenly felt the all-too-familiar sensation of sharing a body; the parasite, unable to find a conquerable opponent elsewhere in the room, had returned to whence it came. Gagging for a moment as it remembered how to breathe, Lily could only watch as Lupis kicked Axel to the ground a second time and bum-rushed her.

Grimly Lupis turned to Lily, socking her in the face and grabbing her by the leg as he dragged himself towards the door. With his other hand, he held the long-abandoned pistol and fired a salvo at the gecko, though his aim was hampered by his many injuries. As he staggered out of the room, he shot out the security camera in order to trigger the silent alarm that would alert all guards in the area to check the laboratory. "I've had quite enough of this..." he muttered, though only Lily could hear him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 06, 2014, 03:34:38 PM**

Tony nodded as he turned down a side street, keeping well enough away from the base's walls but close enough to see if anyone was moving about. "Yeah, of course All dad's cars are modified for great protection and resistance against attacks. We're relatively safe inside the Berline as is." he explained as he turned again, moving around the back of the Purifiers' base.

"With pleasure, boss!" Cavenaugh responded, and reached the loading docks, where Soren was heading. "Open up on him! Kill him!" Cavenaugh yelled, and soon, his team's fire was barking out, bullets whizzing in Soren's direction as the Gila monster lift his MP7 and painfully fired at the approaching human. His shoulder was protesting, but he quickly injected himself with a shot of an adrenaline booster, and felt the power pumping through his veins. "Yes... yes... YES! DIE HAHAHAHA!" he laughed maniacally, his pain subsiding as the drug coursed through him and sent him into overdrive.

His team were mostly covered behind large metal containers and crates, showing themselves sparingly as they popped out to fire bursts in Soren's direction.

Vergil was going to react, but suddenly, memories came flooding into his brain, threatening to overwhelm it as his mind was brought back... back...

He was standing on what looked like the bridge of a naval vessel. Big glass windows looked out onto the sea, and control stations with sickly green and orange lights abounded everywhere. In front of him, two creatures violently fought. One resembled him, but was different... this gecko had fiery red skin, and golden eyes, as well as feathers running completely down his backside. He was considerably bulkier than Vergil as well. Battling him was a lithe green female frilled lizard, and both appeared capable of the very talents Vergil possessed. Various bodies lay strewn around them. Some looked like the bridge crew, and others looked different entirely, wearing strange garb the gecko wasn't familiar with.

As the fight continued, explosions suddenly erupted all around him as the bridge began taking external fire from large caliber guns. The explosions began engulfing everything as the red gecko appeared to become very angry about something, screaming as the bridge became *awash in flames. The hull of the ship shook as torpedoes slammed into her side, her innards groaning in protest as they were torn apart... and as the explosions moved to envelop him, Vergil's mind went black...*

Blinking, Vergil came out of his reverie to see that Lupis was making off with Lily now. A shot was fired at him, but missed pretty badly. The gecko started concentrating, suddenly seeing something up above them as the silent alarm was triggered. Flipping off the platform he'd been standing on, he raced over to Axel now. "I don't know how I know this, but there's a car circling around the back of this base. It will pass a side entrance in approximately ten minutes. Your friends are in this car. If we hurry, we can make it! I know the way out... once again, I have no idea how, but if we don't hurry, security will be here soon! Can you walk?" he asked, helping the rat up as best he could.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 06, 2014, 04:12:50 PM**

Axel coughed, choking as he tried to suck in a breath. Under the fur where Lupis had punched his neck, an ugly purple bruise was forming. The left side of his face was in agony, and as the small gecko helped him up he caught a glimpse of his reflection in the glass of one of the tanks. Lupis' claws had sliced deeply into the side of his head, blood pouring from the wounds. His left ear had been cut apart, leaving behind a torn, ragged mess.

He brought his attention dully back to the gecko, his eyes glazed with shock... then let a whistling gasp out as he realised Lily wasn't there. "No! Lily... where..." he managed, pulling away and trying to rush towards the lab entrance. Axel's back screamed in protest and he stumbled, falling back to his knees. From somewhere further up, there came the faint sound of shouting, boots rushing towards their direction.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 06, 2014, 04:57:48 PM**

"You're in no condition to go after her. I'm sorry. We're getting out of here!" Vergil replied, steadying Axel as he gazed at the wall. "Hmmmm..." he could hear security heading their way, so narrowed his eyes, and soon, the wall in front of them was being crushed, and crumpled inward. On the other side of it, there was a service tube that led straight up to the street, and a convenient staircase nestled inside the tube. "It's the fastest way out: if we go out the main door, we'll run into security. Come on! I'll help you!" the gecko moved at Axel's pace, starting up the staircase to the street. He could hear the Purifiers behind them, shouting things like "they went this way! Hurry!"

Huffing, the gecko was surprisingly strong for his size, and while not able to outright carry Axel, he was at least able to support him and kind of drag him along every so many feet. Shots rang out behind them, but Vergil quickly moved them up to a landing where they were covered before ascending the next flight. "Come on! We're almost there!" he urged Axel, steadying him and holding him up as they began the final ascent. The guards were pretty much firing blindly at this point, and their shots hit the concrete of the stairwell on the landing below them, doing no harm.

Vergil focused intently on the service exit ahead at the top of the stairs, and the door flew off its hinges, its lock snapped like a piece of bread. Panting, the gecko hauled Axel out onto the street, and just in time, too. Headlights played over the both of them, and the sound of an analog engine could be heard rapidly approaching.

Tony saw the rat and some strange gecko like creature in his headlights, and he honked and excitedly exclaimed "It's Axel! He's alive! Yes!" Breaking the car to a halt with a slight squeak, Tony reach over and opened the passenger side door. "Get him in!" he ordered. "Where's Lily?"

"We don't have time." Vergil calmly informed him, pushing Axel into the middle seat as he slid onto the passenger side. "She's been taken, security is right behind us... I suggest you go and go fast."

'Uh... wait... who are you?" Tony asked, confused as Vergil shut the door.

"Vergil... Vergil Speicher... I'd press that accelerator if I were you." he said, still calm as Purifiers began pouring out the service entrance.

"There! In the car!" one yelled, and raised his weapon to begin firing.

"Oh, shit! Hold on!" Tony yelled, and slammed his footpaw down, the massive V-12 of the Pierce-Arrow roaring to life with a throaty rev that echoed off the abandoned buildings all around them like an exploding firework as the car rapidly took off. A few bullets hit the side, but they did no more than bounce off the beautiful exterior as the Pierce-Arrow accelerated like a drag-racer and zoomed down the street, the ferret quickly able to push the car up to over 100 mph, even with the trailer. It rocketed past the buildings at blurring speed, the Pierce-Arrow quite literally having the best V-12 out of any in existence from its competitors at Packard, Lincoln, and Cadillac. They left their pursuers behind in the literal dust, and while Tony slowed the car down to take the corners, he didn't lift much from the accelerator at all. He was in pure fight or flight mode now... and flight had taken over.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 06, 2014, 05:18:05 PM**

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marita he;ld Axel as the car raced away from the camp. she pulled a kany from the pocket in her dress and held it against the side of axels face. ' his ear was going to have to be stitched back together, but nothing a competent surgeon couldnt tackle in 15 minutes. the hankerchief soon became stained with axel's blood..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 06, 2014, 05:18:07 PM**

Soren cursed as a bullet nicked his head. There were just too many Purifiers for him to fight. He cursed himself for being so rash.

The metal dumpster he was using for cover wouldn't hold forever. In desperation, he shot a large tank over the loading dock, praying it was filled with something flammable or toxic. Or at the least, it was part of the factory's steam system.

He was in luck, it was the steam drum for the factory's plumbing. As hot steam roared out of the hole, he quickly bolted for the road, hoping that the huge white cloud covered his escape. Nevertheless, several of the guards fired through the cloud. Most of the shots went wide, but one grazed his ear.

Hopefully, Tony and the others had not left him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 06, 2014, 05:39:22 PM**

Lupis dragged Lily down the corridor, repeatedly kicking her in the face to prevent her from coming to her senses in time to use her powers or even get a grip what was happening.

"Sir!" yelled one of a pair of guards rushing his way.

"Get to the lab!" Lupis snapped, "Figure out what scientists are on the clock and get them over here! Tell them its an 808, they'll know what to do!"

"Sir, don't you need help with-?"

"Now, goddammit! I don't have time to explain!" Lupis knew that in an unshielded section like this hallway, the alien conscience needed only a split second to catch its senses and make another escape. With the puncturing of the shielded laboratory, he was the only thing stopping them from losing the beast they'd fought so hard to capture.

Lily meanwhile, who was unable to even shield her face as it skidded along the floor, was sobbing openly as Lupis kicked her broken nose over and over. Various debris littering the ground was lacerating her side as she slid on top of it, leaving a trail of her own blood staining the laminated tiles.

As the guards double-timed it, Lupis flung open the door to a regular laboratory and threw Lily onto the table. Flicking all the lights off and slamming the door shut in order to startle her yet again, it had the side effect of hiding the disgust on his face from what he was about to do. But while studying the creature in its natural body, its brain waves seemed to associate a particular human emotion with mortal danger, and the best way to keep it contained was to trap it in his own mind until the scientists could come with the sedation...

Strapping her onto the experimenting table, Lupis jammed two fingers between her legs. Lily howled in pain and thrashed wildly. He rammed her most sensitive orifice again, and again. As he suspected would happen, he soon felt the parasite probing his mind, attempting to warn its host of what was happening to her. He allowed it. For as long as he kept this up, it wouldn't think to flee the premises entirely.

But it might be best to kill her after this... he thought grimly. *It would be more merciful than letting her live...*

Below him, Lily was thinking same thing.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 07, 2014, 01:51:58 AM**

Axel jerked as Marita held the handkerchief against his head, breath hissing between his teeth. The pain wrenched his attention back to the situation. He looked around at the others in the car desperately. "Lupis, he... he jumped us... he's got her, he's got Lily! Oh *god*..." Axel moaned, his voice breaking. He suddenly punched the dashboard. "*Goddammit!*"

In his distressed state, he didn't notice that Soren wasn't with them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 07:29:12 AM**

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we'll get her back Axel' Marita said. ' the attack.. er didnt work.. at all. so we'll have to regroup lick our wounds and try a different approach.. you need to hold still so i can stop the bleeding. you;re going to have dozens of stitches just on this ear alone, and thats not including the gash above your eye..figure close to 100 in all..as a conservative estimate. marie was tryinmg to help hol;d Axel down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 07, 2014, 08:30:20 AM**

Cavenaugh cursed as the steam enveloped much of his team. Pretty lucky shot to pull off with just a shotgun! "Boss! That human's beating a retreat! Want us to pursue? I think he's on foot!" the Gila monster radioed in.

Another report reached Cavenaugh that on the opposite side of the base, two intruders had escaped in some kind of vintage car, but the car had roared on out of there at high speed, and security hadn't had time to scramble out their own vehicles in pursuit. "Well whatever! They're gone is the important thing!" Cavenaugh radioed to the team on the other side of the compound. They were at least dispatching some patrol vehicles to scour the surrounding area for the car, so that would take care of that.

Tony didn't slow the Pierce-Arrow yet, just in case they were being pursued. It didn't look like it, but he wasn't taking any chances; he was ensuring the car lived up to its name. The moment he slowed the car down, he knew he risked being overtaken by potential pursuers. The Purifiers weren't stupid... they'd be sending out vehicles after all; it was standard protocol. They needed to put some distance between themselves and the base before they could relax.

It was thus that Tony brought the Pierce-Arrow onto the highway, and eased off the gas just a tad, bringing the car back down to its more comfortable cruising speed of 80 mph. "OK... we'll get to the city... find a safer part of town, and regroup." he said, sighing with a modicum of relief. He knew they weren't out of the woods yet, and every second he expected to glance out the side-view mirrors and see Purifier vehicles behind him. His heart was still racing, and he turned to look at Axel as he squirmed, then punched the dashboard. "Hey!" the ferret exclaimed. "Watch it! The interior isn't armored, after all! But... I'm glad you're alive." the ferret concluded gratefully. "I'm sorry that they got Lily... what happened, anyway? Why didn't you stay in the trailer? Look we just need to calm down, OK? And yes, stop moving; let them look you over." Tony advised. "We have a med kit in the trailer, but I can't stop right now. You're gonna have to wait till we get back to Lanthae proper. I figure we could head to Soho or something, it's much safer. Anyway... what happened? Who's... that guy?" he asked, looking at Vergil briefly.

"I can't fully answer your question, I'm afraid. But I'll let the rat explain first. His story's longer, after all." Vergil replied, looking out the window at the bright city lights as they approached the city center.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 02:26:12 PM**

we'll just have to use hankerchiefs for now' marita said , continuing to hold the blood-soaked hanky against Axel's head.' marie! got any hankys or tissues/" marie dug into her purse, and fully pulled out a small box of tissues ' these are usually for blowing my nose.. but its better than nothing..' she admitted. marita took a handful of tissues and put them uin place of her hanky which was thoroughly saturated with blood. at least the bleeding was slowing down..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 07, 2014, 03:13:01 PM**

Rhaegson grimaced. "No, I want you to throw him a party. I'm thinking cake and balloons," he said, his voice pure sarcasm. "Of course I want you to kill the son of a bitch! Make it quick, we don't want to draw any more attention that we have already." He sighed and rubbed his jaw. "But if he gets to the main road, forget about him. I don't want a shootout on the highway."

Axel fought to control his breathing. "It... we were doing what we said we'd do, just waiting in the trailer when all this shooting started. Lily got scared and ran out... right into the Purifier's place. I tried to catch up with her but I was too slow, I... I screwed up..." He looked at the others in the car helplessly. "Why was there shooting? I thought we were meant to do this *quietly*?!" As Tony overtook a car in front, the vehicle jolted slightly and Marita's hand pressed painfully against his ear. Axel cried out, and his elbow knocked into Marie.

He straightened back up in the seat. "Sorry... I'm sorry," he apologised to Marie, then carried on. "I managed to follow her in and found her in some kind of... a lab, or something. At the end there was... jesus, I don't what the hell it was. A monster in a glass tank. Lupis found us there. He told me that monster's mind had managed to get inside Lily - that's why she's...

she's changing." He sucked in a breath. "Lupis attacked us. This..." Axel looked down at the Gecko. "...Vergil was in one of the other tanks. He broke out and helped us but Lupis managed to get away with Lily. I only got away because of Vergil."

Axel's hands tightened into fists, a faint *whirring* coming from them. He gritted his teeth and nodded at Marita. "I'm going to get her back. I don't know what the hell they're going to do with her, but they need her alive, at least for the moment. Gotta just... just think of a new plan..." Axel grimaced. "I know this all went to shit, so if I'm on my own I'll... I'll understand."

As he slowly looked around the car, he noticed Soren wasn't there. "Where's Soren? He in the trailer?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 03:25:39 PM**

first things first, you need to get patched up' Marita said kindly. ' you're not saving anyone with your ear in pieces and a huge gash over one eye.. we'll help you get lily back, but we need to be much smarter about it.' marie gave Axel a few tissues to wipe his eyes and hold against the gash over his left eye ' no need to apologize Axel. we know you mean well' she said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 07, 2014, 07:38:20 PM**

"Well the plan fell apart the moment Soren jumped the gun and busted in through the front door. I thought we could use it as a distraction, but it didn't work out that way, because noisy *never* works out that way." Tony said with some disgust. He listened to Axel's explanation, and groaned. "Ugh... so that's what happened? Damn... I'm sorry... and hey! No! You aren't on your own in this! Hell no!" the ferret shook his head. "We're in this together, remember? You aren't fighting this fight alone! We'll get her back! We will!" Tony said with determination, glad he finally understood the mystery behind Lily North. Turns out Lupis had been all bullshit after all.

He heard about Soren being mentioned, and Tony suddenly realized they'd left without him. "Oh... shit! You're right! I wasn't really thinking if we had everyone back when they were shooting at us! Well... then again he *did* blow me off and try and run back into the base with nothing but a shotgun to save you." Tony couldn't help but laugh here, but realized it was probably a serious situation, so he quickly stifled it. "I knew such a plan was suicide, but... like I said, he wouldn't listen to me. And my phone's fried so... I can't exactly call him." Tony pointed out. "Chances are he's dead but... if he's alive... ugh! Why did he go off like that?" Tony snapped in frustration, slapping his paw against the steering wheel.

"So what's your story, anyway?" he asked Vergil now, trying to work things out in his head.

"Not much to tell, as said. I don't know how I ended up in that tank, who I am aside from my name, or how I acquired these... powers." Vergil stated, not demonstrating right now. "I must've been a naval officer at some point though... I have a distinct memory of witnessing a fight aboard the bridge of some ship. Wish I knew more than that." he sighed.

"So you basically have no memories at all?" Tony asked, incredulous.

"Barely, yes." Vergil confirmed with a murmur.

Tony let out a long exhale as he exited into the Soho district of Lanthae, and bright lights once again flooded the car's interior as there was neon everywhere. "So we're missing two of our own... our mission failed... Lupis alive... and we've gained an amnesiac... what are you, anyway?" he asked Vergil.

"A mutant, apparently. I've apparently seen another one of my kind in the past, but other than that, I can't tell you just what I am, or whether they did this to me to make me look this way."

he shrugged.

Tony pulled over into a parking spot on the street, and was thankful they were away from all that mess. This was a much safer area of town, where the rich played day and night. "OK... let's get that med kit out of the trailer and get you at least patched up." Tony said softly, shutting the engine down and exiting the Pierce-Arrow to head for the trailer. Opening the door, he noticed Anne was up and moving about. "Oh, hey Anne! Glad to see you're awake! We had to get you out of there really quick, but we did it!" Foraging around in one of the cabinets, the ferret retrieved the med kit, and hopped out of the trailer, holding it out for Marita to take. "You seemed like you knew what you were doing, so knock yourself out!" he suggested, resting his back against the side of the Berline and folding his arms across his chest, looking out both ways at the traffic on the street. "We gotta regroup..." he said now. "See if Soren's still alive... and get Lily back." he commented softly to no one in particular as he studied the lively city.

He had parked in front of one of his favorite malls, knowing it was a safe place to lie low until they could figure out where to go from here.

"Yeah, yeah!" Cavenaugh muttered back, a bit pissed his boss was such an ingrate, but oh well. Time to get this show on the road! "Bring out the APC!" he ordered, and within a minute or two, the armored vehicle was rolling towards the loading dock's gate. "You better run little man!" Cavenaugh shouted after Soren, and climbed aboard as the APC rumbled off and onto the street Soren was retreating down. Cavenaugh was mindful of his orders... only pursue as far as the highway... yeah, yeah. Plenty of road until then.

"Open fire! Let's shred this guy!" Cavenaugh ordered, and the big .50 cals on top of the APC opened up now, spraying bullets in Soren's direction, though the human had gotten a head start, so he was a bit of a ways ahead of them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 08:19:49 PM**

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once we patch up axel here we head back to pick up soren.. yes its dangerous, but heyy, we dont leave anyone behind.. use my phone and call him' marita said handuing it to Tony.. then pulling out the gauze and padding in the first aid kit. this wasnt an ordinary first aid kit ether, it was a mini surgery kit. there was stitches and thread and sterile utensils ' Remind me to thank your dad' marita said to tony as she got out the stitches and thread. ' now grit your teeth Axel because we dont have much sedative, and i'm going to be sewing your ear back together. it will have to do until we can get you to a hospital' she said. marita began the slow bloody process of repairing axel's ear.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 07, 2014, 08:25:57 PM**

"I think you forgot." Tony said, pushing Marita's phone away. "You were right next to me when that pulse went off. Your phone's just as fried as mine is." the ferret stated. "I'm gonna have to buy a burner one for now I guess." he said, looking up at the mall. "I bet I could find one in there." he pointed.

He listened to her comment, but shook his head. "I'm not going back on a hunch. We need to know he's alive. Right now that base is on high alert. Going back... we all die. I'll think of something." he sighed. "As said, might go inside the mall... see about getting a phone. Give my dad a call... have him send me one... I dunno. Let's get Axel taken care of first." he said. "We aren't going anywhere if he risks reopening his wounds."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 08:36:13 PM**

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good point' marita said. i'm going to buy new phones for rose and marie as well' no, you dont have to do that' marie protested 'i insist' marita said as she sewed the lower strip of axels ear together and started sewing the upper part back in place. ' besides we need to get some thing while we're out anyway..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 07, 2014, 09:01:27 PM**

Axel ground his teeth as the needle pulled the ragged strips of his ear together. "I don't have time to go to a hospital. *Lily* doesn't have time. We need to come up with a plan, get ready, and act."

He stared down at the floor. "If we're going to go back, we need firepower. Guns. I didn't see as much of the fighting as you guys, but I could tell they were stocked up. They already have the numbers on us, the least we can do is start to level the playing field in that area." Axel paused and moved his head slightly, glancing at Tony. "Unless we can make up for the numbers too... Tony, I know your dad said he didn't want to get his people involved in a fight with the Purifiers, but what about if he knew how much danger you'd be in?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 09:10:27 PM**

'I'm not a doctor Axel' Marita said firmly. ' i'm doing the best I can, but you need to let your wounds heal. going off half-cocked will only get us killed. right now you are no shape to be going after Lily. we have to be smart about this..." he said as she stitched his upper ear back to the rest of his ear, all things considered, his ear didnt look THAT bad, but the only way to guarantee his ear was truly fixed was at a hospital.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 07, 2014, 09:51:57 PM**

Soren flicked some blood out of his eyes as he made his way to an access road.

He then felt the ground rumble. "Fuck me, what now!?" It was then he heard the distant chatter of .50 caliber machine guns - and they were coming closer.

He looked around for a car. It was then he noticed a 2026 Fisker Karma parked on the side of the road next to an abandoned electronics factory. The fact that it was rocking gave a pretty good hint as to what the occupants were up to.

He dashed for the car and noticed that a Ferret and a Wolverine were having sex in the passenger's side.

He tried the door. It was locked and the couple were oblivious to him. Heart pounding, he smashed the driver's window with the butt of his shotgun.

"Get the fuck out now!" he ordered, leveling his shotgun at the two.

The couple disentagled themselves and raised their arms up as they tumbled out the passenger's side.

"Give me the keys! Now!" The Ferret tossed him the keys, which he pocketed.

He pointed to the direction which he had previously run. "Run that way! If you look back, I'll fucking kill you!"

The couple obeyed and ran. The Human stashed the shotgun on the passenger's side as he reached over and closed the door. He started the motor and sped down the access road, hoping that he was heading towards a highway.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 07, 2014, 10:23:10 PM**

Tony couldn't help but smile at Axel now. "Heheh... I don't think my dad works that way, Axel. He's testing me... he wants to see if I can do this on my own. But sure... it wouldn't hurt to ask... but I'm 90% certain I know what his answer's going to be." He pushed off from the car now, and looked up at the large shopping mall. "Anyway... I'm gonna go shopping for a phone, and grab a bit to eat. I'm starving. Anyone up to joining me?" he asked. "We all need new phones after all."

Vergil slid out of the car, narrowing his eyes at the shopping center. "I guess... it couldn't hurt to see what this world is like." he said hesitantly.

"Don't worry... you won't stick out that much... even with your current disposition." Tony smirked.

Soren outran his pursuers, who halted once he started getting close to a highway. Screeching to a halt, the APC withdrew to the base without further incident.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 10:29:42 PM**

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marita finished stitching up Axels Ear and cut over his left eye. then wrapped the ear in gauze and covered the cut above the eye with a large bandage. ' ok. just let the ear heal and dont put your paws anywhere near your face for awhile' marita said, wiping her paws with a number of tissues from maries tissue box. rose gathered up the bloody hankerchief and bloodies tissues, got out of the car and threw them away in a nearby garbage." we';re all coming with you' Rose said to Tony, as she stretched for a few seconds. a row of stairs led down into a food court a kioask that listed all the stores and locations- along with a ' You are HeRe" marker. was to their right. ' so where to first?' marie asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 07, 2014, 10:51:15 PM**

(Lanthae Highways)

Soren sighed as he wiped his forehead. He had just committed a crime. His heart pounded as he merged onto an elevated highway and continued driving with the flow of traffic.

He silently prayed that the cops were too busy dealing with other things as he had nowhere enough creds to bribe a cop and a failed bribe was worse than no bribe at all.

He then browsed through the car's stored memory. On a whim, he pressed Lanthae Heights Mall. He leaned back as the car's autopilot took over.

(Lanthae Heights Mall)

Anne nodded as she followed the group. She was uncharacteristically wearing a rather sensual looking orange cocktail dress. Granted, it was something that she had found in the trailer but was better than the stained pants she previously had on. She sent a mental command to her horn to see if she could eavesdrop on any interesting radio waves.

She gasped as nothing happened. "Great, I need to go see a internal cyberneticist. My implant's fried!"

Her stomach growled. "On second thought, let's eat first." She looked at the map. "Anyone for takeout noodles?" The mare pointed to a small takeout place on the map labeled "Mizuho Noodles".

All around her, various well-to-do people milled about, flaunting jewelry or the latest in personal electronics and cybernetics.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2014, 11:14:30 PM**

I could do for a pizza' Rose said pointing to a a "Mega Pizza' which was on this level. ' pepperoni sounds good ' marie said ' hopefully i have enough credits for it.. ' i got it girls marita said..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 08, 2014, 04:10:20 AM**

Axel paused, then nudged Tony on the shoulder. "I'll catch up with you." Limping back to the trailer, he climbed up and made his way over to the notepad that lay on the table. He swallowed as he looked down at the message Lily had written for him before, then gently tore it out and picked up the pencil. He scribbled out a new message, then tore that page out too.

Soren - in shopping center. Looking for new phones. Find us.

Stepping out of the trailer and closing the door, he slipped the paper under the windscreen wiper of the car. It was a long shot, but if Soren was still alive and had managed to escape, the vehicle was distinctive enough to be easily spotted across the car park. He exhaled, praying that his friend was okay but suspecting that he'd never see him again, then made to catch up with the rest of the group. Getting something to eat was the last thing on his mind, but he knew they needed to clear their heads and refocus.

Axel approached Tony and Vergil and looked down at the gecko. *With all the damage he can do, we're going to need him with us...* "So you... you were just kept in that lab?" He looked at Tony. "You never knew anything about him?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 08, 2014, 09:21:40 AM**

Tony saw Anne exit the trailer, and had to admit... with that dress on, she didn't look half-bad. He never really thought he'd go for equines, but she was looking pretty good in that dress. Damn...

Smiling, he turned and led the way into the mall, looking at the directory and nodding at their suggestions. "Yeah... I'm gonna get some Indian myself... chicken makhani's one of my faves, after all." the ferret said, licking his lips as he thought about it.

Vergil nodded at Axel's question. "Yes... I was in that tube... I don't know for how long, or where I came from before that... but the resonance of that pulse woke me up. I think they may be responsible for why I look the way I do." he stated, shaking his head. "I'm too bizarre to be natural."

"Nope." Tony shook his head. "That room was for the higher-ups and science guys only... constantly sealed, and not for the likes of a newbie like me." he commented in regards to Axel's question. "I never knew they had... live subjects in there." Tony said. "If I had... I guess solving Lily's mystery would've been easier."

They had descended into the food court now via a moving walkway, and were surrounded by food stands everywhere for those customers who couldn't be bothered to sit down for a two-hour meal. "Oh... right." Tony said now, remembering something. He dug around in his pocket for his wallet, and pulled out some credits. "You uh... probably don't have a lot of creds on you right now... so here." he offered a few to Anne, and gave a few to Vergil as well. "You don't have to worry about paying me back." he said sincerely. "It's the least I can do."

Looking at the Indian place, Tony went over, placed his order, and found a table that was big enough for the others. He poured the chicken makhani over his rice, and let it cool off for a only a few seconds before eagerly digging in.

Vergil was a bit slower, wandering around and looking at all the choices. He didn't even know what he liked in terms of food, so finally settled on some Vietnamese pho, a rice noodle soup. One dish sounded as exotic as the next to him, so he figured why not? Sitting down quietly, the white gecko began sampling the dish, finding it spicy but rather delicious at the same time.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 08, 2014, 09:59:38 AM**

marita marie and rose ordered a large cheese and a small pepperoni pizza from mega pizza. the total cost was 170 credits, including sodas and sauces but even the small size was big. ythe girls brought the food over to tony table and sat down together. rose gratefully wolfed down a slice of the pepperoni while marie and marita tackled a slice of the cheese pizza. ' want some? marita offered tony and the other, each slice is like a foot long and there's 24 slices."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 08, 2014, 04:05:53 PM**

Axel started to walk over to the others, then stopped when he saw the looks he was getting. He glanced down at his torn shirt and grimaced. Axel could see there was a cheap clothing store just outside the food court. Signalling to the others that he'd be back, the rat made his way over, looking for something to hide his bedraggled appearance. Grabbing the cheapest thing he could see, a plain grey hoodie, he handed over the credits and noticed the alarmed look the cashier was giving him. "I, ah... fell off my bike," he explained weakly. The cashier cocked an eyebrow.

Leaving the shop, he pulled it on and zipped up the front to hide the bloodied shirt, then headed back to the group. Sliding into a seat at their table, Axel hunched over the surface and drummed his fingers, trying to think what their next move should be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 08, 2014, 05:07:09 PM**

Rose grabbed a plate and picked up a slice of peppwroni pizza and slid it to Axel " eat that. you must be starving' she said kindly.. ' theres plenty more pizza.' ;' there certainly werent lying when they called the place 'MegaPizza' marie said finishing her slice and taking another.' once you guys are done eating. we'll box up the leftover pizzas and go get our new phones..' marita said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 08, 2014, 05:09:26 PM**

"Oh thanks." Tony said, smiling at Marita's offer. "I think I'm good at the moment though... but let's save that for the ice box in the trailer. Can always heat it up and have it later, heheh." he suggested. Noticing Axel wasn't eating and instead seemed to be lost in thought, the ferret looked over at him.

"Aren't you gonna have anything?" he inquired. "I can treat you if you don't have any credits." the mustelid offered. "We don't know when we'll eat again, so maybe you should get this out of the way while we're stopped."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 08, 2014, 06:29:39 PM**

Axel blinked and looked up from the table. The ferret had a point... he didn't know the next time he'd get a chance to eat, and if he was going to be in any state to help Lily, he had to keep his strength up. He gave Tony a small smile. "Yeah, you're right," he said, accepting the plate from Marita. "Thanks."

Axel took a bite, not really tasting it. He looked around at the others. "What happened to all your phones?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 08, 2014, 06:49:49 PM**

that pulse was a electromagnetic pulse. knocked out anything like phones and computers. fortunately i always backup my computers' maritas said ' but phones.. they're shot..' she said ' so we'll have to buy new ones' marita saiod pulling out the memory card from her phone..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 09, 2014, 02:22:07 PM**

"The pulse *also* fried all augments." Tony stated, waving his fork a bit. "Meaning Nairda's out cold, and Anne must've only just recently woken up." Thinking back on what Axel had said, Tony gulped down some more chicken.

"One thing you mentioned Lupis having said has got me thinking." Tony added thoughtfully. "All we have to do to save Lily is try to kill her, and that'll force the consciousness out of her, right? But it'll flee to another host so... who's going to be the host?" he asked now, looking around. "We can exactly force this into someone innocent, after all. I don't remember if you said this, but is there a way to force it back into its own body without it moving into anyone around it? I was a bit more focused on the road at the time when we were driving to the mall." Standing up as he finished his meal, the ferret stretched out, pulling his arms up above his head and uncurling his tail behind him. "I guess we'll buy some phones and talk on the way to doing so."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2014, 02:45:07 PM**

marita finished her slice and packed away the leftover pepperoni and cheese pizzas. 'alright everyone lets go get those phones' she said as she carried the pizza boxes. 'i dont think its as simple as trying to kill her tony, we'd need a host ready to replace Lily. easier said than done imo."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 09, 2014, 07:05:08 PM**

Axel took a last bite of his pizza slice and let it drop back on the plate, then stood up, glad to be moving. "I don't know," he said, keeping pace with Tony. "From what I could tell, this thing inside her is like some kind of wild animal backed into a corner. You can't tell what it's going to do." He shook his head. "Lupis said something about him being able to resist it and... I think he was probably telling the truth. If it wasn't for that, we could have forced *him* to do it and hope it went into that bastard, but..." Axel sighed. "We could try and force it back into its own body but whoever did that would be in danger of the thing just going into them. Forcing Lupis to do *that* somehow would be the best case scenario, but I don't know how we could get him to do it... or even if getting close to him again is a good idea," he said, indicating his face. "We'll just... We'll deal with that when the time comes," Axel exhaled quietly, already knowing what he'd do if it came to it.

The group took the walkway up out of the food court, and in the distance a shop sign poked out above the heads of the shoppers milling around, screaming the name **Cyber Cell** in bright neon blue. As they started to make their way over, a huge, round man eating a hotdog barged his way through them. "Watch it, morons!" the behemoth yelled over his shoulder.

Axel looked down at Vergil. "Here's where your weird superhero powers could come in useful," he said lightly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2014, 08:21:38 PM**

Emilena breathed under her breath, feasting her eyes on the scared young woman whose hand was trapped by her meaty fist.

"If you don't scream, I'll kill you afterward *rather than before..." she whispered throatily into her prey's ear. She could already feel herself getting hard in anticipation.*

As Lily's cries were muffled in Emilena's ham-sized palm, they were interrupted by someone leaping onto Emilena's back and whacking her in both temples simultaneously.

Sparks erupting in her vision, she threw the intruder over her back and stumbled. Before she could even get a good look at the scrawny white rat, pain erupted through her abdomen as Lily blasted her at point blank with her own shotgun.

Emilena was abruptly in a white-walled laboratory, standing at attention by the door. A heavy shotgun, much more advanced and high-tech than the last one, rested on her shoulder and in the butt of her hand.

"This'll only be a minute, John," her partner Lupis said apologetically.

"Don't worry about it," she smiled. "Always happy to help you out."

"If only these blasted scientists held a similar attitude..." Lupis muttered acidly. Without further ado he marched over to a group of whitecoats staring at clipboards in front of an unsettling creature in a tank.

Emilena didn't like to look at it; it looked like it was asleep or dead, but even from here she could tell its muscles were primed. It seemed to be masking incredible agitation.

Emilena shuddered and looked away. At least she was safely over here, not being involved. Lupis always handled the unknown better than she did.

But something in her mind wouldn't stop thinking about that creature. She tried to focus on Lupis, who was aggressively demanding information on the security features of the room. She liked to look at Lupis when he worked, it calmed her. But right now her thoughts of him kept getting pushed aside.

Maybe I can convince him to relax tonight with some beer, *she thought, idly swiping her security card to open the laboratory door.* He needs some stress relief, he hasn't spent a night in our bed for over a week...

Abruptly Lupis snapped his gaze over to her with a speed that made her jump. "John. What are you doing?"

Emilena looked with surprise at the security card in her hand. "I--? I don't know? I was just..."

"Close the door. Now!" Lupis snapped.

Emilena made to shut the door, but hesitated. The thought of the creature made her pause. Why couldn't she stop picturing it?

Lupis was by her side in the blink of an eye. Faster then the human eye could track, he made a swipe for her security card, but she flipped it into her sleeve. He drew his own, but she moved to block him.

"Get that door shut!" Lupis yelled at the scientists, but they were frozen with fear.

"Lupis...what's happening?" Emilena asked, worry crossing her face. She couldn't control her body.

"It's in your head!" Lupis said urgently. "You've got to fight it! Don't let it control you!"

"Oh, god..." Emilena cocked her shotgun and fired it at the tank housing the creature. As the scientists ran for cover, the body tumbled to the floor. "Lupis! Make it stop!"

Emilena tried to run, but Lupis tripped her and slid her into a wall. Swiping his security card, he closed the laboratory door. "Activate the hazard frequency!" he snapped at the scientists. Only one found the courage to move, but he soon lost it when Emilena fired clumsily at him. Her head was spinning. Where was another way out?

She and Lupis spotted her ticket to salvation at the same time; the computer terminal. Leading through that wall were the wires connecting the computer to the network. Integrity will be weakest there.

Lupis blocked her. "Fight it John!" he snapped again. "You're a government agent you fucking idiot!"

She smacked Lupis upside the head with a ham-sized left hook. "I--I'm not you Lupis!" she cried. "You were always--"

A gunshot cracked out; Lupis had assumed a crouching stance and shot her in the thigh. The gun quavered slightly and aimed at her other thigh, a crippling blow. But the hesitation gave her the chance she needed. Not even understanding how, she sent Lupis flying away from her, hitting the wall with a sickening thud.

As the scientists cowered in the corner, she ripped the computer from the wall and found the origin of the cord. Outside, she heard guards attempting to batter down the door.

"Stop!" Lupis shouted into his radio, staggering to his feet and stumbling forward. "Don't break down the door! That's an order!"

He shot her again. And again. She staggered, but the intruder in her mind gave her the strength to keep standing. Raising her fist, she punched the wall repeatedly until her bloodied and broken fist had cracked it.

She felt hot fangs sink into her neck; Lupis was attempting to sever her spine. He knew where the weakest and most sensitive part of her neck was...

Emilena collapsed to the ground obligingly. Her breathing didn't come easily. But it *was gone, she could tell. It had abandoned her. "Lupey..." she whispered weakly.*

Lupis surveyed the extensive damage to her body with intense alarm. "You worthless fucks get *me a medical kit or I swear to god I'll kill you where you're cowering!" he shouted at the scientists, who collectively found the sudden motivation to follow orders.*

Emilena could feel it; this was the fight she couldn't win. "You were always better than me, Lupey..." she saw blackness cloud over her vision. "...better...at hiding your thoughts..."

"Don't talk," he commanded sternly. But her last sight was his worried face. He was crying. He never cried...

She tried to raise her arms, to touch him, but it was too late. At least she tried...

Abruptly Emilena woke up in a cold sweat. Breathing heavily, she staggered out of bed, mind reeling. In the bathroom she splashed cold water on her face, but no amount of shock could wipe the dozens of deaths she'd just experienced from her memory.

She smelled the unmistakable aroma of bacon and eggs coming from the kitchen, but she locked her bedroom door instead and sat silently on the edge of the bed. She needed to think about everything she'd just seen, digest it. She needed it all to make sense...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 09, 2014, 10:10:39 PM**

Vergil merely looked up at Axel now as he suggested he do something as mundane as trip up the large man using his... powers. He frowned here. "To use my powers for something so petty and self-centered... no... it wouldn't be right." he shook his head here. "Ugh... I don't even know why I feel that way... I just do." he sighed, shrugging. "Where did this honor come from? I-I remember... I remember..." He closed his eyes, stopping in his tracks as he tried to focus, the bustle and din of the shoppers around him making it difficult. "Being a soldier... of some sort. I don't think it was too long ago." he said, reopening his eyes and moving to catch up with the group. "For some reason, I feel I've been told by someone that my powers make me no better or worse than anyone else... and they're not something to use lightly like that."

"Odd.. you think it was your military training?" Tony asked. "I can't imagine they'd teach something like that after all, given how the previous wars have gone." he shook his head here, entering the shop. Walking up to one of the many kiosks, the ferret selected the model he wanted, scanned his card, then headed to the front desk to pick it up. The system was very efficient, and Tony was even able to choose his old number to be transferred to this new phone, along with all of his previous data. Picking up his new phone from the guy at the front desk a few moments later, the ferret took it out of the box and inspected it after he turned it on.

"OK... well looks good. Good thing my previous phone was still under warranty; I only had to pay a replacement fee. That's all sorted. Guess I'll call my dad to give him an update, and we can get out of here. Any thoughts on where to go? I highly doubt you want to just approach the Purifier Base again without a more solid plan." Tony commented.

Vergil marveled at this rather speedy technology at how one could order a phone. He didn't pick one up for himself because he didn't see the need, nor have the funds. He thought about what Tony had said... about how previous wars wouldn't have fostered such a mentality as he suggested. They must have been rather brutal conflicts, in that case. Closing his eyes again, he tried to focus. Flashes entered his mind now, some glimpses of childhood... parents... enlisting in a military... joining the 'good' fight... yes... it was all coming back now. He had been in training... but how had he ended up in that tube? But then... there was war... a war they weren't winning...

Suddenly, his thoughts were jarred by flashes of that red gecko again, the wicked looking one with the golden eyes. He was standing before this creature, who was addressing a body of troops... but his eyes were different. They weren't quite so wicked looking. They were arrogant perhaps, but confident as well. *"I don't care how controversial it is! We have to resort to merciless tactics because our enemy is just as merciless! You've all seen it! We won't win this* *war unless we play by their rules! We're losing this war because we're being too predictable and too honorable! I say the hell with honor! We fight to end this war now! There's nothing wrong with 'moral shortcuts' if it means we'll bring an end to this damn conflict! I'm fed up with the tactics of the past! If you follow me, I promise you... victory will be swift and decisive. They will remember us as the greatest warriors of all time, and we will avoid extinction! Follow me, and your samples of victory will turn into permanent tastes, I promise you this!"*

"Mmmm..." Vergil opened his eyes now, his brow furrowed. This red gecko was clearly key to his past... but who was he? And more importantly... was he still alive?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2014, 10:29:20 PM**

marita picked out phones in pink , red and yellow for herself rose and marie. she swiped her card at the counter and transferred her old info to the new phone. rose and marie did the same, and soon all three were activated.' thanks. i like yellow as a color' marie said as she looked at her phone, before putting it in her pocket.' so now that we have our phones, whats the plan? marita asked tony..as she continued carrying the pizza boxes.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 10, 2014, 02:35:27 AM**

Axel was chewing his lip thoughtfully. "Well, for a start, Tony, you could tell us everything you know about the base. All the ways in, how well guarded they are, any secret ways into that building that they think we don't know about." He looked at the ferret. "We've got to use the knowledge you have of that place as much as we can, and come up with a strategy that way. If they're holed up there, it's not like we can just charge in, we'll be cut to pieces... Even if we have one of the X-Men with us," Axel said, glancing down at Vergil.

"We'd also need to find a way to get some better weapons. From what I saw, the Purifiers were packing some heavy duty guns - We need to try and match them there as best as we can. But I, ah... I don't actually know where we could get those." He turned his attention to Anne. "I... don't suppose you'd know someone who'd supply us? I mean, you're, uh..." Axel picked his words carefully. "...Streetwise, right? Or I guess we could see if your dad would help us out there, Tony, but from what you've told me that'd probably be a dead end."

"Finding more people to help us is probably a good idea too, like I said. Even if we have the best guns in the world and solid plan, there's still only a few of us and a whole army of them." Axel shook his head, frustrated. "But I have no idea how we'd deal with that, either."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 10, 2014, 08:38:00 AM**

"The guns are already covered, remember?" Tony asked. "We're packing serious firepower in the trunk of my car and my trailer, since my dad already provided us with kind of the 'standard package' in addition to everyone's personal requests. So we're good on that front. Now then... in terms of the base itself... there are some entry and access points that are typically not well guarded... but now that we just attacked them, security's going to be tight everywhere. The best modes of entry are the service tunnels and hatches, since that place used to be a factory and is chock full of them. They're always kept open as evacuation routes should anything happen to the base." the ferret explained.

"In terms of more numbers... my father wouldn't commit to something like this unless he was certain of victory. Sparking a drawn-out war with a group that has nothing to do with his family is both unwise and not financially sound. He would want it to be over swiftly because otherwise, it'd just turn into a drain on manpower, finances, and resources. The Purifiers haven't exactly crossed him either, so he has no reason to wage war on them; my father is a very retaliatory kind of guy. You leave him alone, he leaves you alone." Tony outlined.

"So if we're gonna do this... we're gonna have to make sure we take out the Purifiers as a whole, including Rhaegson, if possible. A good way of destroying the entire base is restarting those old reactors that powered the whole place. The Purifiers use a different power source now, but if you overload those things, they have the potential of leveling the whole location."

"You're talking about wholesale slaughter?" Vergil piped up here.

"Well... yeah, probably." Tony nodded. "They're terrorists who kill innocents all the time. Only real way to get rid of them is to kind of wipe them out." He shrugged here.

Vergil had to admit, these tactics sounded like the ones the red gecko would use, and he wasn't entirely comfortable with it, but he saw no clear alternative at the moment either.

"So yeah, our weapons are covered, I can take you to some entrances which will probably be less heavily guarded if guarded at all, and the numbers issue well... I doubt I'm gonna get my dad to agree to any support, so we'll probably have to look for alternatives on that front, but I suppose I could pitch it when I speak to him." Tony concluded.

"I'm not sure we'll need the numbers." Vergil spoke up now. "The careful application of superior tactics can ensure victory against any foe. One must only look for openings, opportunities, and weak points, and capitalize on them." He noticed the others looking at him now, and he looked down shyly and shuffled his feet. "Yes, well it was... just a thought. But I feel with a carefully planned approach, victory is not impossible. One thought that occurred to me was that this place is large, and a former factory. That means their manpower is stretched, and they won't be watching places that are no longer in use. You mentioned the reactors... I doubt these are guarded, yes?" Vergil inquired, and Tony shook his head to indicate they weren't. "Well this factory must be full of such places. It's like any base that's not tailor-made as a base, really. You man only the posts that are worth manning, and ignore the ones that aren't." the white gecko pointed out. "Right there you have your first weakness."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 10, 2014, 11:33:42 AM**

Axel nodded. "Alright. The reactors sound like the best... or, so far, the *only* way to get rid of that place for good." He glanced down at Vergil. "Trust me... these guys have it coming. But we'd only start it when we know we can get Lily out of there. Not before." Scratching his bandage, Axel looked back at Tony. "Are you sure they wouldn't be guarded though?" he asked. "If they're really that powerful, there's a good chance they know it too. And if we manage to turn them on, I'm guessing they wouldn't exactly be quiet... which is where some extra man power could come in useful, keep them from swarming us..."

Axel shrugged and shook his head. "But, I don't know... I mean, I'm not exactly a tactician. You two have more experience with this kind of thing, so I'll trust you." He paused. "We should probably think about whatever it was that got Anne and Nairda and messed up your tech. What did you call it? A... a pulse? Whatever it was, we don't want them to throw that at us again."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 10, 2014, 12:06:59 PM**

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guys, this sounds .. well nuts' marie said ' we have to be practical about this. we would have to get lilly out then blow up the reactors, which would well likely result in a chain or explosions destroying the compound and most likely everyone in it.. we would need to be well away from there by the time they blow up..how exactly ae wwe going to pull this all off.. ' i could try and hack into thier defenses and turn them against them' Marita said," that would buy us some time..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 10, 2014, 04:10:33 PM**

"That's easy." Tony responded to Marie. "As I already said... we overload them. That requires them building up to their critical point first... which takes time. Once we turn them on, it's not like they just explode as soon as that happens. We set them to past their critical point, and have plenty of time while they build up to that. Of course, we should do that probably around the same time we plan to free Lily. To answer your questions, Axel..."

Tony looked at Vergil. "I think he's on to something here. No, it's not very heavily guarded, because no one ever goes in there, and it's in a relatively deserted part of their base. If we destroy all the controls for it, it'll prevent them from shutting it down, meaning we don't even have to be in that room anymore to watch the reactors. We can be off doing our own thing and rescuing Lily."

Vergil's eyes widened at this. "And on top of that, what are they going to be doing when they discover the reactors are on and building up? To add even further to what you said, Axel, they'll be running for their lives. Evacuating... creating the perfect cover for us to get uh... Lily" he said, remembering her name "out of there. It'll also mean minimal opposition, for every guard that tries to waste time stopping us will be thinking in the back of their minds... 'if I don't leave soon, I'm dead.' The power of self-preservation trumps menial guard duties every time." He chortled here, folding his arms across his chest.

Tony smiled, snapping his claws. "Exactly! It's perfect! We sow panic throughout the base, giving us the cover to withdraw without interference, and we're out of there, no problems! Only problem I see..." Tony began. "Is getting past the more heavily guarded parts to the more lightly guarded deserted areas. Also avoiding that pulse again and locating Lily... those are the only real challenges we face, in my opinion. We have to find a way in without tipping them off... which I can sort of do, find a way to negate or outright stop that pulse from going off, and then ensure we can find Lily as well."

"I... might be able to help with the latter. I found I was able to glimpse a few minutes into the future... while I still don't fully understand how I can do this or if it's controllable or not... I'm just saying might." Vergil put in.

"Yeah kind of a long shot if you don't fully understand it yet, but hey, it's something to keep on the back-burner, for sure." Tony nodded here. "Anyway, how's that sound so far to you, Axel?" the ferret asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 10, 2014, 06:08:51 PM**

"I think it sounds crazy," Axel said, shaking his head. "If a couple of days ago you'd told me I'd be having these kinds of conversations, I'd have called you insane." He looked up at them and, for the first time in a long while, grinned. "But then again, a few days ago all I did was sit on my ass and fix computers."

Axel stood up a little straighter. "It's a plan and... I think it could work. I mean, as long as those reactors give us enough time to get the hell out of there before they blow us into next week." He already felt better knowing they were starting to come up with a plan of action... and a way of getting to Lily. Axel knew he'd either find her, or die trying.

"Getting access to where Lily's being kept could be a problem too," he considered. "The lab they were keeping her in before was pretty... heavy duty." He looked at Vergil. "You can back me up on that. They'll have moved her, and I doubt it'll be to a place we can get into easily. If worst came to worst Vergil could probably take a few walls down, but... I mean, that would bring us all kinds of attention."

Axel crossed his arms thoughtfully. "Maybe we could get our hands on a guard while we're there... find out if he knows anything." He looked at the others. "But we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. Nothing we can do for the moment." He looked down at Vergil. "It's a long shot, but you can't remember anything about... I don't know, any other labs in there?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 10, 2014, 08:54:14 PM**

(Lanthae Heights Mall)

Anne was walking along with Tony and Axel. She said nothing, the silence inside her head from her disabled implant was making her profoundly uncomfortable.

"Why not lure them somewhere with a fake tip or something? I used it a few times to fuck with the cops," she piped up as she noticed a Lanthae Police Department repulsorcar landing in the parking lot. At the same time, she moved a bit faster to get out of the window so the cops didn't see her.

Soren parked his car and carefully hid his shotgun in the compartment under the rear seat. He looked around for the distinctive Pierce Arrow and the trailer. He soon found it near the front of the mall and approached the vehicle. He knocked on the door.

"Hey guys?"

(Purifier Base)

Aaron's truck pulled up to the completely mangled front gates of the base. Bullet holes and spent casings littered the ground.

"The fuck did we miss?" Aaron asked as he got out of the truck.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 10, 2014, 11:20:12 PM**

Nairda, unconscious in the back of the truck, lolled his head against Soren's window, jostled from Soren's knocking.

The scientists finally arrived, over fifteen minutes after Lupis had called them.

"What in god's name took you all so long?" he snarled angrily. He looked on the verge of pouncing them.

"We were in the reinforced bomb shelter for our own safety!" one of them explained hastily. The scientists quickly sedated Lily, who relaxed unnaturally into a fitful sleep.

The scientist grew silent as Lupis withdrew his bloodied fingers from Lily's crotch.

"Let's get her in a tank..." Lupis muttered, making eye contact with nobody.

A few minutes later, the two guards from before leaped to attention as Lupis and his scientists entered the room. "Sir, we reset the blast doors in place, but their mechanisms and locks were completely demolished," one started. "It can fully seal shut though."

"--That's not structurally sound enough," one scientist said. "We need a full construction team immediately to fix them to flawless perfection!" added another.

"Belay that," Lupis cut them off. He was looking elsewhere; at the mangled body of Exstasis in the center of the room. "I'll need a few minutes to debrief my science team. Please assemble the construction team, but do not return until I order you."

After the guards left, Lupis walked over to the sealed blast doors and made sure they couldn't be opened. "At a brisk run, it takes five minutes to reach this lab from the bomb shelter..." he muttered.

No reply.

Lupis shed his bloodied outer coat. "It takes *five minutes!* Four minutes-and thirty seconds less than the time it takes to activate the hazard frequency, I might add..."

"We were...scared!" one of the scientists blurted out. "We heard shooting! We passed bodies!"

The scientists were beginning to get nervous. Lupis walked to the security system monitoring the room and turned it off. Then he removed his pants and shoes, revealing sharpened claws retracting from the pads of his feet.

Then he struck. The scientists' screamed and most got the chance to run, but the room was only so big. Savagely, Lupis tore into exposed flesh and quickly-exposed bone, systematically murdering them one-by-one, herding them like sheep away from the intercom or security system monitor. In minutes, the bloodbath was over, and the panting, feral wolf was the only man standing.

Panting, Lupis slowly returned his breath to normal. Straightening up, he replaced his outer clothing and walked to the intercom. "Bring in the construction team," he sent to the guards, and then contacted Rhaegson. "We've got her. I'm sorry to report she relapsed after we got her into the laboratory, and murdered the science team. But I'm more than capable of doing the tests myself. The hardest part is finally over."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 11, 2014, 08:29:39 AM**

"Oh there's also a bomb shelter." Tony stated, remembering now. "But it was meant to protect against a nuclear strike somewhere else in the city. A direct explosion right on top of it from the reactors and it'd be gone, cause those things would leave a crater probably a mile wide. As for our time window... I'd say it'd take about 30-40 minutes to reach the critical point, so that gives us time."

They were starting to wander back to the car now, but Tony didn't feel like leaving the mall just yet. He noticed Anne shying away from a window, and saw the cop car outside. "Hmm..." He moved more towards the shops now, pretending to browse so as to stay away from the windows.

"I... do know there are other labs in the facility." Vergil said slowly. "I got some brief flashes of them when I sensed your friends driving around the perimeter in their car. Must be what they call 'remote viewing.'" Vergil added.

"Pretty impressive, but yes, there are standard laboratories that I know about." Tony commented. "They're relatively easy to find, so she's either going to be in one of those, and that's convenient cause they're all clustered together, or that secret one you escaped from, if she's not in the cell block. Worst case is they moved her out of the base but... let's hope that hasn't happened." He listened to Anne's idea here. "Well it's worth a shot. Could give them an anonymous tip and see how they react. Might lure some away at least." Shoving his paws in his pockets, he acted like a casual shopper as they made their slow way back to the street the car was on.

"I might be able to detect if they've moved her. She was a psionic, like myself, and I was able to get a good read on her. I should be able to detect her again if I'm in proximity. Not sure how close, but it's there on the table now." Vergil put in.

"Then that's that problem solved." Tony replied in a relaxed fashion.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 11, 2014, 08:42:20 AM**

kojuuro stirred. one of the men who had watched him fight kozlov had taken pity on him and driven him to a nearby hospital. ' how are we feeling? a doctor said coming in and seeing him ' how bad was it? kojuuro muttered ' your injuries?. ' lets see, 5 broken ribs, level 3 concussion, contusions to head and neck area, some internal bleeding.. in short you really got messed up. you're lucky you didnt have a severing of your spinal column, or worse..' the doctor said reading from a chart. kojuuro looked down and saw his mid section wrapped in bandages. ' how long before i can be discharged' discharged, mr kojuuro, you need to heal. your injuries required surgery. at least a couple of days would be preferred. is there any one we can contact.. ' no.. i dont have anyone ' kojuuro replied lying back on the pillow.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 11, 2014, 03:36:05 PM**

Marcus looked around as he climbed out of the truck, eyes narrowing as he focused on the spent casings lying on the ground. A engine rumbled behind him, and he turned to see Cavenaugh driving up in a truck loaded with a 50 Cal. gun. "What the hell happened here?" he shouted across to him.

Rhaegson frowned. "She wiped out the science crew? There's no survivors? Damn, that's..." He stopped as Lupis confirmed that he could finish their work. "Yeah? Well, that's alright, no harm done. You had me worried there for a second," he said, relaxing visibly. "Make sure our little mutant freakshow doesn't try anything else. I've already lost a few men just earlier, I don't want to lose any more. 'S bad for business."

He glanced down at his watch. "Well, well, would you look at the time," he said, stretching his arms above his head, the movement causing his joints to pop. "I'd say it's about time for me to show my lovely face. Just get on with your part. I want that bitch prepped as soon as you can."

"You... you can sense that kind of stuff?" Axel asked Vergil. "Alright... *Alright*! I think this could actually work!" he grinned, starting to feel hopeful again. *We're coming Lily...* Above the group, a huge screen was suspended from the ceiling, hanging over the bustling crowd. On the screen, a cheerful animated squirrel was advertising a new brand of hazelnut cookies. "If we just..."

He trailed off when he noticed the image on the screen start to flicker, static playing across, the sound of the advert cutting out. At first, through the grey fuzz of the interference, Axel could just about make out a shape moving around. Then, all of a sudden, the static vanished.

In place of the advert, a small, unkempt man was standing in a grey room, the image grainy. Hanging on the wall behind him, a black piece of cloth was hung up, with a red cracked gear symbol printed on it. Axel's heart skipped a beat. *The Purifiers...* The man's hands were shoved casually into the pockets of his denim jacket, and beneath dirty blonde hair that hung over his face, his eyes glinted savagely. Axel's own eyes widened in confusion. A few shoppers had noticed the change as well, and, like him, were pausing to look up. Axel heard a raised voice, and he glanced across the mall to a television shop on the other end. The same image was on the screen of all the TV sets he could see. His tail curling nervously, the rat returned his gaze to the big screen above them.

The man grinned. "Hello, Lanthae," he said, his voice booming through the mall. "I hope you're all having a pleasant day. You don't know me, but I know all about you... I know that the city is full to the brim of so called 'citizens' who've decided to pollute their bodies with machinery, with bits of metal, circuits..." The man's smile vanished, his expression twisting. "Turning yourselves into freaks of nature..." He paused, and after a second his jovial expression returned. "Well, let's not get ahead of ourselves."

By now, most of the shoppers were looking up at the huge screen, or the smaller monitors dotted around the mall. A few feet away from Axel, the obese man who'd barged through them was staring up, a half eaten burger now hanging from his hands. "Who's this guy? What's he playing at?" he demanded.

"If you don't know who... or, what I represent by now," the Purifier continued, indicating the cloth behind him, "Then... well, you're a fuckin' moron."

The fat man looked down dejectedly at the ground.

"The reason I'm here now is to offer a heads up to some, and a warning to others. There's going to be a few changes coming up. Some... most of you probably won't like them. Unfortunately, that doesn't really mean a damn. The Purifiers have spent the last few years cooking something up. A weapon. Most of you will have heard of something called an EMP, or an electromagnetic pulse. Fries all computer circuits, electronics... you get the idea." The Purifier paused, his predatory smile spreading even further across his face. "You all probably get where I'm going with this."

"In exactly 24 hours, we'll be launching an EMP bomb with an... extra ingredient to give it a little more oomph. Believe me when I say it's radius'll be... impressive. Any augmented who are watching this, don't bother trying to run. You won't be able to escape. Any augmentations you have will be destroyed, and *you'll* be left significantly worse for wear. We have agents planted everywhere, waiting for the countdown to reach zero. And once it does, they have orders to execute every single augmented they come across." He chuckled. "And therein lies the warning. You're all fucked. But nobody can accuse me of not playing fair. Now, then, for the rest of you. As long as you stay out of our way, you won't be harmed. As long as you don't fuck with us, *we* won't fuck with *you*. Hell, go ahead and take out a few augmented yourselves. We'd sure appreciate it."

The man lowered his voice. "And you're going to want to earn some brownie point with us. Because while some of our forces are dealing with that, more of us are going after Lanthae's government. The government which just so happens to place so much importance on augmentations for their defense." He cackled. "Bad move, boys. And once we've accomplished that, any who've tried to get in our way will be dealt with. Just a little something for all you normal, *pure* folks to think about."

He leaned closer to the camera, brushing aside the hair from his eyes. "Well, that about concludes our time together. For now. Take care! And remember, it's open season on those freaks!" The expression on his face darkened suddenly, and the pitch of his voice lowered. "Have yourselves a ball," he growled. The image on the screen suddenly flickered off, and was replaced by the tail end of the cookie advert. "They're the nuttiest!" the squirrel exclaimed.

The crowd gathered around started looking amongst each other, suddenly speaking again, a cacophony of confusion and fear. Axel looked at the group, suddenly aware of his augments. "Was... he couldn't be serious?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 11, 2014, 06:47:14 PM**

Cavenaugh sighed. "It's a long story... we were attacked by a bunch of augment freaks, and Tony was helping them! They were after... well who knows? Lupis I guess. But we beat them back and well... couldn't get any of 'em, except that monster freak that wolf has been after, so I guess that's pretty big." Cavenaugh grumbled. "The hell you been doin?" he asked now.

Tony looked up, his face contorted into a frown as he watched the broadcast of Rhaegson, his old boss. "Ugh... can't believe I used to work for this jackass..." Tony muttered, his eyes going wide as the announcement was made about the EMP being used to fry the entire city... and about the hunt that would begin afterward. "Of course he's serious!" Tony snapped when the broadcast ended, clenching his paws at his sides. "He doesn't screw around, you know that! But he's going after the government too? What kind of..."

Suddenly, his new phone rang. "Ugh! What now?" the ferret demanded angrily as he pulled it out and saw his father's name on the screen. "Oh... uh..." He hit the answer button. "Dad?" he asked.

"First off... thank god you're alive. Second... did you see that moronic broadcast just now?" his father asked.

"Uh... yes, sir." Tony nodded.

"Wonderful people you decided to join, son." his father growled. "But we'll talk about that later. Listen... this is a serious crisis, and I'm not standing for it. Two reasons why: Threatening the government is seriously stupid. You fuck with them, you fuck with the mob, because the government pays us... *all* of us... protection. All five families have their hands in this pie. Two, it would destabilize the city and cause economic chaos... which would be bad for business. Most of the families also invest in the augment business, so perpetrating mass murder and government unrest is simply not tolerable. I'm going to give Emilio Barzini a call here after I'm done with you, and suggest an emergency meeting of the Five Families. We almost never agree on anything, but this... I think we can agree on. We'll crush those fuckin' Purifiers like the bugs they are. Launch a combined assault... the government may be relatively impotent to do anything about this, but we aren't. I wasn't originally going to help you... but this changes things." Don Stracci stated. "They just made this personal."

"Oh!" Tony stammered. "W-well... that's great!"

"No it's not great... I don't like having my paw forced... but what choice do any of us really have? By the way... you find out more about Ms. North?" he asked.

"Well... yes, we did." Tony added. "Lupis, dad... he's even worse than I thought."

"Figured. He's helping these whackjobs. Do me a favor... kill that stupid son-of-a-bitch, will ya? Any business prospects I had with that moron are now out the window. A Purifier body will be discovered within the hour in a very public place... and what we do to him won't be pretty, trust me. Too bad I don't have any higher-up Purifiers on my payroll... otherwise, Rhaegson would be getting a bullet in the back of his head within the hour as well, but don't worry about that. War is messy... dirty... should only be resorted to as a final push but... this is that final push. Where are you now?" his father inquired.

"Uh... L-Lanthae Heights Mall, in Soho." Tony responded quickly.

"That's Don Cuneo's territory. All right... I'm sure he'd provide you protection for now if you need it... you didn't ding my Berline, did ya?" was the next question.

"No! Of course not, dad! It's fine." Tony said softly.

"Good. I take it you failed your first try, eh? Well the thing about a Stracci is that he never quits. You get back out there when you're ready, and try again. This time... you'll have five armies at your back if I have a say in it." Tony felt himself smile at his father's words. "Anyway, I gotta give Don Barzini a call. I'll talk to you later." His father hung up now and Tony lowered the phone from his ear as if in a daze.

"Uhhh... well... I think we just solved our manpower issue... or rather, the Purifiers solved it for us. They just pissed off the mob by threatening the government... and you *don't* just piss off the mob and get away with it. My father's calling an emergency meeting of the Five Families, and he plans to publicly execute a Purifier within the hour in a... gory fashion I'm sure." he said, still not letting that smile die, suddenly feeling giddy all of a sudden. "This is... this is great!" he exclaimed, his smile turning into a happy grin as he looked at the others.

"Such an injustice will not be permitted to stand. Wholesale slaughter of innocents is the mark of cowards." Vergil stated, narrowing his eyes now.

"Yeah well... they made the wrong move in this chess game, I guess. Great news, eh?" Tony reiterated.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 11, 2014, 07:04:12 PM**

Those bastards just declared war on all of us' marita said ' so we have 24 hours to wipe them out.. or find a new city to live in, if that fails.. i'm glad your dad is pitching in Tony, because we're going to need all the help we can get.' she turned to marie and rose ' you girls in?' she asked ' you dont need to ask' rose said . i'm in. ' me too marie said ' whatever i can do to help out..'
-
lets get back to your car tony, and figure things out..' mmarita said to him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 11, 2014, 10:03:57 PM**

A refined British gentleman in a crisp suit and a blonde mustache walked up to the group in the mall. "My good sirs, would you be interested in a free shoe shining from Cockfosters Curios?" he handed Tony a gift certificate. "Free on this glorious birthday of Dr. Dorothea Wilmut, rest her legacy!"

The certificate had a logo of an O bisected by a claymore, and the motto "*Caveat Astrum*." Both would be familiar to Tony as the calling cards of Don Cuneo, Stracci's ally in this part of town.

"If you're interested, you need only follow me..." the gentleman added.

After much pondering, Emilena had pieced enough of what she'd witnessed in her dreams together to start drawing conclusions. Lily was clearly the linking factor; it appeared to have been every person who died in her vicinity since...a completely unrelated experiment escaped the Purifier base. She was capable of putting two and two together.

And that last flashback, as unpleasant as it had been, made her realize something. Something huge.

She unlocked her bedroom door and saw her parents fornicating on the couch.

"Oh! Hehe, sorry..." Emile blushed as Lena darted off of him and snatched her bathrobe off the floor. Emilena sighed heavily. "Hi honey! We saved you some bacon--"

"I've got to go," Emilena said tersely. "I'll need an outfit and my katana. If you have small arms I could use those as well."

Both of her parents were silent.

"I thought you said..." started Lena, bathrobe hanging forgotten from her hand.

"This is more important than me or you two," Emilena cut her off. "It's about a woman in trouble who deserves a second chance far more than I ever did."

She strode past them into her parent's bedroom, ignoring the dozens and dozens of every conceivable sex toy in existence, and scrounged for a clean set of Emile's farming coveralls and tool belt (she tried not to think about the complete lack of locatable clothing for Lena.) She helped herself to a flashlight, M1911 pistol, and a trowel for a makeshift bludgeoning weapon. When she returned to the living room, her parents had a backpack packed for her, with food, survival gear, and her retractable katana clipped to the strap.

"We Kibagamis can't resist being the heroes, can we?" chuckled Emile.

Emilena donned the backpack. "Trust me, I'm anything but."

Lena ran her paw along Emilena's face. "We're both so proud of how you've grown up," she smiled, tear running down her cheek. "And we're so glad we got to see you. Please come visit us again, when you can..."

Emilena stifled a recoil from her touch. "I...If the chance presents itself, maybe..." She regarded her parents one last time. For all their flaws, it was clear they loved each other. "This trip went...differently from how I expected, I'll admit."

She turned and started walking away.

"Oh, Emilena!" her mother called after her. "Last night, you occasionally mentioned a friend named Nairda...could you tell us a little more about him?"

Emilena paused and looked back. "I...he's just this fox who thinks too highly of himself. Has a flair for the dramatic, and too touchy-feely for his own good. I've wanted to stab him multiple times, but unfortunately he helps me in some...less than public ways I occasionally need."

She couldn't grasp what part of her description warranted the fitful chuckling bursts her parents were both stifling.

"He...sounds like a keeper!" grinned Emile, and then couldn't manage to force another word out.

Puzzled, Emilena continued her trek towards the city, until her parents and their farm was a blip on the horizon.

Back in the mansion, the Doktor jumped up and started waving his arms when he heard who the don was speaking too.

"Gutendag freiulein, vould it bee possible for me to conwerse vis Nairda? I haff urgent beezness to deescuss vis him!!!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 12, 2014, 12:02:57 AM**

Anne stared at the screen in shock. She ran her finger over her horn. "I...I...I'm gonna die," she whispered.

Her head suddenly swam as she flopped down on a nearby bench. "Fucking hell, I need a pill – or a few!"

Soren shoved his way through the crowd until he recognized Axel and his group. "Hey, Axel, Tony, what's going on?"

"The Purifiers," Anne said. "Wait, how'd you get here?"

"I carjacked someone," he replied. "Anyways, mind bringing me up to speed?" He sat down on the bench next to Anne.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 12, 2014, 02:19:16 AM**

"Soren!" Axel cried, "I thought you were... ah, well, you know. It's good to see you back," he said, clasping his friend's shoulder. Straightening, a worried expression returned to his face. "You... you didn't hear it? The Purifiers, they just announced that tomorrow they're going to launch some kind of... EMP bomb. Every augment in Lanthae's gonna get fried and then they're going to send their guys in to finish the job..."

He crossed his arms over his chest. "But now we have Tony's dad on our side. We can stop them, Soren. We can stop them *and* get Lily back!" Gritting his teeth, he added, "We've got to..."

Axel heard a posh British voice, and turned to see a well dressed man addressing the group and handing something over. "Ah..." he started, puzzled, looking uncertainly at Tony, who the man seemed to be focusing his attention on.

"Tony attacked us?!" Marcus snarled, feeling his blood boiling. If there was something he hated more than the augmented, it was traitors. On the phone he'd said he was with Kibagami... had he thrown his lot in with *him*?! For a moment, Marcus didn't say anything. Then he growled, "We'll deal with him later."

Holding up the toolbox, he continued. "We were finding the last parts for the weapon. Took longer than expected." He brushed past Cavenaugh, heading into the base, then turned. "Have your men sweep the perimeter, make sure there aren't any breaches in our defense, then increase the number of sentries on patrol," Marcus commanded. "If we've had a break in, and they didn't get what they came for, we have to assume they'll be back."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 12, 2014, 09:54:47 AM**

Marita turned as Soren joined then ' Soren! You made it out.. Next time, dont go rambo on us and charge headlong into a well-fortified building..that only works in movies..' she said. 'so now that we're all together, whats our first move? she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 12, 2014, 02:40:20 PM**

Tony noticed Anne seemed spooked by the announcement, and he sat down on the bench next to her "Hey... hey no... you're not gonna die." he said softly, trying to reassure her. "My dad's getting involved now... as are the Five Families. We'll crush these guys before they have a chance to use that bomb... OK?"

He looked up as Soren shoved his way through the crowd. Well, well... how had he managed to locate them? Brightening up upon seeing him, Tony remained seated next to Anne for the moment. "Hey, Soren! Glad you're alive! Sorry we had to leave you... but when I picked up Axel, we were getting shot at, and you'd kind of walked off on your own so... we had to put the pedal to the metal." he stated. "Still... glad to see you made it."

It was then that one of Don Cuneo's men arrived and handed Tony his card, which Tony recognized immediately. "Oh! Well sure, we'd love the d... uh... his hospitality." Tony said, remaining purposely vague. "But I have a rather expensive car of my father's outside see, so I'd need to bring that, along with some hardware we're carrying." Tony said, knowing the man would understand.

He looked at the others now. "I was thinking maybe head towards Don Cuneo's, see what the meeting produces, and go from there?" he asked, looking from one to the other.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 12, 2014, 04:40:02 PM**

Axel shoved his hands in his jeans. "Yeah... I mean, if they'd actually, you know, let the rest of us sit in on a meeting like that..." He nodded and looked at the others. "Knowing what their plan's going to be would definitely help."

Around them, the crowd had started growing increasingly agitated, pushing and shoving one another, voices raised in panic. Axel glanced around, shifting nervously. "Maybe we should, ah, get out of here, guys... It's looking like things could get kind of dicey..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 12, 2014, 07:52:22 PM**

The gentleman nodded. "Walk this way, please," he motioned them.

After a few pathways, he led them into the backrooms of the mall, away from the rapidly agitating crowds. "My apologies, but Don Cuneo cannot meet with you personally," he explained. "I am Hastings Bitparte, one of his most trusted agents. Follow me; there are known Purifier agents in the crowd, who no doubt recognized you."

(OOC: Anyone who wants to play Hastings Bitparte can; I'm releasing him into the public domain.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 12, 2014, 10:34:38 PM**

Soren scowled but he realized that he more or less deserved it. "Yeah, I fucked up big time."

He then drank in the news of their ultimatum. "Great, what was once a simple arson turns into a city wide hostage situation."

Soren rubbed his eyes as he flopped down on a chair. Hastings had led the group insde the mall's staff room. A plain meeting room with grey walls, nasty looking upholstered chairs and bland motivational posters. A disgusting looking coffee pot amd a stained table rounded out the whole room.

He then turned to Tony. "That's good idea but I don't think us non-Family members will be allowed."

"Hey, Anne, what do you think?"

The mare was drinking some beer filched from the refrigerator. "I'll go look around the Night Market in Lanthae Square and see how people are reacting."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 12, 2014, 11:08:03 PM**

marita warmed up some of the leftover pizza in the microwave. the lightbulb in the microwave flickered on and off but the machine did its job otherwise and warmed the pizza. the pizza was tasty, and marita figured she would need all the energy she could get. " want some pizza Soren? We've got lots left. the girls and I ordered a large cheese." She offered as she sat down in a chair. Marie and Rose warmed up slices as well, being jostled by panicking shoppers gave one a fresh appetite.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 13, 2014, 10:51:53 AM**

Tony looked around at the small break room, and sighed, also shoving his paws into his pockets. "Well I don't mean sit in on the meeting. I could attend of course, but I just meant go to his place until some of the panic subsides, find out the meeting's results, and get on back to the Purifier base once the families start moving. Oh yeah, Soren, this is Vergil Speicher." Tony introduced Soren to the white gecko. "He was a lab experiment back at the base and helped Axel escape. He's got some pretty serious abilities, from what Axel's told me."

"Oh it's... nothing really." Vergil said humbly, giving a small wave.

"Anyway... I can't imagine we were being watched in the mall... but if we were, best get to the car and head to Don Cuneo's place. We have our overall plan for assaulting the Purifier base, and I think we should see that public execution soon of a Purifier as well." the ferret commented.

Poking his head out the door, Tony saw no staff in the corridor, and the way to the exit was clear. "OK... let's go!" he said, waving them on as he stepped out into the employee hallway. Walking casually down to the exit, the ferret popped the door open, looked around again to make sure they were in the clear, and exited out onto the street. He could see the Pierce-Arrow a little ways up the block, and he began heading for it.

"So this... Don Cuneo... he a rival or ally?" Vergil inquired.

"He's closer to my dad than the other dons, I'd say. He's on the level, from what I know. We don't implicitly trust him but... we should be OK." Tony explained as he reached the car, and got in behind the wheel now. Vergil waited for some of the others to choose their seats in either the car or the trailer before he entered.

At the Heights, Don Stracci was about to start the video conference with the other dons when that mechanical Doktor thing approached him. Narrowing his eyes, the ferret glared darkly at it. "You call me fraulein again... I'm gonna rip that head off and use it was a toaster for my daughter... understand?" he asked. "What the hell do you want, anyway? Talk to Nairda? I don't care *what* you want to do with that horny fox. I don't have his number, so you're on your own, I'm afraid. Now if you'll excuse me... I have an important meeting to attend." Don Stracci informed the robot, adjusting the cufflinks on his suit a tad.

It wasn't the don's job to contact others in Tony's group. If the Doktor didn't have their information that wasn't his problem. He paused before entering the conference room though, and turned around. "Look if you don't have his number, call my son, all right?" he asked, then slid him a card with Tony's number on it.

Cavenaugh watched Marcus head back inside. "Coming back? Yeah right... they wouldn't do that..." he murmured as he turned back around. "Ridiculous... he should know we can't possibly watch *every* access point. This place is too damn big." Sighing, he knew he'd just have to do the best he could. "All right you jerks! Spread out! We have to cover as much ground as we can! Those assholes might be back after all!" the Gila monster called.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 13, 2014, 11:51:00 AM**

"I phoned him but eet doesn't vork!" the Doktor admitted, tears welling in his German cybernetic eyes. "And 'Freuiein' means Friend, doesn't eet? Zat's how I've been using eet zis entire time!"

He jumped for joy when the don gave him the business card with Ton'y name. "Oh *zank you* freulein! Zis makes me wery happy!" He checked the time; right in the middle of dinnertime. Perfect time to call, and he quickly dialed the number and waited for the ring.

Emilena was just getting out of the woods when she heard rustling in a nearby abandoned farmhouse. Investigating, she stumbled across a naked couple shivering and looking spooked.

"Please, can you give us a blanket or something?" the male asked.

"The city is less than a mile east of here," Emilena looked scandalized. "What in the hell happened to you?"

"We were minding our own business driving along, when Soren Almaya held us up at a stoplight and commandeered our vehicle!" he explained

"How did you know it was Soren Almaya?" asked Emilena, alarmed.

He paused. "...I don't know. Lucky guess."

"Where are your clothes then?"

"We, uh...Soren wanted those too," the female shifted her eyes. "He admitted he was into cross-dressing."

"Does not surprise me in the slightest." Emilena threw them her blanket and whatever clothes she wasn't currently wearing. "There, but I'd appreciate if you tell me everything you can about where he went."

"Oh, the car's GPS is hooked up to a chip in my brain that lets me track it," the female explained. "I work at the Zwings Car Dealership, and was taking this man out for a test drive."

She rattled off the latitude and longitude of the car's current location. Emilena frowned. "I have no way of tabulating coordinates right now, but thank you for the information. I wish you both well."

She kept hiking. By sheer utter coincidence, she hiked all the way to the shopping mall where Soren and the others were! Then she hiked right into the parking lot where the car was parked!

But before she could notice the car, she quickly picked up the atmosphere was not that of friendly Saturday shopping. Yells and screams were breaking out as tensions rose, and some thugs had shoplifted items that doubled as bludgeoning weapons and were itching for a fight.

"Hey Girly, you an Augment?" sneered a particularly large one, brandishing the severed arm of a mannequin.

"No, but compared to you I could be Deep Blue, get out of my face," Emilena threatened. When he approached her personal space and opened his mouth to speak again, Emilena shot him in the stomach. "And never bring a bell sleeve to a gunfight," she spat on his writhing corpse, but the damage had been done. At the sound of gunfire, everyone in the vicinity went into "fight-or-flight" mode, and it quickly spread into the mall and beyond.

Hastings looked up at the increased sound of fighting and shooting. "Oh dear. It appears I got you out of there in the nick of time." He stood up. "I apologize, but all I had to say was that Don Cuneo has his own problems at the moment and can not help you in any fashion other than assisting your escape. However, he is prepared to offer you two of your father's spies, who he has graciously let live and are holed up in a safehouse just north of here, at 1002 Brady Shanty. A backalley doctor and a Chinese Triad enforcer, both good men when they're not reporting on your every move. If you wish to contact them, the safehouse is programmed to allow Tony and his friends access."

He led them down a set of stone stairs to a locked double door. "This leads to the parking lot; I wish you luck in reaching the car." He passed out Lugers to those who needed firearms, and unlocked the door. "And Tony; let your father know that Don Cuneo will not be able to attend the Council of Five Families either." This would be a major blow; Cuneo was Don Stracci's staunchest supporter. "We're sorry, but our current problems necessitate it."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 13, 2014, 12:25:06 PM**

Tony could see the mall was starting to break out in some sort of disturbance, so he sighed, and slid out of the car for the moment. "What problems?" he asked acidly. "What's more important than this?" he snapped, raising a paw. "Are you saying the Cuneos are having problems that's more important than the government collapsing and economic chaos about to erupt? I don't need that!" he angrily pushed the Luger away from him. "I already said I got hardware in the car. What are you trying to do, get me busted for accepting a weapon on the street? You should know better!" He had to raise his voice due to the increased noise breaking out around the mall.

He felt his phone vibrating in his pocket, and gave an exasperated grunt as he pulled it out. He didn't recognize the number, so he hit ignore and pushed it back down into his pocket. "Look, buddy!" he said, raising a claw to Hastings's chest. "Your don *doesn't* support this move, how good do you think that's gonna make him look if he turns down a request for aid from the other four families? Just what's this about, anyway?" he demanded. "And no... you don't get *me* to tell my father Don Cuneo's not attending... *you* can do that!" he exclaimed, pushing his claw into Hastings's chest now. "I'm sure my father's gonna be very interested to hear this... along with the other dons he's meeting with at this point in time."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 13, 2014, 12:40:05 PM**

Lets just get to this place Tony' Marita said as she marie and Rose got in. ' Lets drive there, and get these two guys to help us.. if possible..' she looked at the gun she had been given and sighed.
The sooner we get on the road the safer i'll feel' Marie said.. ' this place is going to pieces..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 13, 2014, 12:43:42 PM**

Axel looked down at the luger in his hands, then nodded his thanks to Bitparte, shoving the weapon in the waist of his jeans and pulling his hoodie over it. Following Tony, he pulled level with him.

"So... these guys know what they're doing, right?" he asked anxiously. "I mean, if we do this wrong, I... I just don't want anything bad to happen to her. Lily won't be in any danger from them?" He stopped talking when he saw Tony and Bitparte were exchanging tense words.

Marcus stalked into the compound, and wound his way to Rhaegson's office, pounding on the door when he reached it. There was a pause, then Rhaegson called through. "Hey, take it easy on the door!"

The doberman narrowed his eyes in irritation and pushed the door open. Inside, Rhaegson was reclining in his chair, holding up a phone to his ear. He held up a finger and continued to speak into the receiver. "Yep. Good." Rhaegson eyed the metal box Marcus was holding. "I think the rest of it's here, so you're good to go. Get ready, the delivery boy's on the way." He hung up, and then turned to Marcus. "Those the amplifiers?"

Marcus nodded. "Took a few extra, just in case."

"Well, isn't that helpful of you," Rhaegson drawled. "Good work. Take them down. They'll know what to do with them."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 13, 2014, 01:06:52 PM**

A small smile played across Hasting's face. "Don Cuneo is...not in any position to be speaking to anybody. But I suppose his silence will be all the answer your father gets."

He backed away from the door and held the Luger in a more threatening position. "Consider your survival right now a repayment for my years of dedicated comradeship to the Stracci Family. Your father can call me, but if he holds the same attitude as you, this section of the city may be allying with the Purifiers..."

"I vant to speak to Nairda!" the doktor said urgently. "It regards unusual brain vaves he vas giving off earlier!"

"Please leave your name and number after the beep!" The voice replied pleasantly. **beep**

"I vant to speak to Nairda!" the doktor said urgently. "It regards unusual brain vaves he vas giving off earlier!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 13, 2014, 01:24:03 PM**

Tony's eyes widened at this. "I don't... believe this. What did you do to him you bastard!?" he demanded, grinding his teeth down. "You don't make threats like that idly..." He said, taking a few steps forward away from the car now before feeling something pressing into his backside. There was a hand on his shoulder as another human stood behind him, dressed in a long raincoat that seemed older in style. From the feel of it, Tony could tell it was the muzzle of a gun pressed into his backside. Glancing over his shoulder, he could see the man held the gun inside his coat pocket, concealing it from those around him.

"Tony Stracci." The man said in his ear. "You and I are going for a walk. Start moving down the sidewalk... in about 15 yards, a car is going to pull up, and you're going to get in. Say anything or talk to anybody and I'll kill ya, Stracci, ya got that?" he asked softly.

Tony was rooted to the spot at first, starting to tremble as he wasn't sure just what the hell was going on. "I'm insured against kidnapping... for a very large sum. This doesn't have to go this way." he said quietly in response.

"Shut up and move!" the man hissed, and Tony felt a jab in his back, and from this angle, he had a poor view of the car. He'd have to turn his head to look at it, and he wasn't sure he should be doing that. Being pushed forward, the man dropped his hand from the ferret's shoulder and simply walked behind him now, still holding the gun to his back. Tony's jaw trembled, but he noticed Bitparte seemed in no way to be part of this. In fact, the man didn't seem familiar from the brief glimpse he'd gotten of him, and Tony wasn't sure who this was.

"Don't want to wreck your raincoat... do ya?" Tony asked quietly as he counted the steps. He was probably about 8 yards or so from where the guy had said the car would pull up, and sure enough, there it was: a black, unmarked sedan that pulled in to the curb at an oblique angle, so that the black tinted windows were uncomfortably facing him. He tried to signal someway to the others, but the man was between him and the Pierce-Arrow now, and blocked off view in that direction.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 13, 2014, 02:12:32 PM**

Axel stared as Tony walked off with the man. He glanced at Bitparte in confusion, but he didn't seem to know any more about what was going on than he did. Turning, he took a few steps towards where the pair was walking, then froze as a black car pulled up suddenly by them. "Tony! What's... what's going on?" he called after them. "Tony?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 13, 2014, 02:20:41 PM**

Tony paused in mid-stride as he heard Axel, but was shoved forward once more by the man behind him. "Keep walking!" he ordered, and the ferret closed his eyes momentarily, wondering what he could do. He didn't have any further time to think, however. The door opened, and a man in a black suit motioned for him to get in.

"Tony Stracci... we have some business to conduct." he said, waving his fingers forward.

"What's this abo-" Tony began, but then cried out in pain as he was pistol whipped from behind, the butt of the gun smacking hard against the back of his skull, and causing his eyes to close and his body to crumple forward. Taking hold of him as he tottered, the gunman shoved him towards the door of the car, and hands began pulling the ferret in to their interiors.

"Go!" the man in the black suit ordered, and the sedan's tires burned rubber as the car shot backward away from the curb, pulled into the street, and started screeching off.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 13, 2014, 02:33:01 PM**

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masrita jumped into the drivers seat and motioned to AXel' Get Back in here! We're going to follow them! She said. as she turned the key in the ignition.'come on!"
Those bastards just took tony! Rose said. " not for long" Maritas said. as she pulled out of the parking spot.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 13, 2014, 05:17:39 PM**

Axel stopped dead as he saw the man behind Tony strike him in the back of the head, and someone else drag him into the waiting car. His hands jerked up involuntarily. "*Holy shit!*" he gasped, started to reach back for the luger he'd been handed... but the car was already speeding away, and it wasn't like he could shoot out the tires.

Swearing under his breath, his voice shaking, he turned when he heard Marita call out his name. Seeing the Pierce-Arrow's headlights spring to life, he forced his trembling legs to start moving, heading back towards the car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 13, 2014, 05:33:40 PM**

Marie opened the door for Axel as marita pulled up alongside him ' Hurry Axel.. we can catch them if we hurry' Marie said quickly. marita waited until axel got in them floored it, speeding out of the garage and after the black tinted limo. thanks to the modifications Don Straci had put in place, the car could top 100 easily.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 13, 2014, 07:23:25 PM**

The sedan wasn't driving particularly fast, and instead, they proceeded at a leisurely 45 mph or so before turning into a large parking lot for a nearby office building about three blocks from the mall. The red brake lights came on, and the door opened as they rolled to a stop. Tony sailed out of the door and landed hard on the asphalt. He didn't appear to be very conscious. The man in the business suit stepped out behind the prone ferret, and grabbed the scruff of his neck, yanking him upward to a more or less kneeling position. "Get up!" He yelled, shoving his gun into the back of Tony's skull.

He then waited for his pursuers to catch up, and held the gun to Tony's head with steely determination. Time to end this game.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 14, 2014, 12:03:56 AM**

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron had a mag-rifle dangling from a sling as he stood in one of the watchtowers that ringed the complex. He also wore a HMD that looked like a set of glasses, giving him night vision, infrared, UV and telescopic vision.

(Lanthae Streets)

Soren hastily stuffed the pizza down his throat as he ran after Maria and the others. He leapt into the Pierce-Arrow's trailer.

"Fucking hell, I lost my shotgun at the mall," he said.

Anne drank a bottle of beer. "Knowing the shitstorm that's brewing, someone's probably already used it."

Soren drew the Luger from his pants pocket. Anne did the same, pulling it from a pocket in her dress.

"So what's our plan?" the mare asked.

"Full throttle action movie didn't work last time, so I'm thinking something more subtle. Like say, sniping the guys?" Soren replied as he sat on the couch and crossed his legs.

Anne's ears gently splayed to the side. "Okay, who's skilled enough with a rifle to shoot their target from about 300 meters away, kill them with one shot and not accidentally shoot Tony?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 14, 2014, 01:19:37 AM**

Eyes widening as he saw Tony collapse out of the vehicle, Axel gasped when he saw the man drag Tony up and put a gun to his head. He turned to Marita and the others desperately. "Oh shit... *shit!*" He bit his lip, heart pounding. "Look, there's a... an intercom on the dash, use it to talk to Soren, come up with some... some sort of plan. Someone needs to go out there and talk to them, maybe I can... distract them or something..."

Swallowing, Axel cautiously opened the car door and stepped out slowly, keeping his hands in the air. "Wait! Please just... just stop!" He waited a second for his breath to steady, then called across. "What do you want?! We can talk about this!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 14, 2014, 08:42:50 AM**

The abductor didn't flinch when Axel exited the car with his automated hands in the air. "Keep back, augment! One step closer and I blow his brains out! What do I want? Nothing you can possibly offer me, rest assured of that!" was his response to Axel's question as he dug the gun against Tony's head. The ferret's eyes were fluttering a bit as he struggled to regain consciousness and fight the painful swimming sensation in his head.

"Axel?" he asked weakly, hearing his friend's voice.

"Quiet!" the man shouted down at Tony. "There's nothing to talk about aside from this: get back in your car, turn around, and head on out of here. Forget your friend ever existed, and stop pursuing us. Failure to comply will result in me torturing him in front of you, and possibly even putting a bullet into his brain, got it?" he asked threateningly. "Don't test me!" he snapped.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 15, 2014, 03:41:36 AM**

Axel froze, the colour draining from his face. "Alright! I get it! Just... just please, don't hurt him!" His mouth opened and closed as he searched for something to say. "Look, the... the Purifier's just announced that tomorrow they're going to try and take over Lanthae... thousands of innocent people are going to be slaughtered! We're going to try and stop them, but we need him with us to do it! Whatever this is, just... just *please* stop..."

Axel's eyes darted around desperately, trying to find a way he could save his friend, but there was nothing... and if he made a move he had no doubt it wouldn't end well for Tony.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 15, 2014, 11:22:23 AM**

Emilena stumbled out of the melee in the parking lot in time to see her old friends driving away. At the very least, she recognized Axel, who she hoped to speak to.

Sprinting through the parking lot and leaping through hedges and anything else in her way, she came huffing and puffing up to the scene in time to witness the standoff.

Keeping her presence secret from the others, she circled around the back and slinked into the best position for the shot, hidden in the bushes beside the road. The man holding Tony was facing the opposite direction, towards the street and Axel.

Taking careful aim with her pistol, she sighted the man's head and fired.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 15, 2014, 01:01:59 PM**

Soren remained in the trailer with a rifle he had found hidden under the sofa at the ready. Luckily, a combat helmet and a set of armor was also at hand and he had donned them.

He peered out the door and waited to fire if things went foul.

Anne clutched her pistol tightly. Her arms jittered as she began to feel the effects of withdrawal.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2014, 02:42:34 PM**

marita clutched the wheel hard, her mind racing, trying to think off a way out of this situation. the car was parked 30 yards from where the man and tony were. ' trying to drive at him would be a death sentence for tony' she thought ' he'd blow him away before i moved 10 feet' marita hated being stuck in a situation like this. She could try and shoot at the man holding tony hostage, but she wasn't a very good shot with a gun, and in order to save tony, shes have to get off a very very good shot. she shook her head, and continued to watch the drama playing out in front of her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 15, 2014, 03:01:43 PM**

"That's the idea!" the man shouted back. "Moving against the Purifiers is not beneficial to us! We hold him... and then kill him, we've removed a major threat to their plan! So just back off, ya hear? Otherwise, I guarantee I kill him right now!" He pressed his gun tightly against Tony's head to demonstrate he was serious.

Vergil too had been left behind when Marita roared off in the car, and had ran down the streets trying to catch up. He'd been distracted by looters advancing towards the car, and had had to defend the trailer as they had seen the flashy wheels and wanted a piece of it. After flipping over them and then mentally picking them up to slam them back down into the street, he was off, racing down the sidewalks to catch up with his new comrades. Shorter legs meant longer transit time though, so he huffed along, his cheeks inflating and then deflating with every so many feet he sprinted. He kept an eye on the vehicles as they seemed to pull into a parking lot up ahead... great... hopefully they wouldn't be gone by the time he'd get up there.

As Emilena fired, the man heard the gunshot, and reacted... but whether for being shot at or as a reflex couldn't be determined. As her bullet struck his head his gun went off, and as blood sprayed out of his skull, blood sprayed out of Tony too, and the ferret fell forward, a look of anguish on his face as the man fell on top of him. Where he'd been shot was impossible to say for now, as it had all happened so quickly and the man was now on top of Tony, masking him from view.

Almost immediately, another man stepped out of the car and opened fire on Emilena's position with an MP7, his back to Axel. The driver of the sedan rolled down the window and opened up on Emilena with a pistol he stuck out the car as well. "Get Stracci back in the car!" shouted the driver.

"Working on it!" the guy outside yelled as he began sidling over to Tony's position, which was already beginning to grow moist as Tony's and the man's blood pooled around the two of them.

Vergil finally managed to reach the parking lot, and his eyes got even wider than they already were upon witnessing the scene. "Oh shit!" he breathed, and steeled himself for another dash as he ran on, trying to reach the scene in time.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 15, 2014, 03:47:06 PM**

Axel flinched back when he heard the gunshot, seeing the blood and brain spray out from the man's head... then, gut-wrenchingly, he realised that Tony had been hit too. Horrified, he stood motionless for a split second, time seeming to pass in slow motion before the shouting from up ahead snapped him out of it. "Fuck! *Tony!*" he yelled, darting around the car door and starting to sprint across the parking lot towards Tony's position.

Gunfire exploded from the car up ahead, and Axel's teeth bared in a snarl as he saw another man exit the car and start heading towards where the injured ferret lay. He didn't register that the man was shooting at someone else, that someone else was helping them. The rat only saw that the man's back was to him, and he seized his opportunity. Wrenching the Luger from the back of his jeans, Axel raised the barrel and charged towards him, screaming as he tugged back on the trigger.

The first two bullets missed their mark, but the next two slammed into the man's back, the force spinning him around to face Axel. The fifth tore through his throat, exploding out the back of his neck. As the man fell, Axel slid on the floor to where Tony lay sprawled under the first body, the rough asphalt tearing through the knees of his jeans and skinning him. Grunting, he heaved the corpse off him as machine gun fire continued to rattle from the car. "Tony, come on! Talk to me!" Shifting to the side, he wrapped his arms around the ferret's torso and started to drag him away from the gunfire. With so much blood spilled, it was impossible to tell how badly he was injured. "*Shit!*" he gasped as he continued to try and move Tony to safety.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2014, 04:02:20 PM**

Marita stepped on the pedal and drove as fast as she cpuld could towaerds axel he turned the car as she did blocking the other car from seeing what they were doing. she stopped inbetween Axel and the other car, as marie threw open the passenger door ' Get in Axel! Quickly! She yelled, her arms outstretched to help Axel get Tony in the car. rose was huddled in-between the back seat and passenger seat.
- marita glanced nervously around, waiting for the moment to drive away, once tony was safely inside

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Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 15, 2014, 04:17:56 PM**

Axel panted with exertion as he lifted Tony up, blood dripping as he and Marie heaved him into the vehicle. *Please don't let that be his...* Sliding him inside, Axel turned to slam the door shut... and caught a view of Vergil across the other side of the parking lot. "Dammit, Vergil's still out there!" he shouted, "We can't leave him!" Leaning out, he took another few pot shots at the kidnapper's car.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2014, 04:25:20 PM**

Marie grabbed tony torso and dragged him into the car. ' Run Vergil! She called out. " we;re leaving" she shouted, as rose tried to help as best she couls from her position.
Marita honked the horn, so Vergil could hear it and know that they were about to leave." you've got 10 seconds Vergil! Marita shouted out the open door..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 15, 2014, 04:52:02 PM**

Tony coughed as he was hauled up into the car, the leaking blood coming from his neck, where he'd been hit by the man as he'd gone down. It looked like the shot had also grazed the side of his head, creating a lot of blood, but only a superficial injury there. His neck had been hit close to where the shoulder connected to it, and it was hard to tell if either his carotid or jugular had been sliced, but from the lack of arterial spray, it didn't seem like it... but that could be because he'd lain on the ground for a bit of time too.

Cracking his eyes open, Tony seemed to be struggling with recognizing even where he was. "Axel..." he sputtered, reaching up for the rat's face now. "H-help me!" he exclaimed weakly, and it was clear that wound in his neck would need to be patched, and from how he could barely move, it was also clear the blood loss meant they had mere minutes to help the ferret.

Vergil heard Marita yelling, and raced over to the car. "Wait!" He shouted, holding his hand out, then skidded to a stop, and focused on the black sedan ahead of them, and prepared to flip the car end over end. Focusing with narrowed eyes, the sedan was suddenly tossed into the air and landed hard on its room, its horn blaring for a moment and then going silent as the air left it.

Running up to the car now, Vergil stopped beside the driver-side door. "Is Tony all right? Who shot the guy holding him hostage? One of you guys? I couldn't see clearly from this angle!" he said, practically out of breath.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2014, 05:01:41 PM**

hes been shot in the neck. here vergil, help close up the wound Marita said as Marie fumbled for the bandages and gauze they had brought in from the camper while they had tended to Axel's Ear. " ok, once vergil's gets in, i'll floor it, we'll drive someplace nearby and sew up the wound in his neck" Marita said after getting a look at the wound in Tony';s neck.' Rose put a cloth on tonys neck , and squeezed hard, the towel acting like a tourniquet stopping any further blood loss. Marie bandaged the wound in Tonys neck, trying to tighten it as much as she cold.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 15, 2014, 05:36:12 PM**

Axel supported Tony's head as Marie wound the bandage around his neck. "Come on, I'm here, just... just keep with us, alright? Everything's going to be okay..." he tried to reassure him, his voice shaking. With his free hand he held on tightly to Tony's paw. "It's over... they're not gonna hurt you..."

Turning to look at Vergil, Axel shook his head. "I... I don't know, I didn't see anyone but... but someone else was out there. I think they were trying to help us!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 15, 2014, 06:09:46 PM**

Emilena had already retreated back into the trees. She had no reason to reveal herself at the moment. Plus she appeared to have drawn the fire of the assisting kidnappers, she had already given the team the chance they needed to escape.

I'll catch up with them later... she thought. *Because if I were them, I wouldn't stick around long enough to get the chance to grab another passenger.*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 15, 2014, 06:22:33 PM**

"Ugh... let's just go!" Vergil said, throwing the door open when it became apparent whoever was in the bushes wasn't coming out. Besides... he was starting to see black sedans everywhere, and he didn't like it. Sliding into the front seat (there was precious little room in the back after all), he glimpsed another black sedan heading down the road and driving slowly past the parking lot, as if scanning it. "I'd go." Vergil murmured, trying to look as inconspicuous as a mutant white-skinned gecko with feathers could look.

Tony gripped Axel's hand as firmly as he could, which wasn't very firmly at all, but his fluttering eyes were starting to focus at least, and he was coming back to his senses after the trauma of being clubbed and shot. "What happened?" he asked, trying to relax as best he could. "Damn this hurts... was I... shot?" he asked with some confusion, trying to make sense of it all. He was trembling, the adrenaline coursing through his body to tell him something was wrong... he was in danger... but he tried to focus instead on Axel's calming influence, and not panic.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2014, 06:33:40 PM**

Marie shut the door, and Marita pulled out of the parking lot and drove down the road..as quickly as the speed limit allowed.. 'Tony, does your father have any, well ' safe houses' you know places where you can lie low for awhile? i'm hoping he does, because you need a place to lie low for awhile' Marita said as she turned down on to the main street in the area. ' you've been shot in the neck, and lost quite a bit of blood. we're trying to get you to a safe place so we can properly care for your injuries. and I dont think your dad is going to take kindly to the fact you've been shot. if he finds out.. well we're likely dead. so.. please.. don't tell him about this.." Marita said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 15, 2014, 07:49:32 PM**

Soren took off his gear and stuffed it back into the locker as the vehicle sped down the road.

Anne pressed the intercom. "Go to Lanthae Square. There's a guy I know who can help him. Name's Tommy Jiang. He's a 'backalley doc'." She spat out the last words. While it was true some backalley doctors were little more than talentless hacks with a scalpel or completely insane, some – like Thomas Jiang – were fully qualified doctors and cybernetic surgeons who decided to go rogue, implanting augmentations without regard to the law, caring only if the would-be Augment could afford the surgery and implants.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 15, 2014, 10:06:29 PM**

"No... no safe house!" Tony protested weakly, trying to pull himself up using the back of the car seat before falling back down. "I'll be fine... I feel fine!" he insisted through slurred speech. He heard Anne's suggestion over the intercom, and thought about this now. "All right... we can do that... but no augments... I don't need augments." he said, shaking his head a tad here. "Just get patched up... some painkillers maybe..." he suggested, coughing a bit again, which caused him to wince in pain.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 15, 2014, 10:44:30 PM**

The Pierce-Arrow roared through the streets. The combustion powered vehicle was a dramatic contrast to the electric vehicles that plied the streets. Then again, most of the output of the algal oil farms went to making plastics, military vehicles, heavy ships, airplanes (try as they might, electrically powered airplanes and heavy cargo ships couldn't compete with the old combustion powered vehicles).

What was leftover was sold to classic car enthusiasts or those who simply wanted the status symbol or nostalgia of driving an old combustion vehicle.

Soren peeked out the window of the trailer. It was starting to grow dark and the LED streetlights began to turn on. He sighed. By the time they got to the Night Market, it would be busy. He only hoped there was some way to smuggle Tony to Doctor Jiang without attracting unwanted attention.

(OOC - In this world, civilian gasoline and diesel vehicles are kind of like real-world horse and buggy. Impractical for modern transportation but still used for their romantic/historical association and sport. As a sidenote, a common entry level "fueler" <slang for liquid fueled vehicle> is what would be recognized in the real world as a Toyota Camry)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 16, 2014, 03:18:19 AM**

"Hey, hey, come on..." Axel coaxed, gently holding Tony down, feeling the ferret trembling. "You can't move so much. Just... just try and relax..." The bandage around his neck was starting to soak through already. He glanced up at the driver's seat. "Hurry it up, Marita..."

Axel looked back down at Tony. "Hey, you got something against augments, pal?" he said, smiling sickly, trying to keep Tony's mind from the situation.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2014, 07:28:37 AM**

' to the doctor it is then..' marita said as she redoubled her speed, she reached lathae square within a few minutes ' so where does this doctor normally hang out in the square/' she asked through the intercom. we know that twe can drive around most of the traffic and got tony to him sooner.."
-
 rose wrapped another fresh bandage around tonys neck., the towel she was using as a tourniquet was now stained with blood on about a quarter of its surface. she shifted the towel and moved to a unbloodied section of it, continuing to squeeze toght to prevent any more blood loss.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 16, 2014, 06:14:17 PM**

As they reached Lanthae Square, Nairda continued to be unconscious.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 16, 2014, 09:21:02 PM**

"OK..." Tony said weakly, not protesting against Axel holding him back down. He tried to do as instructed and just relax. He wasn't aware that his blood was already soaking through the first bandage rather handily. "So... how do I look?" he asked hopefully, just barely able to see it if he moved his head downward a bit, and it wasn't much; more like the edge of the bandage. "Oh god...!" Tony exclaimed upon seeing his own blood soaking his shoulder. "Oh god... are we close?" he asked, noting they were back in Lanthae Square. He almost attempted to pull himself up again before remembering Axel's instructions, and sighed and sank back down.

"No... no of course not!" he smiled at Axel's mock accusatory question. "I just... I'm just scared... that's all." he said, the rat clearly seeing the fear was genuine in the ferret's eyes. "I'm not gonna die... right?" he asked, his voice light and breathy as he searched Axel for answers.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2014, 09:45:51 PM**

We're close Tony' Just hold on for a few more minutes, we're getting you to a doctor' marita said she continued driving through the square."Anne, do you have the doctors number, if you do, call it! Tell him this is an emergency" she said through the intercom.."Time is of the essence!' she said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 17, 2014, 03:00:24 AM**

Axel shook his head firmly. "*No way*. You're going to be fine. You hear me?" Looking up briefly through the window, he could see they 'd reached the square. *Almost there...* "C'mon, you're a Stracci, right?" he continued, keeping a hold of Tony's hand. "You think something as pathetic as a bullet's going to bring you down?! I sure as hell don't think so."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 17, 2014, 01:48:17 PM**

"No can do, he doesn't have a phone. It's word of mouth," Anne replied.

The car pulled into an empty lot near an alleyway.

Soren opened the door and Anne got out.

The mare knocked on a door that was battered and scarred. A camera on an arm aimed at her. "Password?"

Anne looked around. "Blue Screen," she whispered.

With a hiss, the magnetic locks disengaged and the biting odor of disinfectant wafted out from a white hallway.

"Hurry!" Anne barked.

Soren stood by Axel with his rifle at the ready in case someone wanted to finish the job on Tony.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 17, 2014, 03:30:40 PM**

Opening the car door, Axel looked uncertainly down the hallway that had been revealed, but Soren's presence with his rifle made him feel more at ease. He looked down at Tony. "Alright, we're here... we have to move you, okay? Just... just lean all your weight on me and Marie, we'll do the all the work..."

Shifting his position, he gently put Tony's arm around his neck and waited for Marie to do the same. "Okay, I'm going to lift you up," Axel cautioned. "Remember what I said, just lean on us. Three... two... *one*!" He heaved him up, one hand around Tony's waist, the other keeping hold of the arm around his neck, keeping him steady. Grunting, Axel climbed out of the car and staggered with Tony towards the white corridor.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 17, 2014, 03:40:53 PM**

MarIe and Rose helped support the other side of Tony while marita got out and helped Axel carry tony's lower half, 'carry him to a stretcher and lets wheel him into surgery' Marita said " The augments with us will have to get theirs repaired' the building was that of a small hospital clinic' we have a shooting victim here she called out to a nurse , who was sitting at a counter reading from looked to be a newspaper. ' you loking fir the doc. hes in room 13. take the patient in yourself '; the nurse replied. a stretcher lay unused near an open door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 17, 2014, 04:32:45 PM**

Doctor Tsing "Thomas" Jiang had been alerted to the recent arrival. Room 13 had been prepped and cleaned for surgery and Doctor Jiang had scrubbed up and gotten himself ready to perform the operation.

He turned to the group entering. "I presume he is the patient?" he asked, pointing to Tony with his stainless steel hands. Despite the blue glow coming from his cybernetic eyes, his gaze was businesslike. His voice had the soft, faint accent of one native to Hong Kong and had learned English as an adult.

Anne watched as the door slid shut and locked itself. Soren was looking around. His rifle dangled from its sling as he watched Axel and the others hustled Tony down the sterile hallway. A Vulpine orderly was wheeling a Wolverine who had just had his augmentation surgery down to the recovery room.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 17, 2014, 04:52:50 PM**

Yes' Marita said as she marie and Rose helped lay Tony on the operating table. ' we just want his injuries treated, no augments for this one' MArita added, as she removed the bandages, a dobermann nurse entered carrying a tray of thread and stitches' biodegradable stitches ' she said to Marita "We'll go into surgery immediately she said ' the surgery should take a couple hours there are magazines and books in the waiting room we'll buzz you when he is in the recovery room.'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 17, 2014, 06:04:09 PM**

Axel nodded at what the nurse said, then looked down at Tony. "I guess you won't be the pretty boy anymore," he said with an awkward grin. Then he gently touched the ferret's shoulder. "We'll be here for you when you get out alright? Just... you'll be fine. Trust me."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 17, 2014, 06:42:21 PM**

Tony was led out of the car, and then practically picked up and carried (which he didn't think he needed, but he didn't protest against either) into the clinic. He tried to hold back his tears, but he couldn't. He started to cry a bit, sobbing as he was dumped onto the gurney. "I don't know... I just don't know..." he said now, then nodded as Marita practically spoke for him. "Yes... no augments...unless... unless it's needed." he said softly here, not ruling out the possibility that the bullet had paralyzed his left arm... he didn't think so, but he couldn't tell. He could move it at least, but due to the pain, couldn't give it full mobility.

He looked up at Axel, almost pleadingly, and nodded. "I hope so. I just... I'm holding you guys up... you should go on... go fight your fight." Tony said, blinking away more tears. "I'm sorry this happened... I'm really sorry." he whispered. He wasn't being completely logical about his own situation, but the guilt was his strongest emotion right now, and it was winning out over everything else.

"Just uh... yeah... I know you'll be close by." the ferret nodded here, setting his jaw firmly to try and get ready for this. "Guess I always fear being knocked out and operated on..." he offered a small smile here. "Take care and... see you soon." He patted Axel's hand on his shoulder, and let him go.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 17, 2014, 08:27:22 PM**

Hang in there Tony " Marita said patting him on the shoulder as the nurse put a needle in his arm and began injecting the anesthesia you'll be out in a matter of seconds' she said calmly. once we're done you'll be much better, i promise' she said.
- marita Rose and Marie headed out to the lobby to wait..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 18, 2014, 01:55:39 AM**

Axel watched anxiously as Tony was wheeled away. Once he disappeared from sight, he let out a trembling breath, finally allowing his features to show how scared he was. Turning, he made his was slowly back to the others in the waiting room.

"Jesus, how did everything go so wrong..." he muttered to Soren, brittle-voiced, rubbing a hand over his eyes in exhaustion. Having to wait while Tony was taken care of was making him nervous. *We need to go back for Lily as soon as we can...* After a second, he paused and looked up at the others. "Hey, didn't you guys say Nairda was messed up from that... pulse thing? Maybe they could help him here..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2014, 08:28:49 AM**

Lets go bring him in ' Rose said as she got up from her seat ' Comer on Axel' she said. " we wont be more than a few minutes she said to marie and Marita. rose heaed to the front of the clinic and out to the trailer where she found Nairda unconscious.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 18, 2014, 11:39:08 AM**

Nairda lay there, doing and saying nothing. A bird had flown through the window and was pecking him in the forehead trying to eat his brains.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2014, 12:26:55 PM**

Marita shooed the bird away and helped the others pick Nairda up " alright We'll need to get his augment repaired.. this is going to be a hefty bill' marita muttered as she lifted Nairdia's upper half. " Letas get him in and get him treated.' She said. the trio began carrying him into the clinic.
- the nurse at the front desk sighed as sdhe saw they carry nairda in ' whats the problem with this one?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 18, 2014, 01:08:59 PM**

"I think he's got more than a few problems..." Axel muttered, struggling to hold Nairda up by the legs - his armour weighed a tonne. "But right now, something happened to his augments... Look, could we maybe put him on a stretcher? He's really heavy..." Axel motioned for Marita to help carry him over to another stretcher in the corner, and dumped him in it.

Axel turned back to the nurse as he struggled to get his breath back. "Is... is there any way he could get... checked out now? It looks pretty bad..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2014, 01:23:33 PM**

Marita put the fox down on the stretcher in a plop. " Fine" The nurse said ' Room 4, i'll have someone come in to fix the augment implants. What happened?' EMP pulse" Marita said evasively 'Well that will do it, just wheel him down there" the nurse said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 18, 2014, 02:18:39 PM**

As they rolled Nairda into the back, the other nurse spoke to the healthy members of the party. "Its late, and we understand that these surgeries can take time. As you wait for your friends, we have freely available lodgings prepared for you to stay in on the west wing." On-site sleeping quarters served double purpose; it also ensured that the clients didn't leave until they paid for the procedure...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 18, 2014, 02:32:23 PM**

A internal cyberneticist had gotten her tools ready and scrubbed up in preparation for surgery.

The surgical suite looked like a cross between an electronics workshop and an operating room. Which made perfect sense since this was a room for operating on Augments.

Before the operation, a nurse-cybernetician plugged in some wires to some ports on his armor. He examined the results of the scan from his laptop.

"The implants in his head have been completely fried," he said. He then turned to Marita. "Exactly what was he doing to damage his implants so severely?

Doctor Jiang had his eyes zoom in on Tony's neck wound. The bullet had ripped open his jugular vein and narrowly missed his carotid artery. Another command ordered his fingers to shrink down to needle-fine points. His magnetized fingers helped hold onto the tiny needle. With that, he began to carefully sew up the gash in the vein.

A nurse arrived transfusion bag of artificial blood that would replace the amount of blood Tony had lost.

Soren sighed as he put his magazine down. "I don't know. Honestly, if I hadn't charged in like that, we wouldn't be in such deep shit."

The door slid open and a lithe Boa Constrictor slithered in.

Anne was in another room. Her horn was connected to a similar monitor and another nurse-cybernetician was examining her.

"So how bad is it?" she demanded.

"You're lucky the implant's not completely destroyed. It won't need to be replaced but the repairs under local anesthesia. As for your antenna, we'll properly repair that as well."

"Well fuck," she said. The mare folded her ears back as the nurse-cybernetician placed the injector gun against her forehead and fired.

Two more nurse-cyberneticians came in with tools and spare supplies at the ready.

(OOC - injector guns use pressurized argon to fire dried medicine at supersonic speeds to get them past the skin. It's more hygienic and produces less waste than a standard syringe.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2014, 02:41:29 PM**

there was a electromagnetic pulse in the area we were in that hit him really hard. it didnt affect me because i dont have any augments.' Marita said."Can you fix it?"
- it could be worse, ewe could all be dead' Marie said as she grabbe a newspaper, which talked about the assassination. ' i honestky dont know how we are going to pull this off..' she sighed.' do we have enough to pay for the surgeries for Tony, Nairda and Anne?'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 18, 2014, 04:09:02 PM**

An hour passed. The surgeries were nowhere near finished.

"I'd be willing to show any of you to your assigned sleeping rooms if you like," offered the nurse to those not getting surgery.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 18, 2014, 04:24:30 PM**

Axel rubbed his hands over his eyes again and sighed, exhausted. "I... don't know. But we'll deal with that when we need to." He turned his eyes up to the clock mounted up on the wall, and saw that the time was into the early hours of the morning. *When was the last time I slept?* He knew every second counted... but going full throttle for days at a time had left him feeling drained. *And I won't be able to do anything for Lily if I'm dead on my feet...*

Running a hand through his hair, he stood up and looked around at the group, dark circles under his eyes. "Guy's, I'm... I need a rest. Feeling like I might collapse. If... if something happens and I'm still asleep, wake me up?" Raising a hand weakly in goodbye, he made his way across the room and followed the nurse towards the West Wing. Once he arrived, Axel let himself into an empty room and collapsed face first onto the bed, half hanging off it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 18, 2014, 04:40:19 PM**

Soon, there was a knocking on Axel's door. "Mr. Whent?" Asked the nurse. "You've, uh, got a letter."

She slid a plain white envelope under the door. Other than a stamp indicating the hospital had scanned it for dangerous substances and it came up plain, the only thing written Axel's name and the hospital's address.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2014, 05:02:06 PM**

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marie rested her head against Maritas shoulders while they waited. rose was doing a crossword puzzle from a magazine, she was about halfway finished, the current question she was pondering was' what was the first vehicle to go to mac 10? ' the answer was the 'omnishot' and Rose soon filled it in.. the time was 330 in the morning.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 18, 2014, 05:19:16 PM**

Axel jerked up at the knock on the door, struggling to remember for a second where he was. Looking blearily over to where the sound had come from, his eyes narrowed when he saw the letter slide under the gap. Blinking, he raised himself up and slowly approached the envelope. Bending to pick it up, he turned it over in his hands, using the moonlight that poured through the tiny window to look at the writing on the front. Taking the envelope back to his bed, he sat down and paused for a second before cautiously opening it.

After he read the letter, Axel let out a trembling breath and dropped it beside him, then lowered his head to his hands. His fingers twisted his hair as he thought desperately about what to do. He knew it was probably a lie... that nothing good could come of it. *I have to... I have to take the chance...* Axel raised his head and looked down with dark rimmed eyes at the letter again.

He made up his mind.

Scrunching the letter into his jeans pocket, he stood up and quietly approached the door. Checking nobody was in the hall outside, he slowly let himself out and made his way down the corridor, heading towards the waiting room. Poking his head around the corner, he could see Marita, Rose and Marie were still there but facing away from him... and from the entrance. Swallowing, Axel crept out and across the room, wincing as his trainers squeaked slightly on the polished floor. After what seemed like forever, he managed to reach the hallway leading down to the entrance. As he approached, the metallic door opened automatically with a hiss. Axel stopped and looked behind him. *I'm sorry... I'll see you all again soon... I hope.* Taking a deep breath, he stepped out, hearing the door lock itself behind him.

Alone on the dark streets, Axel looked around, fingers flexing nervously and breath misting up in the cold. The road was just ahead of him, and slightly further up he could see a taxi parked on the side. Jogging up, he climbed in and told the driver where to go, handing over the last few creds he had left in his wallet. The car pulled out and set off, leaving the backalley clinic behind him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 20, 2014, 02:41:25 AM**

At 5 A.M., the surgeries were finished and all the patients in the recovery room.

Doctor Jiang entered the waiting room. "Marita, Rose, Marie and Soren, the operations are finished. The patients should be coming out of anestheia soon.

Soren didn't hear him. His rifle lay across his lap.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 20, 2014, 05:58:36 AM**

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maire got up to wake up soren. ' they'e out of surgery' she said as kindly as she could given the early- or late- hur. marita headed to the open door on the left and entered she saw tony on the bed a large bandage wrapped around his throat. ' so how are you feeling now?' she said with a smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 20, 2014, 06:41:58 AM**

The sound of the cab's engine faded as the driver sped away, leaving Axel standing alone at the end of the road. The dim sunlight that was just beginning to break over the horizon cast a dull, bronze glow to the street. Axel looked at the street sign, then glanced down to the crumpled note in his hand. *Rhode Way*. This was the right place. Swallowing, he followed the road up, counting off the houses as he passed. 95... 93... 91...

The sound of shuffling ahead of him caught his attention, and he looked in front to see an alarmingly rough looking woman stumble down from one of the doorways, her short leather skirt dubiously stained. "Hey hon," she barked, fixing her slightly bleary eyes on him, "Quick lay? Gettin' late but I can make it fast, and it'll cost less..."

"Ah... n-no. No thanks," Axel blinked, stepping past her quickly.

"Fuckin' prude!" She shouted after him, turning to wander off.

Chewing his lip, Axel looked at the number of the next house. 89. He nervously looked at the note one final time. *5:00 am. 89 Rhode Way. Right alley. Come alone, or I won't show myself. I know how to save Lily.* He could see the dark alley to the right of the building. Taking a deep breath Axel stepped cautiously into it, the weight of the Luger still tucked into the back of his jeans giving him some small comfort, though it only had a few bullets left. He peered down the passageway, trying to discern anyone who might be lying it wait for him from the dark shapes of the dumpsters and trash littered around.

Axel cleared his throat. "Hey, I... I'm here! And I'm alone!" he called out, trying to sound more confident than he felt. "Who are you? What do you know?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 20, 2014, 01:22:44 PM**

Soren awoke with a snort. He shook his head to clear the sleep from his eyes.

"Well, that went well."

Anne was already up and walking. Because her surgery was minor, all she got was simple local anesthetic. A bandage was wrapped around the base of her horn. Luckily, thanks to Doctor Jiang's expert hands, there would be no scarring.

"Well, at least everything's back to normal." She tested her horn on a nearby TV, overriding its normal late-night talkshow to put her own face on the TV and her voice. "Well, it looks like my horn's back to working order like when I first got it."

"I'll go get Axel and we can then pay for everything and get moving." Soren got up and slung the rifle over his shoulder.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 20, 2014, 02:08:43 PM**

"Not so loud," cautioned Emilena Echo, emerging from the shadows at the end of the alley. A pistol was clipped clearly to her waist, but she held no weapons and was on the side of the alley that freely gave Axel the ability to exit to the street if he wished. "This is the bad side of town..."

Nairda stirred as he came out of his dream. "Emilena, is you there, biatch?" he muttered drowsily. "I dreamed you n' I were...where is yo slick ass, biatch? Where be I, biatch?"

He shook his head dizzily. "And what tha fuck happened ta mah voice?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 20, 2014, 07:38:18 PM**

Axel started, squinting in the dark as he tried to make out the figure who'd emerged... then recoiling back a step when he recognised Emilena. "You!" he gasped, reaching a hand back to hold the Luger but not drawing it out just yet. "What... where did you..."

Axel's eyes narrowed. "The letter was from you... Why the hell would you care what happens to Lily? You got what you wanted, Lupis has her!" He looked around quickly, half expecting to see the wolf leap out at him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 20, 2014, 07:59:20 PM**

Emilena sighed. "I made a deal with Lupis to get out of Purifier prison, and that's as far as my allegiance went." She unclipped the pistol from her belt and threw it at Axel's feet. "Of course nobody gave me the chance to explain that..."

Her muscles were tense and her eyes were darting nervously to the opening of the alley. "Lily was the only one of our entire team who didn't instantly think the worst of me. And now I can repay that kindness. But you're going to have to trust me, like she did."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 20, 2014, 08:10:24 PM**

Soren knocked on the door of Axel's room.

"Hey Axel, the surgery went perfectly. Tony, Anne and Nairda are recovering right now."

No response. Soren knocked on the door harder. To his amazement, the door swung open. The bed had obviously been slept in with blankets piled up at one end.

"Axel?" A shudder ran up Soren's spine. He looked around the room. "Stop fucking around."

Still no response.

The Human suddenly got a sinking feeling in his stomach. He was aware this was a backalley clinic and despite how professional and clean it was, that didn't mean that someone could have kidnapped and ransomed, or worse experimented on him.

Scowling, he got his rifle ready and flipped off the safety. He saw a Golden Retriever housekeeper passing by the room.

"Excuse me, do you know where Axel Whent is?" he asked.

"No." The housekeeper entered the room.

Sighing, he returned to the lobby and confronted the secretary on duty. His rifle was at the ready but pointed towards the ground. "What happened to Axel?" he asked. Soren's tone said one thing: I want answers and don't give me any shit.

Anne was reading a magazine as she sat next to Tony's bed. "So Tony, I'm guessing this is the first time you've been shot?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 20, 2014, 08:15:12 PM**

Keeping his eyes on her, Axel bent down quickly to scoop up the pistol she'd thrown. "Yeah... and look where trusting you would have got her..." he said as he stood, holding the gun but not aiming it at her. He didn't trust Emilena, not for a second... but he also couldn't think of a reason why she'd try anything now, when she could have just stayed away.

"And what could *you* do to help her?" Axel asked suspiciously, his uneasiness radiating from his posture.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 21, 2014, 12:22:47 AM**

Emilena took a deep breath and explained her plan to Axel. Regardless of how crazy it sounded, she explained how she 'escaped' the torture chamber, what she saw in her dreams, and her conclusions from them. She left out the part about visiting her parents.

"But obviously, you're going to have to get me into the Purifier base for any of that to happen," she finished. "I know your team must have a plan to get back in there, but there's no way any of them would ever trust me. It'd be up to you and me, but you've got to see that it's the best shot Lily will ever have of being normal again."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 21, 2014, 03:58:32 AM**

Axel stared back at Emilena for a long moment without saying a word. Then he slowly raised his hand and offered her gun back, grip first. "If you try anything... if you put her in any more danger, I *will* kill you." He loosened his hold on the barrel of the pistol.

Sighing, Axel shook his head. "Getting in isn't going to be easy. Last night we tried to go for Lupis and it... it didn't go so well. So the security around the base is gonna be even tighter. Tony knew about some secret ways to get in, but I never got to hear where they were exactly..." He trailed off as he thought of his friend's condition. Axel swallowed. "There's more... The Purifiers built some kind of pulse bomb and tonight they're gonna use it to slaughter as many augments in Lanthae as they can..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 21, 2014, 06:56:20 AM**

He left about 20-30 minutes ago, just walked right out. didnt say where he was going, didnt say anything in fact..' the secretary said.'he could be anywhere at this point, fella. but right now, the more important thing, is paying for the surgeries. once you do that, then you can go hunt down your pal' the secretary showed no fear, as if she was used to gun-toting people in this clinic.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 21, 2014, 11:41:43 AM**

"I honestly couldn't care less," Emilena folded her arms. "More power to the bastards."

She turned and leaped onto the chainlink fence blocking the exit to the alley. "That 'pistol' you just borrowed is actually a police tracker; its designed to be confiscated by the target so we can trace them. While it's in the lead-lined holster it can't transmit, but that also makes it immune to all abilities to detect tracers. So remove the gun from the holster once you want me to know where you are and no tracer-detecting allies are nearby."

Nairda walked into the waiting room. "Guys, dis is blingin son! Somethingz wack wit mah rap algorithms muthafucka! How tha fuck can I git dis ta stop?" He looked fearfully from left to right. "I aint goin ta sound like dis forever, be I...?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 21, 2014, 02:48:44 PM**

Axel stared at her, aghast, as Emilena dismissed what he'd told her about the bomb. "How can you say that? Innocent people are going to die!" *What the hell is wrong with her?*

Shaken at how Lily's only hope might lie with this woman, Axel glanced down at the pistol as she explained how it worked. *So I can't take it out around Anne... she'd detect it in a second. And I can't signal her when Soren's around, there's no telling what he'd do if he saw her again...* "Alright, but you'll need to be ready to move quickly," Axel said, looking up at Emilena as she jumped onto the fence. "If we're breaking in, I won't be able to wait too long." The sky was brightening - he'd need to try and get back before the others noticed he'd been gone for too long.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 21, 2014, 03:35:17 PM**

Tony groggily came awake, his eyes filmy and unable to focus at first. He heard Marita ask him something... how he was feeling probably. "Terrible..." he murmured, the nausea in his stomach from the anesthetic causing a really sick feeling deep within him. Looking around slowly, he noticed Axel wasn't even there. Wincing, he tried to rise, then fell back against the pillow. "Can I have..." his mouth felt like cotton, and he was unable to get the rest of the words out.

Closing his eyes as a tear or two slid down his cheeks, he tried to rest. "Yes..." he finally managed to say in response to Anne's question. Breathing heavily, the ferret cracked his eyes open a tad. "I don't suppose..." Nairda entering the room talking in that strange fashion which caused his head to swim, and his nausea to build as he groaned pitifully, clutching his abdomen. "Where's... Axel...?" he asked here, and then was unable to suppress it anymore.

He turned in the bed, and retched violently into a container near the bed. He felt like he was vomiting up his stomach as he lost his most recent meal and then some. When it was over after a moment or two, the ferret collapsed back against the pillow, a look of anguish on his face. "Fuck!" he exclaimed sadly. "I can't go anywhere like this!" He started sobbing a bit, the unpleasant sensations of having been anesthetized not sitting well with him, and causing his mind to reel a bit as he was bombarded all at once.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 21, 2014, 03:54:06 PM**

"Take it easy," Anne said as she rubbed Tony's back. She pressed the call button on the wall.

"Can we get a nurse with an antiemetic agent?" she said into the microphone.

Soren scowled. "I'll go speak to the others."

He then turned to Rose, Marita and Maria. "So who's paying?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 21, 2014, 08:07:45 PM**

"Trust me," Emilena assured as she darted off into the blackness, "I've never been one to waste time..."

"Yo muthafucka, is mah playas listenin ta me son?" Nairda cried, "This is serious muthafucka! How tha fuck is I supposed ta pick up chicks soundin like this?"

He marched up to the receptionist. "Let me peep Dr. Jiang at once!" he demanded, stomping his foot for emphasis. "Shiiit, dis aint no joke. That quack has fucked up hardcore!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 21, 2014, 09:53:32 PM**

we'll have to pool our credits' Marita said as the secretary handed them the bill her eyes widened ' half a million credits!" she whistled and looked at the others.. ' guys how many credits do we have?
_
lets see' Marie said digging into her purse and pulling out a ' credits Counter" this scanned credits cards and displayed a readout of how many credits were on the card' Marita gave hers to Marie and she scanned it 37153; So under 400 dollars' 371 to be precise' Marie said. as she swiped her own. 21170. ok I have a little over 200 dollars. "Rose how about you?' marie said rose handed her hers.. but she barely had any credits 900' You have 9 bucks on you? thats it?' Marita said." and the clothes on me, yeah Rose admitted.
so between the three of us we have 59223 credits, or just under 600 dollars Marie said. You need 50 grand' the secretary said..
_Please have a seat sir" the receptionist replied to Nairda.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 21, 2014, 10:29:24 PM**

Tony relaxed a bit as Anne called for antiemetic. Sighing miserably, the ferret closed his eyes. "I've never been anesthetized before... guess I'm not reacting well to it." he murmured. "God, my stomach... uggggh." he groaned, rubbing it with a paw.

He reached out, and clasped Anne's arm with his free paw, as if for support as he reopened his eyes. "Painkillers would be good too..." he mumbled, a rather ill look washing over his face. "Don't worry about my bill... my family can cover my end of things... I got a card for emergencies." he said, almost in agony. "Ugggh..." he groaned again, still gripping Anne. "Where's Axel?" he asked again, his words slurred.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 21, 2014, 10:42:41 PM**

A nurse came in with a tray containing painkillers and the antiemetic as well as a cup of water. Another nurse removed the garbage can to be cleaned up.

Anne shook her head as she wrinkled her nose at the odor of vomit that still hung in the room. "I haven't seen him since we arrived. I'll go ask Soren and the others."

She took a look at the bottle of painkillers. Non-narcotic. The mare made a note to go light up a joint as soon as she got the chance. She turned around and made a move to leave the room.

"Tony, will you be okay by yourself?"

"I'm broke," Soren replied. He emptied his pockets. All that came out was a credit chit that he had swiped from the car he had stolen ó and it had 150 credits. Just enough for a soda at a vending machine.

He watched as the door slid open and a Human with a glowing red eye went up to the receptionist.

Doctor Tsing "Thomas" Jiang entered his office where Nairda was sitting. The doctor's blue electronic eyes bored into the Wolf. The doctor was a lean middle agd Chinese man who looked younger than his 44 years. A neutral expression was on his face as he temples his stainless steel prostheses on the table.

"Nairda," he said, his voice betraying his Hong Kong origins. "I need to speak to you about your non-payment."

Behind him were his diplomas from the schools he had attended as well as his (expired) Lanthae license to practice cybernetic surgery.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 21, 2014, 11:33:16 PM**

"No! Don't go!" Tony reached out for her, and then let his arm fall with another sigh. "I know I've held you guys up long enough but... I would appreciate the company." he said honestly, reaching out for the antiemetic and painkillers and took them, trying not to gag as his reflux acted up again.

Outside, Vergil eyed the approaching man with the red eye, keeping his orange eyes peeled for any further trouble. He'd been dozing when Axel had slipped out, and had woken up a few minutes ago.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 22, 2014, 01:47:26 AM**

Axel sighed as Emilena ran off, then turned the gun over in his hands, making sure it was firmly secured into the holster. It was small, so at least it wouldn't be too obvious he suddenly had an extra pistol on him. Clipping the holster onto the side of his trousers, he pulled his top down to conceal it then walked out of the alley, emerging back out onto Rhode Way. He didn't have enough credits on him to order a taxi, but if he hurried, he could probably make it back in okay time.

Jogging down the pavement, he passed the decrepit-looking prostitute sitting in the gutter and smoking a cigarette. She spat at his feet when she saw him. "Found yer balls yet, little boy? I could help ya find 'em for half price..." Gasping, Axel picked up speed and ran around the corner, heading back to the clinic.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 22, 2014, 06:12:42 AM**

I'm going to go check with Tony' Marita said to the others as she went into the room where Tony was " Hi Tony" she smiled at the ferret ' thoght i'd keep you company.. we have a problem Tony, the surgeries for you anne and nairda.. well they're going to cost 50 thousand, dollars not credits. and we have less than 1000 bucks on us. do you have enough money for to pay for it?" she asked as she sat down..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 22, 2014, 02:23:33 PM**

Nairda's eyes went wide and he sat straight. His apprehension betrayed his attempt to pretend he didn't recognize Dr. Jiang and have a past history.

"Yo ass did dis ta me biaaatch! I thought you was a phat doctor playa! How tha fuck could your fresh ass screw up so badly?" He yelped, trying and failing to sound indignant.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 23, 2014, 03:21:55 AM**

Axel eventually drew near the clinic. By now, the sun had risen high enough to reveal just how grungy Lanthae Square was. *I can't believe they made a clinic here...* Casting his eyes towards the building, he saw with relief that the car and trailer were still parked outside. Staggering over, he leaned against the side of the trailer, trying to get his breath back and thinking of what to say. After a while, he walked over to the barred door, looking apprehensively at the camera as it swiveled over to him.

"Password?" a voice demanded.

Axel's mind blanked for a moment. "Ah... oh, Blue Screen!" The locks on the door disengaged with a clunk and it slid open. Taking a deep breath, Axel stepped into the spotless hallway, making his way down to the reception room. When he reached it he saw Vergil and Soren hanging around and walked over, raising a hand in greeting. "I'm back. Sorry I just vanished, I just... I needed to clear my head for a bit. Things were getting kind of, ah... overwhelming..." He grimaced and scratched his bandage, not meeting Soren's eyes. "Anyway, how... how are the others doing? Is Tony okay?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2014, 08:06:02 AM**

rose and marie waved to Axel. ' needed some time to yourself? we all need from time to time..' MArie said ' tony made it through ok, but now we're trying to figure out how to pay for the surgeries. how many credits do you have on you Axel? because its a half a million credits for the three surgeries.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 23, 2014, 09:44:05 AM**

Vergil nodded at Axel as he reappeared, but noticed the evasive nature of the rat. Narrowing his eyes, he studied the rodent for a moment. He was hiding something... but why? What could possibly be worth hiding?

In the recovery room, Tony looked up as Marita entered. She was "keeping him company", but in reality was asking him for money. "Uhh... no... I don't think I do." he shook his head here. "I think that... ugh!" he put a paw up to his mouth again, waiting for the antiemetic to take effect. "My emergency card is to cover things like my emergency expenses... but I doubt my dad would want me to use it for other things. I could always ask, though. Don't you guys have insurance?" he inquired, rubbing his stomach, as he still felt like hurling again, the nausea not immediately subsiding.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2014, 10:07:57 AM**

"Let me see' Marita said.. digging through her purse.. " I asked because we dont have much cash on hand.. ah here.. I DO have insurance.. and you have enough to pay for yours.. that leaves anne and Nairda.. i'm glad to see you pulled though.. you really scared us..' She said softly, as she handed him a tissue.. ' here if you have to throw up again.. So, once we get out of here, i'll be driving the car for a bit until you feel fully up to it. hopefully that shouldnt be too long, because time is not a luxury we have, those lunatics are going to release their bomb in less than 24 hours and we cant afford to make any more mistakes..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 23, 2014, 10:36:28 AM**

"I don't even know if the doc's gonna let me move in my condition." Tony said a bit despondently as he looked down at the floor. "I mean once the drugs kick in... I should be good enough to drive... but... that's only if I'm allowed to be discharged... getting shot... isn't there usually a recovery time?" he asked, looking up now as he glanced at the clock. The antiemetic was starting to work, but painkillers typically took about 20 minutes, and his throat was throbbing. "If I'm laid up... then I guess I'll miss whatever's coming next..." he said sadly, gulping a bit here as he lay back against the pillow and stared at the ceiling.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 23, 2014, 11:08:38 AM**

Axel shook his head. "No, I... I don't have anything," he told Marie. "Sorry. Doesn't anyone else have any credits on them?" As he spoke, he felt Vergil's eyes on him, searching him, and he blinked back at the gecko awkwardly. "Vergil? Are, uh... is everything okay?" Axel shifted uncomfortably.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 23, 2014, 11:24:23 AM**

Vergil's eyes were still on Axel, and he spoke in his even tones as he explained his line of thinking. "You're hiding something, or at least your body language tells me you are. You failed to make direct eye contact with Soren, your posture indicates a defensive and not open stance, so that to me says that you're keeping something back, or at the very least, uncomfortable. What is wrong?" he asked pointedly, raising a brow and frowning thoughtfully. "I take it you did more than just clear your head on this walk."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 23, 2014, 12:14:22 PM**

Axel flinched. "I... uh..." He sighed, his ear flattening. "Alright... I *did* go for a walk, but when I was out there, I... well, I was thinking about heading off without you guys, trying to get into the Purifier base on my own." He looked up, shamefaced, at the group. "I just kept thinking about how Lily's still in there while they're doing... god-knows-what to her... and I thought about how long we were going to take here, and I just panicked. The only reason I didn't just take a cab and get out of here was because I don't have any credits left **to** go anywhere."

He swallowed. "I... I wasn't even thinking that I'd be abandoning the rest of you. It was *stupid*, and... and *selfish*, and I'm sorry. I wasn't going to say because I don't want you guys thinking I'd just leave you." Axel surreptitiously bit down on the inside of his cheek, and tears welled up in his eyes. "I won't ever think about doing it again, I promise." Inside, his stomach was twisting in knots. Lying to his friends made him feel lousy, but Axel knew he had no choice.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2014, 12:35:13 PM**

well, at least you changed your mind.' Rose said looking at him.' but this not something any of us can handle on our own.. only by working together can we have any chance of getting lilly back. i know she means a lot to you axel, and desperate people often do desperate things, but in the future you need to tell us first where you are going.
-
we'll give you some time to rest at the safehouse.. say an hour or two, but you're going to have to forgo the full recovery time- we cant afford to have you laid up for days on end.. we dont have that luxury' Marita said.' not when those lunatics are trying to turn Lanthae into a major hellhole. well, a bigger hellhole than it already is..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 23, 2014, 12:44:36 PM**

Vergil softened here as Axel explained, though the thoughtful frown was still on his face. "Well, I think your apology is owed more to your friends than to myself." he pointed out here. "I barely know you, but I know you seemed really close with some in this group. So perhaps you should tell them what you just told me." the gecko suggested with a slight smile here.

In the recovery room, Tony continued staring at the ceiling. "What if I don't have a choice in the matter?" he sighed sadly. "What if the doc tells me no way? I'm stuck here until I recover?" he sighed again, shaking his head. "I guess I shouldn't let that stop me... even if I risk reopening my wound..." he commented now, lifting a claw to the air and tracing imaginary patterns now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2014, 12:53:34 PM**

we'll convince him to let you out' Marita replied. ' you're going to need to take it easy, at least for a little bit. let your neck heal as best you can.. we have to stop these guys.. whatever it takes.. you hungry?" she asked. ' perhaps we can get you a shake to sip on...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 25, 2014, 07:14:12 AM**

Dr. Jiang was nonplussed. "Mister Nairda," he said as he fixed his blue electric gaze on the Augment. "You have failed to pay your bills with me. Currently, you owe me over a million creds in debt. Pay it all off now and I'll fix your vocoder. Be thankful that you merely sound like a second-rate rapper."

Soren sighed. "Axel, I'm handy with a gun *and* I had a powered exoskeleton. I did the same thing you did and nearly died. You'd be fucked for sure if you did it."

Anne came out of the bathroom. She passed her credit chit to the receptionist. As the repair procedure had cost her all of 900 creds, the card was now empty.

The mare flopped down on a chair. "Well, I paid for my bill, now we gotta pay for Nairda and Tony's."

She looked at the TV and turned it on. The headline "Anti-Augmentation Activist Publically Murdered!"

A crystal clear video of a Purifier being beheaded with a reciprocating saw usually intended to cut concrete played on the screen.

"Turn that shit off!" Soren snapped.

Anne did so. "Could that be the warning Tony mentioned?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2014, 07:30:34 AM**

Marie dug into her purse as the tv was turned off..' ah. good.. my insurance card.. all the workers at the club had to have insurance, due to the risk of guys getting into fight and stuff. lets see here.. i had enough coverage for 1 million credits, but i had that accident two years ago..she said as she ran the card through the credit counter."ah i have 375000 left' she said
 she got up and handed the insurance card to the receptionist ' you're paying for the augment huh' the receptionist said.. ' yeah nairda is part of our group' Marie said. ' ok, that leaves 124100 credits, since the augment over there paid hers. the receptionist said.
 Rose found her insurance card at the both of her purse, and took the credit counter from marie. ' 50500 credits' the counter said. ' you hardly have any insurance..' marie sighed, 'and i know why..' rose hung her head.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 25, 2014, 08:07:22 AM**

Before Anne had switched the TV off, reports that a second Purifier had been found naked, eviscerated and hanged from a construction site were also displayed. He had been cut from groin to collarbone, and his insides were seen dangling underneath him as his body hung lifeless from a crane. This Purifier was a bit more prominent than the first...

In the recovery room, Tony shook his head. "No I'm... I'm still a little woozy... the drug hasn't kicked in yet." he explained. "If I have to take it easy... I'm probably going to have to do it here." he reiterated. "I'll just see what the doc says. But I want to go... I want to go so badly..." He sighed, still staring at the ceiling. "If I can leave... I will. And even if I can't... I can't just sit here... even if I risk reopening my wound."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2014, 08:32:49 AM**

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you have to let the wound heal as best you can. we barely got you here in time' marita reminded him, ' but i understand your feelings. i'd be raring to go as well. we'll just have to wait for the doctor' she said as a nurse came in..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 25, 2014, 08:34:56 AM**

Axel nodded at the group, gratefully. "Thanks for not taking it personally. The more I think about it, the dumber it sounds." As Marie and Rose paid over the credits they had on them, he grimaced. "I'm... I'm sorry that I can't help with any of this. I mean, money was never something I really, ah... had." Shifting slightly in embarrassment, he looked up at the TV and blanched as he saw the images flashing up.

"I'm, ah, gonna go check on Tony," he choked, quickly turning away and heading down to the ferret's room, knocking on the door lightly. Opening it, he nodded at Marita and gave a small smile to Tony. "Hey... sorry I didn't come sooner. How're you doing? You look... uh, good..." he said unconvincingly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 25, 2014, 09:12:54 AM**

The conversation with Marita was starting to go in circles now, but fortunately, Axel's entry into the room spared the ferret any further need to agree that yes, ultimately, they had to wait for the doctor.

Tony raised his head, and gave Axel a blank stare. "No... I don't, I'm sure." he replied, looking off to the side here before shifting his gaze back to the rodent. "Where were you?" he asked accusingly, brow furrowed in consternation. "You were the last person I expected to show up last..." He trailed off, resting back against the pillow. "Not that it matters I guess..." He looked off to the side again. "I don't even know if I can go with you anymore. I haven't heard anything yet on my condition."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2014, 09:30:06 AM**

i'll letyou chat with Axel' marita said to tony getting up and leaving the room. she went down the hall and rejoined the girls in the lobby.'well tonys hanging in there' she said to them. we'll have wait until the doctor sees him before we know when or if we'll be able to take tony with us..'
- well rose and i found our insurance cards so we'll be able to cover most of the costs. annes cost wasnt very much, nairdas was' marie said.' how much as we short?" marita said ' 124000' rose said. ' tony has enough to cover his operation so we're good.'Marita replied. ' You guys hungry? theres a Mega Fries in the food court. you girls want anything?" ' sure just get me a mega fry' marie said ' me as well' Rose said. ' so 3 mega fries..' marita said relieved that she could use her credits on something other than hospital bills.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 25, 2014, 09:42:58 AM**

Axel's face dropped. "I know, I'm... I'm really sorry. I was going to do something really stupid, but I guess being poor worked out, for once." He crossed the room and took a seat in one of the chairs next to Tony's bed. The pistol Emilena had given him dug painfully into his back, and he shifted position. Axel blinked guiltily, wishing he could tell him the truth. "The whole situation just got to me..."

He swallowed and tried smiling again, hoping Tony would forgive him. "Well, anyway, I'm glad you're, you know... still here. With us. And not, ah..." Axel trailed off. "Well, you know." He nodded vigorously. "Oh, don't worry about it! If you need to take it easy... I mean, I'd feel like crap if you got hurt again."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 25, 2014, 11:55:05 AM**

Tony didn't look in Axel's direction as he sat down, the ferret still looking off to the side and away from him. "What happened to doing this together?" he asked darkly, staring at the wall.

"But I guess I'm one to talk." he continued, his tone still having that edge to it. "Here I go and get myself shot... and maybe I won't even be able to join you guys for your final push." He closed his eyes here and frowned before crossing his arms over his chest. "Which means I'd be useless... and then's nothing worse than that when your friends are counting on you." he said, his body trembling a tad.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 25, 2014, 12:01:58 PM**

"Oh, did I never pay you all that, biatch?" Nairda rambled nervously. "All Out forgot son! I be bout ta just go git mah credit card outta mah pants...they still up in tha surgery room..." nervously he dodged back into the room he had just been operated on, and began trying to squeeze himself through a small decorative window that was roughly a third the size he was.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 25, 2014, 01:00:38 PM**

Axel didn't say anything for a moment. Then he leaned forward and put a hand on the ferret's shoulder. "Hey... look, nobody's blaming you for this. *Nobody*. You didn't ask for this to happen. What's important for you right now is that you get better, alright?"

He sighed. "You've already done so much for us... and for me. Lupis meant absolutely nothing to you, but you still went after him. There's... I mean, I can't think of what I could do to repay you for that... and for being my friend." Axel smiled at him. "So you have to stay alive until I can think of something, alright?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 25, 2014, 01:15:07 PM**

Tony exhaled sharply, and shook his head as if he was fighting back tears, or maybe he didn't believe it. "Sure..." he said now, more a shaky breath than a response.

He turned his head finally, rotating it across the pillow's top to look up at Axel, but he didn't face him directly. "You don't have to repay me... I know that." he responded, pursing his lips as his head started to swim... damn... were they really making painkillers this strong now? Closing his eyes, he all but collapsed back against the bed, sinking down into the pillow as he let the light-headed, swimming feeling wash over his mind. "I think I just want to rest..." he said, more a long sigh than a request.

Outside, Vergil perked up. "Hmm..." he narrowed his eyes now... sensing something. "Excuse me... I'll be right back..." he murmured, standing up out of his seat and making for the clinic's exit. That presence... it was very familiar to him... but why?

Throwing the door open, he looked from left to right up and down the alley, then started walking in the direction he sensed it. This way... yes... but what... or more correctly, *who* was it?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 26, 2014, 03:04:46 AM**

Axel looked down at the ferret as he drifted off. "Alright. I'll leave you alone. Just... take it easy alright? I'll try and stop by as soon as I can." Getting up, he crossed the room and left, quietly closing the door behind him. When it shut, he sighed and rubbed a hand over his hair. *At least he'll be safe here...* After a moment, he started heading back down the corridor to the reception.

Passing one of the doors on his way, he heard muffled thumping and scrabbling noises. Axel paused and looked at the door. **Surgery Room B**. For a second, there was silence, and he was about to continue when it suddenly started up again. Unsure, Axel clicked open the door and peeked through. "Is everything alri-" He stopped when he saw a figure trying to squeeze through an impossibly small window, and after a second, Axel recognised the rear that was wiggling in his direction.

"Nairda?" he gasped. "You, ah... you know there's a door in the reception?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 27, 2014, 12:08:16 AM**

Doctor Jiang crossed his arms as he looked around the room. He was normally pretty patient but Nairda was notorious for fucking up his recovery suites, failing to pay his bills and overall being an obnoxious asswipe.

"Next time he shows up, I'm denying him service until he pays up." He then got up and headed to Tony's room.

Anne's ears shot up as she heard a faint thumping noise. "The hell's that?"

Soren closed his magazine. "Marita, could you just get me a tempeh burger with all the fixings?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 27, 2014, 08:17:53 AM**

sure marita sxaid ' mind if i borrow a sheet of paper' she asked the receptionist ' the receptionist tore a couple notepad sheets from a note pad and handed it to her. 'Cabn do you do me a favor? get meme a burger, would ya, i've been stuck this desk all day and havent had time to go get me anything ' she said ' just a tempeh burger nothing on it. heres the credits for it.. she gave marita 1000 credits. 'whats your name?' Marita asked ' zula came the reply. 'i'm marita' marita replied. as she took out a pen and wrote down each persons order; "vergil, Anne, you want anything/" she asked taking the credits Zula gave her ' justvtell me wghhat you want and i'll write it down.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 27, 2014, 11:29:39 PM**

Regrettably Nairda returned to the room where the others were. "I can't pay so I be heroically escaping!" he informed the others.

He noticed that there appeared to be some serious chemistry between Zulu and Marie. "Yo...Zulu," he asked cordially. "Would you like ta travel wit us, biatch? We can always use one of mah thugs wit yo' scrilla sense." Then Marie would not have to live unloved...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 01:27:24 AM**

Soren smirked as he put the magazine down. "You really think he'd let you walk away without paying?"

"Mr. Stracci. May I come in?" Doctor Jiang asked as he knocked on the door to Tony's room.

An orderly carrying a neurotester passed by him.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 28, 2014, 02:49:55 AM**

Axel snorted. "Really? Heroically? If you say so..." They did need to find a way for him to leave though - a glance up at the clock mounted on the wall told Axel almost 45 minutes had passed since he returned. He noticed Vergil wasn't there, but assumed he was just out for a toilet break or something.

One of the orderlies walking through the reception caught his eye. He bit his lip, then turned to Soren and lowered his voice. "The people working here... they can leave the building if they need to, right?" Axel frowned. "And, uh... what's a scrilla sense?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2014, 08:38:42 AM**

The knock jolted Tony back into wakefulness, and his head snapped up as he came out of his uneasy sleep. "Sure thing, doc." the ferret replied, blinking wearily. He felt a lot better at least, if not slightly drugged out. "So... how's it look, doc? How long do I have to stay here?" he asked groggily as he came more awake.

Outside, Vergil was on the streets, and glanced around at the crowd. There! Up ahead, walking along amongst the people, the white gecko could see a green reptile anthro with her back to him. Narrowing his eyes, he hated how short he was, as he couldn't get a very clear shot of her. But she was there... and she was... familiar somehow. Not too familiar though... perhaps someone he knew briefly from before...

But he halted, sighing as he realized walking away wouldn't help his new comrades, so he turned and headed back into the clinic, shaking his head. Damn... a lead he couldn't pursue... terrible shame, really.

Sulking back to his chair, he sank back into it with a heavy sigh, and rested his forehead on his fingers.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2014, 10:08:22 AM**

"Moolah! Dosh! Simoleons! Smackers! Greenbacks! Dough! Aaaarrrgghh!" Nairda swore, having attempted to say the word 'money' seven times. "So what do you say Zulu? Come wit us?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2014, 11:29:48 AM**

Tony's stomach suddenly rumbled, and now that he was no longer nauseous, the ferret found himself with a certain craving that only mustelids could get in times like this. It was *that* kind of craving... deep and inherent, and he needed it. "Excuse me for a minute, doc." he said, raising his paw. "MARITA!" he called. "If you're going out... could uh... could you get me some... *CUSTARD*?" he asked hopefully, eyes wide. Yes, custard. Milk and egg yolk... eggs... *eggs*.

"Oh... sorry, doc." Tony blinked, coming out of his custard daze, and looked over at the doctor with a smile.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2014, 04:40:17 PM**

Alright Tony' Marita called back' Custard it is" she said, writing it down. Zula glared at Nairda ' Its Zula, with an a.. and well, i'm probably here for another couple hours.. until the other receptionist Musa comes in.. if she comes in early then i'll tag along with you folks, stretch my legs, that kind of thing ' she shrugged.
- i think you mean marita" Marie corrected Nairda as she stretched her legs, having sat in that chair for several hours. 'already have a girlfriend Nairda' Marita said firmly..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2014, 06:51:11 PM**

"Huh, biatch? I didn't mention either of yo slick ass?" wondered Nairda, confused. "I was rappin' ta Zulu!"

He crossed to the door. "Whatever playa letz git tha hell outta here!" He kicked the door open and scampered into the streets, grateful to be away from the vengeful prowling eyes of Dr. Jiang and his telepathic secretary.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 08:36:26 PM**

Or at least Nairda tried. The door to this underground clinic was specially reinforced to prevent people from breaking in.

"Nairda! What the fuck do you think you're doing!?" Anne snapped as she watched him try to break down the door.

An orderly went up to Nairda with a Taser in hand. "Back away from the door," she said calmly. The Puma locked eyes with him. "Doctor Jiang wants to talk to you after he sees another patient."

The doctor looked at Tony's chart and then the wound itself. It was still bloody and the stitches would eventually reabsorb but the liquid spray containing induced stem cells he had prepared from Tony's own blood was doing a remarkable job at healing it.

"It's doing quite well. If you follow the discharge instructions and keep using that liquid, it should heal fully in about a week or two. Right now, you can be discharged. As for activities, you can resume normal activities but nothing strenuous," he replied.

He pointed to the aforementioned bottle in its refrigerated jacket on the nightstand.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2014, 09:52:32 PM**

"Oh... thank god!" Tony sighed happily. "I was afraid I'd be cooped up here! Thank you, doc!" he exclaimed, climbing out of bed, and wobbling a bit on his feet. "Whoa! So uh... good painkillers!" he complimented the doctor, taking the bottle of fluid from him and heading for the bathroom to change. It always felt good to get released from intensive care and surgery, even though Tony had only done it once before.

Pretty soon, he was back in his usual attire, and walking out, bandage on his neck. "Hey guys!" he exclaimed, throwing his arms open wide. "I'm out! I can go... I'm a little stoned I guess from the meds, but otherwise, feeling OK." he said, nodding. He then noticed Nairda cornered by an orderly, and his eyes widened. "Uhhh... what?" he asked here, then shook his head. "Oh right..." Walking over to the receptionist, he handed her his emergency funds card, and paid his end of the bill. Most places didn't ask for money up front but...

"Anyway... we ready to go?" he asked the others. "Any suggestions on where to?" he inquired, his voice kind of a slurred, almost drunken tone. He was at least confident he could do this... whatever came next.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 10:03:33 PM**

"Nairda!" Doctor Jiang called from the hallway. "I need to see you about your debt!"

The orderly shoved him to get him to start moving.

Soren put his newspaper on the table. "I'm not sure but we need information."

Anne rubbed her horn and smiled. "I have an idea. Right now, the Purifiers are probably creaming themselves over a chance to kill some Augments, right?"

Soren nodded. "No shit."

"Right. I'll use my horn to spoof a transmission, we'll ambush a Purifier and squeeze them for some info."

Soren smiled. He had some "squeezing" in mind...and it wasn't metaphorical.

(OOC - the Purifier they catch is one of the arsonists who destroyed Soren's house. I'm planning that they spoof a message and lure a strike team to what they think is a dinky little Augment store. It's actually an abandoned bakery.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2014, 10:03:50 PM**

i was going to head out to grab some food marita said to Tony, glad to see him upand about . ' i'll drive for awhile, until you feel up to driving again.' as she said this a large Saint Bernard female entered ' Alright Zula you can get outta here, i'll be at the reception desk for the next triple shift' The bernard named Musa said.
-
lets go get some food ' Marie said ' yeah we still have leftover pizza, but i'm in the mood for fries.' ' i have my food list ' here marita said, turning to them others ' back to the car everyone.. marita said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2014, 10:18:36 PM**

"Heh heh, come on now, da perved-out muthafucka holla'd I don't git steez if I don't pay...I was willin ta make dat sacrifice..." murmured Nairda nervously, inching the only way Zula was allowing him...into Dr. Jiang's office. Before he left he cast one worried look at Marita. "Please Marie, help me up here biaaatch! Just pay him, I swear I be bout ta make it up ta you, nahmean biiiatch?"

Then he heard Zula was coming and his mood brightened. "You're coming! Ain't that chill

Marie? Yo ass two should smoke heterosexuizzle fries while chillin on each otherz lap up in tha trunk of tha car..." whatever else he was saying got interrupted by his falling with a cry into Jiang's office.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 11:06:15 PM**

"I am not in the mood for games Nairda," Doctor Jiang said as he fixed his icy electronic gaze on the Wolf.

"I saw what you tried to do on camera. You ruined a piece of expensive equipment in your 'escape attempt'. That adds another 500,000 creds to your debt. I have however analyzed your augments and they'll cover your debt. Now, you have two choices, come up with that cash by tomorrow or I will have my guards find you and I will remove and sell your augments to pay for it? Is that clear?"

Anne stepped out into the grimy alleyway. She cursed as she crunched a drug vial under her hoof.

Soren had his rifle ready and his eyes peeled for threats.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2014, 11:12:33 PM**

"Oh yeaaaa certainly sir playa!" Nairda stammered quickly, relieved that hadn't gone worse. "Yo ass won't be pissed tha fuck off hommie! I be bout ta have dat scrilla fo' you as soon as you won't even believe!" Inching his way away from the doctor, he gingerly turned the knob and made his way out into the lobby.

"Dum diddy-dum, here I come biaaatch! Who tha fuck wants lunch, biatch? I be famished fo' a shitload of mah straight-up cereal, *Alpha-Bits!*" He announced joyously to the girls.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 11:17:24 PM**

Anne glared at Nairda. "The fuck's wrong with you?"

Soren rolled his eyes. "Nairda, just shut up until your vocoder's fixed."

A drunken bum staggered into the alleyway and began to relieve himself against the trailer's rear tire.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2014, 11:18:11 PM**

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marita was the first to reach the arrow and opened the passenger side doors so tony and the other back seat passengers could get in. then she opened the drivers side door and climbed in. she wuld wakiit a minute or two for everyone to get in before starting the engine..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2014, 11:19:12 PM**

Tony nodded, and stepped out into the early morning air, noting his Pierce-Arrow was still there with a smile. "Ahhh good... nothing happened to her... she's still in one piece."

"Well I was gonna suggest I drive but... I can't... I'm not really hungry either, aside for custard. Maybe breakfast in a bit but... for now..." He shook his head. "Gotta just let my stomach settle. Soooo..." Maybe it was because he was high, he wasn't sure, but he was feeling more bold than he'd typically feel under any other circumstance. "Liquid courage" they called it, except he wasn't drunk.

He sidled over to Anne, not wanting to seem as if he was being too direct. "Anne..." he began. "I know you aren't really looking for a long term-relationship or anything but... for some reason... you've kinda grown on me." The ferret blushed here. "I uh... don't mean to be direct but... I don't think we have a lot of time... would you perhaps settle for a... short-term... relationship?" he asked, closing his eyes now, and expecting to get slapped. He seemed to shrink a little here, withdrawing in on himself in anticipation.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2014, 11:25:20 PM**

Nairda leapt into the Arrow, slamming the door shut behind him. "Helloooooooooo ladies and muthafuckas! I be a gangbangin' free man! Now, whoz payin fo' brunch, biatch? I would yo, but I aint got a gangbangin' finger-lickin' dime biaaatch!" " He fluttered his eyelashes at Soren. "How tha fuck bout you pay snookums? Since I don't wanna distract Marie n' Zula from their...date...."

His idiocy was giving Anne and Tony the privacy they needed outside.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 28, 2014, 11:34:29 PM**

Soren shoved Nairda back with his rifle. "Call me 'snookums' again and I'll put a bullet in your groin," he growled.

He then saw the bum. "Hey! Quit pissin' on my vehicle!"

The bum hastily pulled up his pants and ran away.

Anne chewed her lip. She wasn't interested in a relationship but at the same time, snubbing the son of a crime lord was a bad idea. "Ehh, why not? It'll be like trying a new strain of pot."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2014, 11:42:02 PM**

"Really?" Tony asked, opening his eyes now and grinning stupidly. "Well uh... looks like everyone's getting into the car so... uh... if you wanted to try this new strain sooner rather than later..." he nodded subtly to the trailer. "I can't drive in my condition... but maybe I could... take something else for a spin?" he asked, raising his brows. "Only if you... want to, of course." he said here, sounding incredibly nervous. Usually, he was much more confident and self-assured, but the drugs were making him giddy.

Vergil slid into the back seat as well, smirking at Nairda's and Soren's antics.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 29, 2014, 12:05:55 AM**

(Stephenson Memorial Hospital)

A police officer and a detective entered Kojuuro's room.

"Sir, you are under arrest for public indecency and sexual assault of an non-sapient," the detective said.

"What!?" Kojuuro exclaimed as he shot up from the bed, only to he stopped by a spike of pain.

"Anything you say can be used against you." The police officer then began to handcuff him.

(Alleyway)

Anne climbed into the trailer. "In a little bit."

She smiled and lay down on the couch, emphasizing her dress's smooth folds.

Soren climbed in after her. He took off his rifle and other gear and sat on a chair. "Tony, I think I have a plan."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 29, 2014, 12:10:37 AM**

"You got it..." Tony practically breathed, watching her lay down on the couch, and taking a moment to just admire her as she lay there, eyes playing over her form. Then Soren climbed in, nearly giving Tony a heart attack.

"Jeez! Well uh... OK... go ahead." Tony said, nodding as he sat down as well. He then buzzed Marita. "Hey Marita... we're discussing strategy back here... you guys can go and get breakfast if you want. We'll wait. Don't worry about it." he told her over the intercom.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 29, 2014, 12:14:20 AM**

"Is this about Lily?" stammered Kojurro. "Because she was still sapient when I..." he trailed off, realizing there was no way they could know about that. "And we didn't even get anywhere with that night! This is absurd!"

But his prior wounds from Kozlov were preventing him from actually fighting back; had he been in his normal form, he would have beaten both of these men to a pulp. However, he did have enough strength to surreptitiously implant both of the men with his signature bugs.

Nairda's eyes lit up when he saw how Tony looked at Anne. He could tell a romantic upgrade when he saw one.

"Snookums, how bout you explain tha plan ta me, n' our slick asses leave dis trailer....less overstuffed. Y'all KNOW dat shit, muthafucka! Therez nuff room wit tha hoes up in tha car," he offered brightly, winking conspicuously at Tony and leading the way into the car where Marie, Marita, Zula, and Rose were waiting. "Whoz Driving?" he asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 29, 2014, 12:34:34 AM**

(Stephenson Memorial Hospital)

"No. Lanthae Aquarium reported that you was engaged in...sexual activity with one of their sharks two nights ago."

The two cops escorted him past the nurse's office and down the elevator.

A nurse exiting one of the patient rooms stopped to let the duo pass.

Soren got up and promptly kicked Nairda in the groin. Constantly being smacktalked, insulted and being hit on by Nairda finally caused the Human to snap. "Shut the fuck up! And don't *ever* call Marita a 'ho'!" He wasn't attracted to her but he was very thankful for all the help she gave the group. And he'll be damned if someone talking like a bad rapper was talking shit about her.

Anne got up and backhanded him across the face. "That's for being an obnoxious assclown and being a dick to Doctor Jiang. I overheard everything."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 29, 2014, 01:04:04 AM**

Kojurro allowed himself to be led away. "Oh yeah, that. I suppose that justifies this."

He had no further objections as they led him to the station and Broadstreet made him fill out sexual offender registration forms.

"I said 'ho'!" howled Nairda, clutching his gonads and falling to his knees. "Ho!" He repeated, frustrated. "Ho! G.I.R.L! It auto corrects itself biiiatch! Annit adds 'biiiatch' ta the end of sentences!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 29, 2014, 01:52:11 AM**

Axel heard Nairda's cry of pain, and made his way over to the trailer to investigate. Peeking in, he saw him kneeling on the floor and clutching his unmentionables. Glancing around at the others, Axel shrugged. "I'm... going to guess he probably had it coming?"

Climbing up, he took a seat opposite Soren. "I don't really feel like eating at a time like this. So, ah... what's going on?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 29, 2014, 07:55:56 AM**

marita responded to Tony's call ' sure tony, you guys can hang back here while we go get some breakfast. you asked for custard so i'll see what we can find as far as flavors. ' mega fry was open 24 hours a day ' marita started the arrow and pulled out of the square.
- kojuuro read all the paperwork Broadstreet gave him. ' any chance i can get off this list?' ' you serve 10 years a jail and spend 5 years more on the outside without an instance of recidivism, then yes.' Broadstreet said coldly. 15 YEARS!' kojuuro gaped. ' we dont mess with non-sapiens pal, we have very strict rules against that . swing from either side of the plate, visit strippers, whatever, i dont care, personal choice and all that, but you screw a nonsapien, thats an automatic sex offender listing. you do it again, its life in prison ' broadstreet said.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Pterano** on **March 29, 2014, 09:07:13 AM**

Both Soren's kicking of Nairda and Anne's backhanding of him caused Tony to hold his sides and start laughing, the ferret rolling a bit on the chair as he guffawed. "Damn! It's about time someone put him in his place!" he crowed, pointing at the disabled Nairda. "Way to go!"

He saw Axel joining them, and then, the Pierce-Arrow got rolling. Dammit... so much for his intimate time with Anne... still... they could have some alone time when everyone was off to breakfast, as the ferret really just wasn't hungry right now. "Well, Soren was about to go over a plan he had with us." Tony explained with a snort, sitting more upright on the chair and composing himself.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 29, 2014, 12:55:03 PM**

Marita drove through the drive through at mega fry, and began looking at the selections.' good they have fries 24 hours a day, along with breakfast items ' marita said
- this place had custard in 5 varieties, cookies and cream, smores, mint chocolate chip, twist and plain vanilla. tempuh burgers were combo number 7. ok i'd like 6 orders of mega fries, 4 numbers 7s 3 with everything one with nothing on it, 7 hash browns and 7 drinks to go with it.' total comes to 3,175 credits' came the voice on the speaker.' marita drove up to the window and paid for the food, and soon several steaming bags of food were being passed to her through the window. along with the custard and drinks. ' ulsa took one of the bags, as did marie. rose took the large tray of drinks and held it as marita pulled into the nearest parking spot. She then buzzed tony.' Tony This place has custard in smores mint chocolate chip, twist, vanilla and cookies and cream what flavor do you want?' she asked. tell me what you want and i'll head in and get you a scoop"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 29, 2014, 02:45:31 PM**

"*Alpha-Bits*, fo sho!" Nairda piped up from the back. "Thanks Ulsa!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 29, 2014, 06:13:02 PM**

Axel couldn't help but smile when he saw how amused Tony was by Nairda's pain. "So you have a plan?" he asked, turning to Soren. "For getting into the base? We're gonna need to hurry, we don't have much time left." *And neither does Lily*.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 29, 2014, 08:08:38 PM**

Soren unwrapped his tempeh burger and took a bite. He swallowed his bite.

"All right, we know that the Purifiers like to attack famous Augments, pro-Augment activists and pretty much anyone associated with them, right?"

Anne wiped some ketchup off her muzzle with a napkin. "Well, yeah."

He looked at Anne's horn. "How powerful is the transmitter?"

"I can transmit anything to about thirty meters."

Soren shook his head. "It'll do. We'll buy one of those prepaid cell phones, have Anne transmit a set of fake coordinates to the Purifiers and then we can press them for info. Sound good?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 29, 2014, 08:41:23 PM**

"Well yeah, it sounds good." Tony nodded here, glancing around at the group in the trailer, then buzzed Marita. "Banana is technically my favorite... but go with s'mores I guess for now." he answered her.

"So anyway, we get this phone, Anne transmits the signal, and we extract information from these guys. Sounds simple enough." The ferret nodded again, sitting back against the couch. "I was gonna show you some ways into the heart of the factory too, so we still have that."

Tony drummed his paws on his stomach now, and exhaled, looking around at the assemblage as he waited.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 29, 2014, 10:22:37 PM**

Axel listened to what Soren had to say, then shrugged. "Yeah... I guess that could work. We'd need to make sure we don't bring too many of them down on us, though." He considered. "And we need to get them somewhere quiet."

The rat bit his lip for a second, then glanced around at the group. "Hey, isn't there some big, abandoned bakery, or... or something near here? Might be a good place. I mean, it'll be out of the way, and nobody 'll interrupt us ..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 29, 2014, 10:56:22 PM**

Smores it is then" marita replied , i
ll be back in a coupler minutes Marita said. Marie and Rose mucehed n ther fres, while Ulsa took a bite of her burgers. Marita went inside the resteraunt and soon came out with two smores cusards. the custard had looked so good she had decided to get one for herself. he set hers down in the couholder by the drivers seat, then went to the trailer and knocked on the door" i've got your custard Tony" she said" Open up please!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 29, 2014, 11:28:54 PM**

Tony reached over, and opened the door up, not moving off the couch as he retrieved the proffered custard. "Thanks!" he said gratefully, then eagerly dug in. He still was a bit peeved that his attempt to get some alone time hadn't entirely worked out, but he was still angling it around in his head. "Hmmmm... the bakery could work, yeah." Tony nodded here. He had to admit... he was kind of hoping to move this conference along, as he was still high, and still thinking about this short-term relationship. But he didn't want to come off like Nairda had at his father's place, after all.

Leaning over, he whispered to Anne. "If I had known it would've taken this long, I would've stayed at the clinic and asked you to remain behind... gotta have someone watching over me, right?" he joked with a wink.

"Well the plan sounds good to me." he said in a louder tone here, taking a bite out of his custard. "If you pull it off, we'll get some good info. Anything else?" he asked, looking around the trailer.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 30, 2014, 02:12:50 AM**

Axel saw as Tony leaned over and whispered something in Anne's ear, winking. *Is something going on between them?* he thought, sensing how eager he seemed to speed this meeting up. Axel remembered how they'd rushed into the trailer, alone, and he blinked.

"Alright then, I think I'll just... go check on the, ah... the others in the car," he stated lamely, feeling decidedly like the fourth-wheel, and hurried out of the trailer, moving across to the Pierce-Arrow. "Soren's got a plan to catch a Purifier and grill him for information," he explained to the others as he let himself into the back. "We can't screw things up this time." Looking to the side, Axel saw he was sitting next to Nairda, and immediately began feeling uncomfortable. "Oh, er. Hello... ah... *dawg*?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 30, 2014, 10:29:43 AM**

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marita had returned to the arrow and was tucking in to her fries, which were still hot, and very tasty. " Once we all eat.. excuse me, these fries are good- we'll tackle grabbing one of those guys' She said to Axel. ' you hungry/ i got plenty of food' she said.
this burger is delicious' " ulsa said between bites.. ' so you lot are anti-purifiers huh.. eh i dont care if you have augments or not, so long as you arent a hoodlum or anything like that..
_ rose ate a hash brown, and took a sip from her soda.. ' hadnt eaten much since the don's house.' she said.
- is there any way i can.. atone for my mistake? kojuuro said as broadstreet leaned back in his chair. 'look i saw the broadcast about those nutjobs on tv.. and i'm willing to help if you cut me some slack..' what do you take me for, a gullible idiot? broadstreet replied. theres no way i'm letting you out on your own recognizance.. not with your history.you've got quite the rap sheet here, of course most of those we cant charge you with, due to the statute of limitations being expired and all.' i'll post bail, look take all my possessions as collateral, except for what i have on me' kojuuro said.'including my apartment..' the bail is 1 million credits, given your flight risk ' broadstreet said. he reached into a bag that was confiscated from kojuuro and dumped out a number of bugs, the kind kojuuro had used to bug the group at Don Straccis. he held one up..;' by rights i should shove this up your ass for all the trouble you've caused us over the years Kojuuro. by rights you should be spending years in prison with little chance of parole.. on the other hand these lunatics want to overthrow the government and make this place unlivable for anyone who doesnt hew to their warped view. they make the Khmer roughe look like pikers.so, heres the deal. you want to help, you wear this tracker at all times so we know where you are. you take it off, my officers will be ordered to put a bullet through your head.no questions, no mercy, no back to the police station. you help stop these guys, then maybe. MAYBE, you'll get a clean slate, i cant make any guarantees. so thats the deal. you take it, you wear this bug and you go back out there and serve as a police liaison. or, you can turn me down in wghich case its a holding cell for the next week while you're arraigned on charges.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 30, 2014, 10:53:51 AM**

Anne finished off her tempeh burger and stuck a few fries into her mouth. She blushed as Tony blatantly hit on her.

"Uh, anyways," she said, her ears splaying back in embarassment. "The wildcard is how many Purifiers show up. If only a few show up, we're good. If like thirty show up, we're fucked."

Soren took a sip of the tea he had brewed in the trailer. "Which is why we have to be careful what we say as a tip. If we say it's a pro-Augment rally, we might get a huge, heavily armed horde. Say its a small augment shop or factory and we might just get a team of arsonists."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 30, 2014, 01:32:34 PM**

Tony munched on his custard, then got up from the chair, and headed for the trailer's door. "OK guys... I'll drive us over to the bakery. I'll have Axel direct me." he said, and shut the two in before heading around to the driver side door of the Pierce-Arrow.

"All right Marita... I'm taking over." Tony said, hooking a thumb over his shoulder. "I'm gonna drive us over to an abandoned bakery to capture those Purifiers. And before you argue... I'm fine. Not the first time I've driven while on painkillers, after all." he told her. "Now SOMEONE will have to move into the trailer, because there's only room for six up front, and I definitely want Axel up here because I need to discuss a few things with him." *Why is some random secretary from the clinic coming with us?* he thought to himself as he noticed her in the Berline.

"So yeah, don't worry about my driving. I feel up to it." he said sincerely, whipping out his phone and beginning to compose a text to Axel as he waited for Marita to exit the driver's side.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 30, 2014, 02:46:33 PM**

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you folks can drop me off on 17th street. my apartments there Ulsa said.
Marita grabbed her food , went back to the trailer and climbed in.' well guys i'll be back here with you for a little bit.' she said.
_ rose and marie finished their food and but their garbage into one of the bags and put it at thier feet.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 30, 2014, 03:50:43 PM**

"Thanks for being a sport, Marita." Tony replied, sliding in behind the wheel, and feeling that sudden thrill of being in command of the V-12 once again. Nothing could beat an internal combustion engine! Turning the key in the ignition, he listened to the throaty roar of the V-12 spring to life. Better than the Lincolns, Packards, and Cadillacs that had come out with V-12s in the same era, Pierce-Arrow had beaten them all, and were renowned for their longevity and power.

Tony turned the radio on as he began to pull out of the lot, looking out the window so he could merge into traffic. Fall Out Boy's "My Songs Know What You Did in the Dark" was currently playing, and Tony drummed his paws on the steering wheel and the driver's side door in time to the rhythm as he drove out into the main street. This was unbeatable right now, as nothing could top driving a classic car to great tunes.

As he pulled onto the corner of 17th Street, he waved farewell to Ulsa (but wasn't her name Zula? Or maybe even Zulu?). "Cheers, miss!" he called, and then accelerated back into traffic. He hit send on his phone before they reached their next destination however, getting the directions to the bakery from Axel. Turning up the radio a bit, Tony bobbed his head and wove through traffic, making the turns Axel pointed out to him rather smoothly and driving surprisingly well for someone who was stoned. Driving was something Tony took insanely seriously, and he went into massive focus mode whenever he did it.

Approaching the abandoned bakery now, Tony slowed it down, and gradually rolled to a stop on the street. Turning the radio down, he pushed the intercom to the trailer. "We have reached our destination, ladies and gentlemen." Turning to Axel, he raised his brows. "Got my message?" he asked without elaborating. Tony kept the car idling, not turning it off just yet. "So I was thinking..." he said, back into the intercom. "We're gonna need eyes and ears on the Purifier base. You guys are gonna need Anne to make the call, and Marita's hacking to make it seem convincing. So why don't Axel, Vergil and myself drive down to the base and conduct some recon, see what kind of defenses they've set up since our last visit, and keep you posted while you get the info?" he suggested now. "This way, you got enough left behind to overwhelm the Purifier contingent, and only a minimal number will be going to reconnoiter the base." he outlined. "Sound good?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 30, 2014, 04:12:01 PM**

I'll start hecking right away' marita said ' give me two minutes, to create something plausible.. you guys should be able to do a proper recon. Let me know if you need anything ' she added.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 30, 2014, 04:30:48 PM**

Axel nodded. "We're running short on time. If we split up, we can see what the situation's like at the base, you guys can try and get as much new information as you can, then we can meet up again just before we..." he swallowed. "... Before we finish this. It's the most efficient way of doing things."

He leaned closer to the intercom. "We can keep in contact with you, Soren. If something turns up at the base, we'll let you know."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 30, 2014, 06:23:03 PM**

"We be seein you later Ulsa!" Said Nairda cheerily. "Say, what happened ta Zula? Where did she go?"

He had settled for some bowl of Chinese food, and when he finished it he sent it frisbeeing to the trashcan, where it missed by a mile and skittered to the floor amongst other litter.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 30, 2014, 10:50:16 PM**

"Gotcha!" Soren said into the intercom. He then looked at the group around him. "All right, first things first is we see what we've got. But before that..."

He went into the weapons locker, got out the rifle, combat helmet and ballistic vest he had worn before.

Anne pulled the Luger out of her dress. She pushed the door opened and looked over the factory. It was quite obviously an industrial bakery with a dilapidated sign proudly boasting of "Lanthae's finest algae crisps". The windows had been shot out and debris was scattered over the weed choked lot. The forced open door indicated that it had been hit by looters at least once. "The lot's choked with weeds but I don't think it matters. But the doors have been forced open."

Soren sighed. "Great. That means we gotta sweep to make sure there's no bums or anything that could fuck this up."

Interestingly, the factory wasn't at ground level, but it was on an elevated platform a few hundred feet up.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 31, 2014, 08:19:51 AM**

Tony waited for the others to exit the trailer and the car, and then waved at the group. "We'll stay in contact! See ya soon!" he called, honking as he drove off. Vergil was in the back seat, and Axel in the front passenger side. "Hoo! OK... hope you didn't think ill of this but... I'm just worried Lily might not have a lot of time." the ferret explained. "Thanks for agreeing to go along." he told the rat.

"Besides, we'll see what's going down at the base, and try and get a read on the situation. I won't be jumping the gun unless it's absolutely necessary." Tony outlined. He started heading for the highway that would take them to the Purifier compound, knowing this would likely be their last chance at getting Lily out of there.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 31, 2014, 09:21:21 AM**

Axel glanced at Tony and nodded. "No, you're right. We can't screw things up... this is it. I don't want to take any chances - we have to know exactly what we're heading into." He let out a trembling breath and stared out the window as the highway rushed past, his jaw clenching. "If they've hurt her, I'll kill all of them." As he spoke, Emilena's tracer gun dug into his back, and for a second he considered if he should let Tony and Vergil know about Emilena, and the plan that he was hoping, praying would work. But if the others found out... especially Soren, who likely couldn't see past his hatred of her... if any harm came to Emilena, the whole plan would fall apart. And that wasn't a chance Axel thought he could take. The rat sighed and rubbed his face, suddenly feeling drained.

After a moment, Axel raised his eyes again. "And jesus... killing all the augmented in Lanthae?! Just... fuck, this is *crazy*..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 31, 2014, 06:45:16 PM**

"Take it easy." Tony cautioned as he sped down the highway. "We don't know anything just yet, and going on a killing spree might not be the best thing to keep you alive." he pointed out. "You CAN'T let your emotions run away with you... I know that sucks to hear, but... at least initially, you gotta keep a cool head."

"He's right." Vergil put in. "Losing your head is precisely what they're hoping you'll do, I'm sure. Call me impartial, but from what I can remember of my life, it's never a good idea to go too crazy with your emotions."

"Well hey... I just don't wanna see you dead over this, that's all." Tony continued. "Especially if she's still alive... but only hurt. Remember... the exploding reactor and my father's men will take care of all of them... no exceptions. Either way, they're going to die. Just keep that in mind. MOST important thing is NOT killing them if they've hurt Lily... but getting Lily out of there first and foremost. Any vendetta you have should come secondary to saving her."

"Tony, might I borrow your cell phone?" Vergil asked here.

"Uh... what for?" the ferret replied.

"Internet search." Vergil responded.

"Well... all right. Here." Tony took it out and held it out for the gecko to take, which he did, beginning to tap through it as he did some research.

"Anyway... just let the rest of us handle killing them... cause believe me... I owe them some payback too." the ferret said resolutely. He swallowed as he saw the Purifier complex looming large in the distance. Putting his directional on, he took the Pierce-Arrow down the exit towards the ruined industrial part of the city. Exhaling, he began slowing down the closer he got. "There's an old high rise that overlooks the factory... we could set up in there. What do you think?" Tony asked Axel.

Vergil had found what he'd been looking for, and was reading with some fascination as he started absorbing this new information. This red gecko... was he his old superior officer?

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 01, 2014, 12:38:47 PM**

As the Purifier's base reared up ahead of them, frustrated tears blurred Axel's vision. Being this close to her, not knowing whether she was alive or dead, was driving him crazy. *Get a grip on yourself...* Grinding his teeth, he took a deep breath and blinked them away. "Don't worry, I'm... I know I need to keep a clear head about this." He looked around at Tony and Vergil. "And I've got no arguments against you killing as many of them as you can. But just... just be careful. I want you guys to make it out too." His mouth twitched, an attempt at a smile. "I want *all* of us to make it out."

When Tony suggested the high rise, Axel craned his neck to look up at it. The ferret was right, it would give them a good overview of the compound. He nodded. "Yeah, let's go for it." The industrial area surrounding the base was a mess. As they drove through its empty streets, the wrecked and abandoned buildings flanked them on either side, the smashed windows and broken doors gaping like mouths. Axel shivered, his imagination running wild and making him feel like they were being watched.

As they neared the high rise, the sound of Vergil tapping away at the phone drew Axel's attention. "You okay?" he asked, looking back at the gecko, an amused expression flicking across his features. "Checking out what you've missed since you were stuck in that... tube thing?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 01, 2014, 10:10:14 PM**

Tony felt much the same way as Axel did, and it was an easy thing for the imagination to run away with you in an area like this. He drove more slowly here, not wanting to attract any unnecessary attention.

"Dammit!" Vergil exclaimed from the back seat. "No... I was trying to find a red gecko from my memories... and it turns out he's dead. Died several years ago. I recalled him being my superior officer or something. Turns out he was one of the most famous warlords ever from the Scorched Earth War. He almost single-handedly ended it, using at times questionable tactics, but he was lauded as a hero... then he went rogue. Him and this other guy called Kalis, who was another hero of the war. They started terrorizing the planet for a few years with their accumulated forces, but finally, a great naval battle was fought between much of the world's remaining forces and the massive fleet of Kalis and this gecko. Kalis betrayed his former comrade, and fired on the gecko's flagship, killing him in the process as Kalis assumed command of the forces and still leads them to this day. I remember that memory specifically... I could see this gecko battling a female on the bridge of his ship... and then... fire and explosions... how did I survive?" Vergil wondered aloud, shaking his head.

"Anyway... as fascinating and compelling as this story is... he was my one lead, and he's dead. The only other person I can think of is maybe Kalis, but he sounds like a really evil dude, from what I'm reading. I wonder... was I part of the world's navies back then?" he mused aloud. "I just can't... remember." he sighed here, closing his eyes. "This has brought up more questions than answers, I'm afraid."

Tony pulled the car to a stop next to the high rise, and killed the engine. "OK... here we are. Really fascinating, Vergil. Sorry about your lead being dead, though. Hey Axel, you and Vergil check the place out while I lock up the car and trailer and get us some weapons. Be careful, OK?" the ferret cautioned. "The Purifiers sometimes come in here, but it's not very frequently, so we should be good."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 02, 2014, 03:25:14 AM**

Axel pulled out the Luger and nodded apprehensively. "On it. You watch it too, okay? If you see someone coming, call for us." He let himself out, then walked around to the entrance of the high rise and waited for Vergil to join him. Peering through the dusty glass, he couldn't see anything but darkness. Hearing light footsteps next to him, Axel looked down at the gecko. "Hey, I'm sorry you're out of ideas about... you know, who you are. If you ever need any help, then... I'll be there. I mean, it's the least I can do for your help now." He swallowed and shook his head. "As long as we don't all, ah, die in the next few hours. Anyway... you ready? Let's do this..."

Axel pushed the door in, and it slowly opened, the rusted hinges squealing in protest. He winced, and stopped pushing once the door was just open wide enough, then slipped through. The small lobby room was cloaked in shadow beyond the light that leaked through the doorway, the pungent smell of damp clinging to the air along with what seemed to be years worth of dust. Axel fished his phone out of his pocket and flicked it on, using the low blue light as a torch. Shining the light around revealed a dusty tile floor, a moldy couch propped in the corner, and a rotting wooden desk. After checking to make sure nobody was hiding behind it, Axel turned his attention to the set of stairs in front of them that led up... and a small red light to the side caught his eye. Swinging the phone's light to it, he saw it was the elevator's 'Up' button. *Why give power to the lift?* he wondered.

Turning to Vergil, he pointed towards the elevator. "This has power... Should we take it, or walk?" Axel looked at his small legs with a quick grin. "I'm guessing you're not exactly Speedy Gonzales with taking stairs, huh?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 02, 2014, 11:12:59 AM**

Marita entered the open doowar and listened for noises above her and below her. marie and rose followed her, both looked around narvously as they went up the stairs. ' so whats the plan guys / rose asked. ' we grab some purifiers question them, and form a plan of attack' Marita said..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 02, 2014, 05:00:40 PM**

Soren followed. He used his rifle's built in tac light to peer around. Nothing, just various mixers, bread slicers, ovens and other bakery equipment lying around in various states of disrepair.

The catwalk overhead was dilapidated; he dared not climb up there for fear it would collapse.

"All right," Soren said. "We only have five people so we need to position ourselves so we can shoot the Purifiers as they funnel through the entrance. Remember, leave at least one alive."

Anne looked around. "We could just hide behind the bakery equipment." She tapped her horn. "All right, I'm ready to transmit."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 02, 2014, 07:16:34 PM**

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using it as cover' good thinking. but after this we'll need to get some shuteye as i hardly got any sleep at all last night, what with tonys condition and all'"Marie said' we could do shifts in that case" Rose said. Someone stands watch for an hour or so..
-
 marita walked past the ruined machinery..' looking arond..' this place hasnt been used in years..its a dump' she said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 03, 2014, 09:29:41 AM**

"Yeah well... I guess... I guess I'll just have to regroup and figure something else out. Maybe I could check enlistment records in that war but... reading about how serious it was, I doubt I'd find anything out on me." the gecko said with resignation. Walking into the building now, he scanned the room with his eyes, but sensed no presences within. Noticing the elevator had power, his face fell a little here and looked at the rat with a "really?" look. "Yes well... I can walk just fine but... elevator would probably be best just to save us time." he informed him with a solemn nod.

Tony entered now behind them, carrying some weapons and a small toolbox-looking chest with him. "All right guys, car's locked, as is the trailer. Oh wow... the power's still on, I see. It used to be on in this building back when I was a Purifier too; that's how I knew about it. Hey Axel..." Tony set the chest down and pushed the call button, the doors opening immediately. "I need to talk to you about something before we get too settled in." the ferret stated, stepping into the elevator now along with Vergil. "Also, pick your weapons." Tony said, showing off the assortment he'd brought with him. The ferret had selected a non-projectile (aka laser) pistol for himself, and had a small, folding SMG as well. He had a concealed knife on him too that had a little surprise in it, in case of emergencies. He figured they'd more heavily arm themselves when they started their initial infiltration.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 03, 2014, 11:33:38 AM**

The elevator doors closed behind Axel as he followed the others in. Tapping the button that would take them to the top floor, the lift jerked then started pulling up roughly. The dim yellow light illuminating the compartment flickered. At the mention of weapons, Axel turned to look at what Tony had brought with him. "Good idea," he said, swapping out his Luger for a smaller pistol. "I was almost out."

As he tucked it into his jeans, his arm brushed against Emilena's gun. He blinked. *If more people knew, maybe the plan would have more luck in working... and I trust these guys. They wouldn't do anything to risk it...* "I... have have something to tell you too..." Axel started, then paused. He looked at Tony. "But, ah... you can go first. What is it?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 04, 2014, 01:28:03 PM**

Anne swore. "Shit. I could've given you a moziafil tab to keep awake but I left them in the trailer."

Soren nodded as he yawned. "I'll rest for a bit."

"I'll go first." The mare then turned to Marie. "Have you got the phone and fake info and script ready?"

"Wait, so how is this gonna work?"

Anne tapped her horn. "I read the script and use my horn to transmit it into the phone. Doctor Jiang implanted a spoofer module that lets me fake coordinates. If we just transmit it with the computer, it'll show that the area the tip says is an abandoned bakery and they'll be rightfully suspicious. But with my module, I can say that the factory's gone and its an augment repair shop."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 04, 2014, 02:24:13 PM**

Yeah' everything's ready' marita said as she handed it over." so we transmit this data, and hope we dont get 50 purifiers checking it out'
_ what can we use as a sort of a bunk, while were here?' rose said, stifling a yawn..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 04, 2014, 06:28:44 PM**

Nairda spun in a circle and knocked over a cart of stainless silver kitchen equipment while reciting the complete lyrics of *Getting' Jiggy Wit It* by Will Smith.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 04, 2014, 08:14:39 PM**

Tony blinked, rocking his head back a bit here in surprise. "You do?" he asked, not expecting this. "Well all right... I'll go first." he nodded. "I was thinking... I don't know how long we can wait here... if we see any indication that things aren't going well for Lily or just in general... not that we'd be able to see that from here probably but you get my drift... I say we just go in. I can get you right into that base, we head for the reactor, Vergil points out Lily... speaking of which... she still in there?" he asked the gecko.

Vergil closed his eyes, and seemed to be serenely concentrating. "Yes." he replied after a moment, opening his eyes. "She's still inside."

"OK, good. So yeah, I was thinking we really can't wait if there's signs of trouble. I think I'll call Soren in a bit to see how his end of things is going, and get a time estimate from them." the ferret stated. "But I highly doubt you just want to wait around here either. So anyway... what were you gonna tell me?" Tony asked as the elevator reached the top floor and with a groan the doors slid open. Tony stepped out into the empty offices now, the windows all around them letting in the eerie light of day through the dusty glass.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 04, 2014, 09:32:15 PM**

Anne sighed as she heard the crash. "Somebody shut that asshole up before he fucks us all over!"

She looked over the script and the cellphone. The phone had already been programmed with the Purifier tip line that was from the TV ultimatium. The laptop had the script ready, a program that altered one's voice and a dialer intended for use with smartphones – such as the ones they had. The data cable was connected to the phone. The laptop's radio antenna was out as well.

The mare cracked her knuckles.

Soren, fuming, stomped over to Nairda and promptly pushed him against the wall. "Nairda," he said. "Quit being an annoying bag of dicks and make yourself useful by finding something like a breakroom that we can rest in."

He then pointed to the stainless steel kitchenware on the ground. "If you fuck this up, I will shove the industrial sized mixing paddle so far up your ass that you won't be able to sit down!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 04, 2014, 11:36:17 PM**

Nairda giggled and blushed as Soren played rough with him. "Soren, take me up ta dinner first!"

He began picking up the kitchenware. "Yo Anne, biatch? Why did you turn down dat sexy hunk Tony, biatch? Dude would done been tha *perfect* boyfriend..." he sighed, imaging himself with Tony...but sadly it could never be.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 04, 2014, 11:57:58 PM**

"Fuck you!" Soren snapped. "If you're too horny to think straight, go find some place private and beat off!" He rubbed his temples. Nairda was going to give him hypertension from the stress.

"Shut the fuck up! I'm trying to work!" Anne shouted. Her train of thought had been interrupted.

She turned to the three women. "Can one of you get Nairda to shut up? I can't concentrate."

(OOC - Bitch is a perfectly acceptable way to refer to a female canid in this universe. In general, the real-life specific terms for male, female and immature animals are perfectly acceptable ways to refer to anthros in this universe. Of course, the Human terms are also acceptable. However, using the wrong species-specific term <referring to a male Golden Retriever as a "bull" instead of a "dog"> is likely to cause offense.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 05, 2014, 04:54:48 AM**

Axel didn't say anything for a moment as they stepped out of the elevator. He walked up to a window and ran an arm across the glass, brushing the dust and grime away. Far below, he could see the base, could see figures milling around inside its walls, looking like they were preparing for something. After a moment, Axel sighed. "Yeah. Maybe you're right. I know how risky it'd be, but... we need to get her out of there as soon as possible. That's the most important thing for me. The reactors... they can come later. But we'll need help rescuing Lily, and..."

Axel turned to face them. "That story I told you before, Vergil. I... I wasn't telling the truth." He glanced at Tony. "When you were being treated back at the clinic, I got a message from someone, asking me to come meet them. It... it was Emilena. She's got a plan to cure Lily." He swallowed and shook his head. "I... I know trusting her again sounds crazy after... you know. And that's part of the reason I was keeping quiet about it. So if something went *wrong*, I'd be the only one who had to deal with the consequences." Walking away from the window, the floor creaking, Axel sat on an old, dusty desk and rubbed the bandage over his ear, staring at the floor. "I... I can't think of a reason why she'd betray us again. Lupis already has Lily, and Emilena was home free. Coming back gives her nothing. And the stuff she told me..."

He looked up. "Back at the base, when everything went to hell, I found out what's wrong with Lily. She's been... I don't know how you'd describe it... *possessed* by some kind of creature, and as time goes on it's taking her over. But... it's given Lily the ability to throw her mind to other bodies. At your mansion, Tony, when Emilena vanished - that was Lily, somehow she managed to teleport her away. And when that happened, it created some kind of connection between Emilena and that creature, so she could see the things that it's seen. And she saw that..." Axel swung his gaze to the gecko. "Vergil, remember that huge rhino that you... fried? He's a clone. Lupis has been making new copies of him again, and again. That means they have the technology to make clones, right there, in the base! Emilena knows how to use those cloning... machines, or whatever they are. And she found Lily's backpack in those woods, with some of her lipstick inside. She has Lily's DNA... If I can get rescue Lily, and get Emilena inside that lab... then we can clone her, and Lily can use her mind-throwing ability to take over the clone! *She'd be cured!*"

Axel looked desperately between the two of them. "Look, just getting Lily out of there... it's not enough. We have to split her away from that creature, before it's too late, and Emilena's plan is the only hope I have left of doing that..." Reaching behind his back, he unclipped the holster with the tracer gun still inside and held it out for them to see. "She gave me this... If I take it out of this holster, it'll start giving off a signal. Once that happens, Emilena can find me and we... we try to help Lily." Axel gritted his teeth. "So what... what do you guys say?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 05, 2014, 07:57:40 AM**

theres is no way i'm mwessing with that guy" Marie said ' cant we fix him so hes not sounding like a third-rate rapper' Rose asked. ' i think he owes Dr Jiang money, and lots of it, from what ulsa told me' marita sighed. ' i'll go settle him down, i guess.. she said heading towards the wanna-be rapper.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 05, 2014, 11:20:41 AM**

Tony went silent as Axel began explaining the situation to them, and found out he'd been lied to this whole time since the clinic. But on top of that, there was way more to this than he'd been led to expect. It seemed they couldn't just get Lily out of there now, and had to create a clone of her to get her consciousness back into a normal body. Folding his arms across his chest, the ferret looked down at the floor intently as he listened.

Vergil had an emotionless expression on his face, staring ahead but not looking at anything in particular as new details were outlined. When Axel finished, Tony finally looked up, trying to process all of it. "I just..." he began, shaking his head. "I don't really have any objections. I mean... you're right... what does she have to gain by coming back now? I just... as much as I don't want to trust her... what have we got to lose, at this point?" He shrugged here, still not fully shaking the feeling that he couldn't completely trust her.

"This is gonna require a revision to our plan, then. We're gonna need more time... jesus, why didn't you tell me this sooner?" Tony asked with frustration. "Do you know what would've happened had we set the reactors to blow and you sprang this on me AFTER that?" he demanded. But then he considered... maybe Axel hadn't wanted to say it in front of the others, either. Pausing, Tony composed himself. "All right... at least you told us now... and you probably had your reasons not to say anything beforehand. But we can't go right for those reactors in that case. We're gonna need to move more swiftly and secretively to get Lily to safety AND... get that clone of hers... do you even know how long the cloning process takes?" Tony added here as he thought of it. "Based on that, we can figure out how much time we'll need overall in the base, and go as quickly as possible under the circumstances." he stated, beginning to rethink his plan.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 05, 2014, 04:23:23 PM**

"I *couldn't* say about this sooner," Axel said as he flexed his fingers nervously. "Do you have any idea how much Soren hates Emilena? I've got no idea what he'd do if he saw her again... and I wasn't about to take that chance. She's the only one who'd know how to clone Lily." He bit his lip. "And... no. No, I don't know how long it would take. Not long. If Emilena was here, she could tell us... and it'd be a lot easier to form a plan." He held up the holster and put a hand on the pistol. "So it's alright, then? No arguments against her coming?" Axel looked between the two, then slowly drew the gun out of the protective casing. As soon as he took it out it started transmitting, letting Emilena know exactly where they were.

Axel sighed and put it beside him on the desk. "She said she wouldn't be long, so... I guess while we wait we can start coming up with some kind of strategy." He slid off the desk and padded over to the window again. "Damn it... I was hoping there'd be less of them at the base. You know, if they're planning a mass attack on the city, but..." Shaking his head in frustration, he looked back over his shoulder at Vergil. "You... you said Lily was still there, right? She's not... She's okay?"

One floor below, five Purifiers were staring up at the ceiling, listening to the creaks and thumps as people walked around in the office above them.

"I fucking told you I heard something!" one whispered.

"How many up there?"

The short, squat leopard in the middle held up three fingers. He looked at the others and readied his assault rifle. "Let's go."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 05, 2014, 10:45:09 PM**

"Right... well I don't blame you for holding out... I'd temporarily forgotten just how much Soren hates her. And well... I don't trust her either but... go ahead." He acquiesced, letting Axel pull the gun without any further protest.

Vergil closed his eyes, and concentrated again. "I'm not detecting extreme levels of duress, no, so I would say that for now, she's all right." he responded, reopening his eyes with a smile directed at Axel.

"Right well... I say we head down to street level. Get out in the open to meet her." Tony suggested. "Also... Axel I had kind of only given you half the story before." he confessed as he started heading for the elevator. "See I was thinking... I think Rhaegson's gotta die... and I think I should be the one to do it. If he DOESN'T die... this hatred of augments is just gonna continue and sure, there will be others taking up his mantle, but... it'll cripple them if he dies and we can ensure it by making sure it gets done right and not leaving it up to chance in the explosion. So I was thinking at some point during our infiltration... I go straight for his office and take him out. What do you think?" the ferret inquired, looking between the two of them now, but mostly at Axel.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 06, 2014, 04:22:55 PM**

Axel picked up the tracker pistol, leaving the holster behind so it could keep transmitting, and tucked it away. "Going straight after... Rhaegson, was it?" he blinked, following Tony as they made their way back through the office. "You'd... I mean, you'd have to be *really* careful. I don't know how easy it'd be to get to him... But if you get the chance, if you can see an opportunity..." He looked sideways at Tony and nodded. "Kill the son of a bitch."

Reaching the elevator, Axel leaned over and tapped the button... then frowned as the doors didn't open immediately. From below came a low, muffled groan as the lift rose up. He shot Tony a puzzled glance. "Should..." he started to speak, then stopped as the doors creaked open. He turned to face forwards - and a rifle butt shot out of the elevator, connecting against his nose with a crunch and rocking his head back. As Axel stumbled from the impact, a heavily muscled arm darted out and grabbed the front of his hoodie, pulling him forwards and into the group of Purifiers gathered in the elevator, who were all aiming assault rifles at Tony and Vergil. The one who'd pulled Axel in spun him around and wrapped an arm across his throat, holding him as a hostage. The other four stepped out, keeping their weapons steady on the gecko and ferret.

"Drop your fucking weapons!" shouted the leopard who was holding the dazed Axel, looking between Tony and Vergil. He dug a pistol into Axel's temple. "*Now*. Or the gleamer fucking dies!" Axel tried to say something, but the blood running back into his broken nose made him choke.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 06, 2014, 05:25:19 PM**

Tony nodded, and then noticed something odd about the elevator. It had gone down a floor. Reaching for his laser pistol, the ferret whipped it out just as Axel's head got cracked by the rifle butt. Firing off a shot, the red beam sliced cleanly through the chest of one of the Purifiers, the fellow giving him a shocked look as he tumbled down dead on the floor of the elevator.

But Axel was quickly pulled in and taken hostage, and while Tony kept his gun trained on the group, he knew he couldn't possibly kill all of them. "Heh..." He glanced at Vergil, who only gave him a single nod. He knew Vergil could take these guys out, but with Axel... it might be too risky at present. "That doesn't sound like a good idea..." the ferret responded. "See we drop our weapons, you kill all of us anyway... so why don't I just shoot as many of you as I can right now. Might take all of you with me for all you know. Bullshit! I know how you assholes work!" He snapped, keeping the pistol trained on the head of one of them. He didn't show it, but his adrenaline was racing, and he was inwardly terrified of this standoff. "You have to give me some sort assurance you aren't gonna retaliate for that jerk I just dropped! Cause right now... me dying fighting back sounds like a better deal than surrender now and get killed in a few minutes anyway. So put your money where your mouth is and show me some goddamn good faith or I swear to god I'll slice this asshole's head from his body!" he shouted, still pointing the pistol threateningly at one of them.

He didn't let on for the moment how worried he was for Axel, or how worried for his own safety he was, but he knew Purifiers were lying, cheating bastards, and their words weren't worth shit. He needed to somehow make them agree not to harm them, or their lives wouldn't be worth a grain of salt if he lowered his own weapon.

"How about this?" Vergil suggested, stepping forward now to try and diffuse the situation. "You let one of us go to avoid any further shooting, and the other one will surrender willingly. Tony, your father's men are starting to arrive." Vergil told the ferret now, giving him a nod.

"Right!" Tony breathed, gripping his pistol tightly and relieved to hear that. "So what do you guys say? Let one of us go... and I'll put down my weapon." he said, not budging.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 06, 2014, 06:07:46 PM**

Emilena jumped when the scanner suddenly flashed positive. She had guessed the correct side of the base they would attempt to break through. Setting off at a brisk run, she headed for the run-down industrial area surrounding the Purifier base.

She didn't relish meeting the others again. Hopefully Axel didn't screw something up and she was about to walk into some angry mafia goons...

Crawling up behind a large abandoned generator, she peeked at the coordinates of the transmitting pistol. She only saw two people she'd never seen before. *Well, crap, what exactly do I do about...*

After they spoke to othes, she realized there was a currently a standoff going on. Axel was being held hostage. Her first impulse was to draw her pistol and snipe the hostage-taker, but that hadn't turned out too well for the teammate last time she did that.

Slinking back down the generator, she began circling around. She'd have more options if she could get behind the hostage-taker.

Nairda giggled. "So, like, when is dis Purifier gonna show up, you know what tha fuck I be saying?" he asked. Y'all KNOW dat shit, muthafucka! "Cause maybe they didn't take tha bait, you know cuz they have way mo' blingin thangs ta do than bother one anonymous 'came git me' message fo' realz. Such as preparin ta fire a giant laser dat kills dem all up in one fell tha fuck swoop. And what tha fuck shiznit exactly was our crazy asses hopin ta git from tha hostage anyway, biatch? We already have they location, they plan, they base layout, n' they strength up in numbers."

This entire monologue was very poorly rapped to the tune of *Gangsta's Paradise* by Coolio.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 06, 2014, 06:21:38 PM**

The leopard's eyes shone for a second when Vergil mentioned Tony's name. "Tony Stracci... I thought I recognised you. Fucking traitor." His mouth twitched. "And your father's men are coming? You don't say..." He drilled his gun harder against the side of Axel's head. "Stracci, if I wanted to kill you right here, right now, why the hell wouldn't I have done it already? No. It's not going to be that quick. Not for you. I'm sure we're all gonna want to know why you thought you'd attack us. So *these* are your options."

He tightened his arm around Axel's neck, cutting off the rat's air supply. Axel thrashed, his mouth opening as he desperately tried to suck in a breath, but the leopard's grip was starting to crush in his windpipe, making it impossible. The leopard dragged Axel forwards, out of the lift. "Option A. Both of you drop your weapons, we take you in and you live a little longer. Or option B, watch your friend choke out, my men open fire on you, and you die now." He grinned. Axel's struggles had started to become weaker, his chokes becoming ragged. "Better hurry, Stracci. Looks like you don't have much longer." The leopard stared Tony in the eye. "So what's it going to be?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 06, 2014, 07:24:48 PM**

Tony ignored the comment about his father's men gathering. "All right, listen! Knock it off! Cut the crap!" he yelled. "You know damn well you touch one hair on my body and my father will crush your organization and you know he's fully capable of doing so. We have men everywhere... EVERYWHERE... even in your little base, all right? So unless Rhaegson wants to wake up with his balls in his mouth and his entrails hanging out, you'll cut the shit, stop strangling him, and take me to Rhaegson, all right?" Tony started lowering his pistol slowly, but not all the way, watching as Axel was throttled. "Lay off him, cause if I see him pass out, you aren't getting shit, and I'm gonna opt for option B, cause it's sure as shit better than getting tortured to death by you cunts, got it?" he asked, his pistol pointing more at the groin now of the Purifier who had his rifle trained on him.

"I need assurances. No harm comes to me... or these two either. Cause if it does and my father finds out... you're all dead anyway, got it? I'm NOT dropping this weapon till you lay off, and if you don't... well we'll see how many of us are standing at the end of this, capice?" he asked again. He knew he couldn't just give in to this crap. If he did... he could be used against his father... and that was the last thing he wanted. He could NOT compromise his family... even if it meant his own death. The way he saw it, there were no real options anyway, because of the Purifiers' threat against the city. Either they stopped them now, or they didn't stop them at all.

Vergil suddenly sensed the same presence he'd sensed back in the bushes the last time a standoff had occurred. He knew it wasn't hostile, and figured it might be this Emilena they had been talking about before. Good! If they could buy a few more minutes... then maybe... at least he knew Axel would pass out first before dying. It took several minutes for the brain to die from oxygen deprivation after losing consciousness, so they had time. He maintained his non-threatening posture, getting ready to spring into action the minute the tables turned.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 06, 2014, 11:44:50 PM**

(Abandoned Bakery)

Anne had managed to shut Nairda out long enough to complete her work. She rubbed her muzzle with a hand.

"All right, now all we do is wait," she said. The mare then ducked behind a disused automatic package and pulled out her pistol. "And Nairda," she added. "If you fuck this up, I will sodomize you with my horn."

(Lanthae Streets)

A simple electric sedan cruised down the streets and elevated highways of Lanthae. The four beings inside were dressed in casual clothing. All in all, one could mistake them for a group of friends out for lunch or another activity.

The truth was far more sinister. The four were freshly inducted Purifiers eager to prove themselves to Rhaegson and the tip they got was just the ticket.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 07, 2014, 01:41:08 AM**

Emilena had circled around the group and was now behind the conversing forces. Drawing her katana (but not activating it, for fear of the Purifiers hearing), she crept forward towards the back of the one holding Axel hostage.

For their part, the ferret and the gecko were doing an excellent job demanding their assailant's attention, and she basically had to trust that they would consider her an ally and not give her away.

Once she was close enough, she swung with precision, aiming to bifurcate the hostage-holder from the gun-holding shoulder blade through the heart and out the other hip. The blow was designed to be instantly lethal while also quickly severing the muscles allowing the trigger finger to operate, to prevent a repeat of the reflex shooting when she intervened in a situation like this before.

Of course, now that she's made her surprise move, every other Purifier in the team will instantly hear her, and she has no cover...

Nairda shrugged. "Whatever n' shit. I just don't git why they wouldn't instead go fo' legitimate, already obviously existin Augment stores like tha one you used ta own, Soren."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 07, 2014, 05:45:44 AM**

Axel felt the pressure on his throat suddenly release and he fell back, collapsing over the lower half of the leopard's corpse. Rolling to his side, he gasped for air, coughs wracking his body... and saw the Purifier to the left spin around and aim his rifle at something behind him. Without thinking, Axel snatched up the pistol the leopard had dropped, and fired a volley of shots at him. The bullets caught the Purifier in the chest and he dropped to the floor, gurgling.

The other two Purifiers swore and opened fire on Tony and Vergil.

The sedan eventually pulled up outside the abandoned bakery. The driver frowned, keeping the engine running. "This doesn't seem like a gleamer shop..."

One of the men sitting in the back shook his head. "I *told* you. This doesn't make any sense. Why the hell did we even come here? We just have to wait a little longer, and we can take them out then... This is a fucking trap, I'm telling you."

The driver turned in his seat. "If they found out we took the initiative and did this now, we're gonna get some kind of reward or something. I'm telling you, Felix."

The man in the back, Felix, looked back at the driver. "You're a moron."

"Fuck you." The driver looked back at the old building apprehensively. "Alright, one of us checks it out. If something looks off, we get the hell out of here. Felix, you're up."

"The fuck I am."

The other two Purifiers nodded their head, pleased they weren't being nominated. "Just check it out. Don't be a pussy."

"Felix, you don't check it out, we'll leave you here and you can walk back." The driver glared at him. "Hurry up."

After a long pause, Felix sighed and opened the Sedan's door. "You guys are assholes. You'd better wait here for me." The others nodded, and after giving them the finger, Felix climbed out and approached the bakery cautiously. Reaching the door, he pushed it open slowly and stepped in, drawing his gun. Peering around, it was obvious the place wasn't being used any more. He was about to turn and leave when he heard the faint noise of what sounded suspiciously like someone rapping. Glancing around rapidly, he caught a glimpse of someone hiding behind a disused package, their horn poking up and giving them away. "Oh shit! Guys, it *is* a fucking trap! I told you!" Felix cried, turning to bolt out the door.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 07, 2014, 08:28:29 AM**

It was over in an instant. Tony blinked, and the leopard holding Axel hostage was down. Whatever this was, he was not one to question providence. Firing off a blast, his laser beam cut through the lower abdomen of the Purifier, causing him to drop to the ground, screaming in pain before Tony permanently silenced him with a shot to the head.

Vergil merely concentrated on the final Purifier, halted his initial salvo in mid-air, and then picked his body up, the bullets clattering harmlessly to the ground, before tossing him against the wall and watching him fall lifeless to the floor. "I think that covers that." the gecko stated simply, brushing his hands together.

Nodding, Tony ran over to Axel, helping him get back to his feet. "You all right? Sorry I didn't negotiate but... I CAN'T compromise my family's integrity. You know how some don't negotiate with terrorists? Well I don't negotiate with assholes." Tony joked, helping support the rat. He looked in Emilena's direction now, recognizing her instantly. "So... you got the signal." he stated, not holstering his gun just yet, but not raising it at her either.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 07, 2014, 09:37:29 AM**

Soren stepped out from behind the pile of moldering boxes near the door that the Purifier had overlooked he had crouched behind.

"Going somewhere?" he asked as he leveled his rifle with the man's chest.

Anne also trained her pistol on the man.

(OOC - What species are the Purifiers in the sedan?)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 07, 2014, 11:07:34 AM**

(OOC: They're all human, but it probably doesn't matter :p)

Felix stopped dead in his tracks when he saw Soren blocking his escape. Just beyond, the door hung half open, tantalisingly revealing the street behind it. He could see the sedan, his partners staring out of the windows in open mouthed surprise. "Guys, get-" he started. There was a squealing of tires, and the car sped away. "*Assholes*!" Felix shrieked.

Slowly, he looked around the room and raised his arms in the air, letting his pistol fall to the floor. A nervous smile creased his thin face. "Uh... this isn't the Robo-Ninja convention? My mistake, I'll just be going..."

Axel coughed and spat out a mouthful of blood as Tony helped him up. "It's alright... I'm... I'm fine," he said, rough-voiced. His nose throbbed with pain, and he put a hand to it. Something crunched again, and he winced, taking his hand off quickly. "Dammit..." Raising his eyes, Axel looked at the person who'd saved him and saw it was none other than Emilena. He nodded appreciatively. "Thanks. You, ah... you weren't kidding when you said you'd be fast..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 07, 2014, 11:39:35 AM**

Marita came up behind Felix' Sorry pal you''re not going anywhere' Marita said aiming the pistol at his face. ' so heres the deal. ' your boss wants to liquidate all augmented people in town, and overthrow the government. which will make life here for the average folk even worse, those who aren't killed because had some 'work' done. we know its going to happen tonight, and we need information on how to stop it. you talk, we'll let you live. you dont, well lets just say things will become VERY uncomfortable for you.' maritas voice had an edge to it.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 07, 2014, 12:46:17 PM**

Diving out from behind cover, Nairda opened fire on Felix with his pistol turned sideways. "Dis is fo' Emilena moddafukkas!" he screamed with relish. "Come and get it *biiiiiiiiatch!!!*"

Emilena sheathed her katana. "I've heavily scoped this area out between our conversations. There's a portion of fence out of line-of-sight from the overlooking watchtowers just past the ventilation sheds to our south. Unless there are objections, it's our best way into the base."

She turned to go, and then paused. "Look, I know you have valid reasons not to trust me, and everyone seems so willing to just question me whatever chance they get, so for once I'm not interested. If you're planning on giving me some ultimatum where you'll *only trust me* until you have reason not to and then you *won't hesitate* to shoot me...just fucking leave. I've had it with that and you can just stay behind." Her plan was made for two people; two extras would obviously help, but were not necessary enough to put up with the nonsense she'd no doubt be getting from the last group she'd tried to work with. "We work as a team in there to get Lily out. So only team players are allowed to come."

She removed the helmets from the four Purifiers and threw the best-fitting one to each person. "They don't really have uniforms beyond these hats, so just keep these on. I don't need your name, but if you could tell me something of your skillset, I can figure out where you could best help."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 07, 2014, 01:11:49 PM**

Tony stepped forward now, holstering his gun. "Or, I could figure out where YOU best help." he stated with a level of derision. "No ultimatums, no. You've heard enough of them, as you've said. An objection, however." he said now, raising a claw. "No one died and made you boss. This was my plan from the start, and my family that's about to hit the place. You say don't say we don't trust you, but we don't fully trust you so tough shit, you're gonna hear it again. You don't like that, you can just go... how did you put it? Fucking leave?" He asked here, folding his arms over his chest. "Anyway, I don't give a shit how badass you think you are, you can drop the attitude, all right? As you said... we're all on a team, and I can do without the condescension. Now... my suggestion..." He looked around at the group.

"Since you're NOT in a position to take command nor do this on your own, I suggest an alternate method of breaching the base. There's a little known entrance under this building that leads right to the reactor room, which is also close to the labs. See where I'm going with this?" he asked sarcastically, treating Emilena with the same level of condescension she'd shown them. "Anyway, it'll give you the perfect access point to the labs without having to go over the fence and traipse your way through the main base. It's ALSO not guarded. My family's about to hit the place, so things are gonna get hot and heavy real quick. I suggest you take Axel, do whatever you need to do to safely get Lily out, and I'll work on eliminating a few key figures and setting the reactor to overload. How much time do you need to complete the cloning process? That's basically the only thing I didn't know." Tony informed her. "Everything else I had figured out ahead of time. Something tells me you aren't gonna need more than Axel to rescue Lily, nor would you want us breathing down your neck, so staying out of each others' way is probably best, for now." he concluded.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 07, 2014, 02:02:47 PM**

Luckily, "gangsta style" was a very poor way to use a firearm. Consequently, none of the shots hit anything.

Anne, fuming, holstered her pistol and punched Nairda square in the jaw. "That's for being a dumbass!"

Soren reached over and shut the door. "Do exactly as I say or be shot. Empty your pockets and strip naked."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 07, 2014, 02:39:47 PM**

Axel caught the helmet as Emilena threw it to him, wiping a blood smear from its surface with a grimace. He looked up quickly as Emilena and Tony launched heated words between each other. "Guys, just... just calm things down for a second, alright? Look, if we start arguing, we're not going to be able to think things through properly. Okay?"

He paused and bit his lip. "Emilena, you said you were looking the place over just now? And you found a way in?" Axel glanced at the ferret. "Tony, I... I think that might be the safest way to get in. I mean, this other way, the one that leads to the reactor room... How do you know it wouldn't be guarded? Like, sure, maybe under normal circumstances it'd be clear but... well, this isn't a normal situation. For all we know, they *could* be guarding it. Emilena just scoped it out... so her way might take longer but at least we won't be walking into an ambush."

Felix watched as Nairda crumpled onto the floor, landing from his admittedly impressive diving skills, then turned his head slowly as he heard Soren's order. "What?! What the fuck for? Are you fucking kidding?!" He saw that Soren wasn't. Felix gritted his teeth. "So *that's* what you want, huh?" With all these guns trained on him, there was no way he could make a run for it.

Glaring around, he pulled his T-shirt over his head, then unbuckled his trousers and pulled them off. "Getting a good view, you motherfucker? Cocksucking pervert..." Spinning around, he tore his underwear off and threw them at Marita's face, the business end connecting with a satisfying *flump* noise. "And you too, like what you're seeing, huh? Need to put on the tough guy act to see some dick? Don't get enough of this at home, bitch?!" Felix demanded angrily, indicating his bared package with a furious flourish.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 07, 2014, 03:08:50 PM**

"I'm just getting that out of the way now," Emilena stated. "This plan was designed for two people, and will work with two people. It could work even better with four competent people, but if one of them is going to train a gun on me immediately if Lupis gets the chance to play mind games, they're better off staying home."

She glanced in the direction she wants to go. "My way is guarded too; all ways are guarded. But my way was initially guarded by these goons, so we have a small window of opportunity to cut in before the guard changes and the alarm sounds no matter where we are."

Nairda nodded approvingly as he checked out Felix. "Nice! Nice!" he grinned his approval. "*I* certainly don't git enough you know what tha fuck I'm saying, biatch? Say how tha fuck bout you n' mah crazy ass go up fo' dranks afta this?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 07, 2014, 03:27:04 PM**

"My ONLY reservation..." Tony pointed out now. "Is that over the fence means we have to go through the interior of the base... and the reactor is the heart of it... the heart... meaning more fights, more patrols, more unknowns. I know my way isn't guarded because..." he reached into his pocket and pulled out an elevator key. "I picked this up before I defected from the Purifiers. It's the key to this elevator... leads to the service tunnels under the building, which were used as evacuation routes in case of emergency. However, lacking this key, the tunnels were useless as evacuation routes because there was no way out of them. I picked this up a week before you guys captured me, and DIDN'T let the Purifiers know I had it before that little event took place. The reactor room itself isn't guarded because it's in the middle of the base and currently useless..."

He looked at Emilena then back at Axel. "Remember the plan? It's not JUST about getting Lily out, but blowing the base sky high so that things like your limbs don't become useless the minute we step outside. We can go her way, but I think there's a far more likely chance of running into security if the alarms go off... which it seems like they will, than if we come in from underneath. Where's security gonna rush to when alarms go off, after all? The perimeter. Where are they NOT gonna rush to? The interior areas. See my point?" the ferret asked, looking from one to the other.

"Anyway, it's your show, Axel. I just got you out here. However you do it is up to you, but I need to make it to those reactors, and I'm gonna have a much harder time coming in from the outside than I am if I just walk into the room itself from the tunnels. So do what you want, but yes, we shouldn't debate this any further." the ferret said softly. "Go with her if you want, and I'll come along, but just thought I'd voice the opposite perspective here, because it seems you're fixating on rescuing Lily, and we've got some bigger goals here."

Somewhere over the Pacific

Over the stormy and tumultuous waters of the northern Pacific, an aerial fleet of warships hovered in tight formation, currently idling on standby and consuming minimal power. Several massive carriers formed the core of this fleet, with battleships, cruisers and destroyers rounding out the group. At the heart of it all was one particularly powerful flagship, the name *Red Castle* emblazoned on her side.

Upon the bridge of this behemoth, a creature in long, flowing red robes stood with his arms across his chest, his features pale as death, and his eyes an intense and brilliant yet very dark golden in color. Most of his face was covered by a contraption that concealed much of it, with some of the nose, eyes, and forehead visible. What kind of creature he was was hard to say, for what little could be seen of his skin had been bleached and scarred heavily.

"Lord Kalis..." the words came from an admiral clad in black who approached him from further down the bridge. "Our agents in Lanthae picked up an interesting broadcast a few hours ago and transmitted it here. You'll want to see this."

The one called Kalis turned to look at the datapad in the admiral's hand, and narrowed his eyes as Rhaegson's broadcast began to play. At his mention of the dropping of Lanthae's defenses, a great exhale escaped his mouth. When he spoke, his voice came out raspy and metallic, and not natural in the slightest. "Lanthae... I've been after a way to conquer that city for years... perfect... continue to monitor the situation... if this pulse indeed strikes and lowers their defenses... we'll gate-jump the fleet to the city and commence an attack."

"Yes, my lord." the admiral bowed his head here, slapping the cover of the datapad shut.

"Perhaps I'll finally find what I've been looking for as well..." Kalis said in a wispy voice that sounded like death. He shifted his attention out to the forward viewport, and stared intently into the night, clasping his hands calmly behind his back.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 07, 2014, 03:40:07 PM**

"I likewise throw to Axel the choice of how we break in," Emilena folded her arms. "I do not care in the slightest if they set off that bomb; the world will probably be a better place if it truly kills only Augments. I'm here to rescue Lily. But if you have an easier way of infiltrating the base, I'm not demanding we follow mine. I'm a teammate, I'm not demanding I be the leader."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 07, 2014, 03:58:08 PM**

I prefer girls, you twit' Marita snapped and tossed Felix's underwear back at him' Now start talking pal. the quicker you tell us what we want to know, the sooner you can get the heck out of here, and get your clothes back on.. lets see if any of these things still work ' she said motioning to them.. marita was perfectly willing to break a few rules if it meant stopping the purifiers.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 07, 2014, 03:58:25 PM**

Soren scanned up and down Felix's body. "Good. No concealed weapons or tracers."

He turned to Nairda. "Make yourself useful and go through his clothes to see if he's hiding anything."

Anne returned with a disused and dusty office chair and forced Felix into it. "Have a seat." Her hands trembled as a side effect of her drug withdrawal starting to set in.

"Good. Rose, Marie, Marita, tie him up and then we all can have a 'private discussion' with him." Soren angled his head to a door that read "machine shop". As befitting any industrial area, the bakery had its own machine shop to repair and replace broken parts.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 07, 2014, 04:11:32 PM**

Marie grabbed a length of cord and tied Felix's arms behind his back. and Marita and Rose Carried the Chair- With Felix tied to it, Into the machine shop, with marie holding the doot open for the other girls. roses paws began to shake, from biproxytol withdrawal.. Marita flicked the switch- nothing happened. 'Lights burned out in this area.. Ah well' She said as she amd Rose Set Flix down between a couple of machines.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 07, 2014, 05:04:47 PM**

"Tony... I *am* focusing on Lily," Axel said quietly. "I know it sounds selfish but... Lily's not augmented. Even if the bomb goes off, she wouldn't be affected. But if we can't get her out before, then she's dead. Or worse." He looked at the key Tony was holding out and paused for a moment. "You know for sure it'll be clear? You're *positive*?" He swallowed, then shrugged, cradling the helmet in his arms. "Okay then. Let's do it your way. Then you can work on the reactors, and me and Emilena can go ahead." Axel looked at Emilena and nodded.

Felix clenched his jaw and pulled against the cord. It wouldn't give. After a moment, he gave up and looked up at Marie and Rose. "Come on, what the hell are you guys doing?! I don't know *anything*! I just joined up last week, why would they tell me shit?! What, you think I'm in their, their inner circle or something?!"

He struggled again. "Jesus, come on, just... just untie me! She's a dyke, but you're not, right?" Felix rambled, staring across at Anne. "What do you want? I'll fuck you, or get you drugs, whatever you want! I'll fuck you *while* giving you drugs!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 07, 2014, 07:54:32 PM**

To the exclusion of practically everything else Tony thought with disgust. "Great... so Lily's safe... and what about you?" Tony asked as he turned the key. "Stupid sacrificing yourself if you can't be with the one you love. You PROMISED me we'd ALL come out of this. You even made it a big show to state you wanted to see me alive at the end. Well... do you?" he asked now, punching the button for the bottom floor, which the key would override and take them down into the service tunnels. "And yes... I'm positive. I wouldn't have brought it up if I wasn't." the ferret responded simply.

He took one of the helmets with him, but figured he wouldn't need it. *See what this chick does? She brings up a plan to save Lily, and it's all he thinks about. He didn't even seem to acknowledge her statement about the city being better off if all augments had been killed, including himself.* Tony had to admit, his respect for Axel was plummeting with the floors as they rode the elevator down. *Never mind the millions that'll be killed. That's all good, so long as you save Lily, right? Bullshit! What a load of pussy-whipped crap!* If for some reason they failed... and Emilena decided to help the Purifiers out on their unholy crusade, Tony swore to himself he'd kill her if he got the chance. Still... at least they had the advantage of having an army of mafia surrounding the place. Getting the Purifiers out into the city would be a difficult proposal, at best, though Tony knew their death squads were probably already out there.

The elevator didn't stop at the ground floor, and continued down further, into the tunnels. Sliding open smoothly, the doors revealed a tunnel stretching ahead of them. "All right... let's go..." Tony led the way, Vergil donning the helmet as he followed, noting it was way too big for him, so he simply tossed it aside. It was a bit of a trek. Perhaps 300 yards or so, but at the end, there was only one way out. Tony pushed up on the manhole cover as gently as he could, and peered around.

It was deathly quiet in here, and cold, as no power supplied this part of the base. Sunlight did filter in from some dusty windows, so there was that at least. He held out a paw for the others to remain in place, and slid out lithely through the hole, drawing his gun and scanning the room. The reactors towered like mountains over him, stretching to the ceiling far above his head.

He heard nothing... no chatter... no footfalls... nothing. "OK!" he whispered back down. "Come on!" he motioned for them to exit. "We're clear. Axel, you and Emilena, listen up. When you exit hang a right. Two more rights, you're in the laboratory area, OK?" he told them, still whispering.

"I can sense Lily, if it's any help." Vergil spoke up now. "She's there all right." he nodded.

"Text me when you've got her and the cloning process is complete." Tony instructed them. "I'll turn the reactors on, and that'll give us plenty of time to get out of here. If you think you're gonna be late for any reason, tell me NOT to start overload and I'll hold off. I'm gonna stay here and keep our exit open. Good luck, OK?" he said, looking at them now.

Suddenly, some dull explosions could be heard from way outside. It sounded like rocket and mortar fire, and Tony smiled a bit. "Guess dad's started the offensive with the other families. All right! That'll provide the cover we need!" he exclaimed. He knew his father wouldn't be present in person, nor would any of the other dons, but it was good knowing he had backup all the same.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 08, 2014, 03:59:27 AM**

Outside, standing on the walls of the perimeter, Marcus stared up at the small balls of light as the explosives curved their way through the air towards the base. Some of the Purifiers nervously shifted, looking as if they wanted to make a run for it. He held up a hand without taking his eyes off the view and growled. "Hold!" Above, the explosives began to arc down... and suddenly exploded harmlessly, far away from the base. As they did so, a faint, dome-shaped blue haze could be seen surrounding the compound. A few cheers went up as more mortar fire detonated against the shield, the sounds dull and muted.

Marcus pulled out a radio and clicked a button. "It worked. Force field is active."

Rhaegson's voice cracked through. "Remind me to give Petersons a pat on the back," he said smugly. "So the mob *is* attacking us? Nothing like the ritualistic killing of my men to make it obvious somethin's gonna happen. Just keep them busy a little longer."

Marcus put the radio away without saying anything else, and returned his attention to the perimeter. The force field would prevent their attackers from launching a long range assault on them. The mob would need to get up close if they wanted to accomplish anything - across the grounds which provided no cover, and had a few surprises buried away. "Hayton!" someone called across to him, and Marcus turned.

A Purifier came puffing up. "One of our squads is giving us radio silence. We can't raise them."

Marcus frowned and looked at the industrial section. They could spare the men. "Increase the security inside. Go!" The man ran off.

He turned back. "Ready your weapons!" he barked, and all around the perimeter Purifiers cocked their guns, resting on the wall for cover. 50 cal. guns set up on each corner swiveled around, and up in the watchtowers snipers drew back the bolts on their weapons. Marcus fixed his eyes on the horizon and waited to see what the opposing force would do next.

"Of course I want to see you alive," Axel said, narrowing his eyes slightly at Tony. "But we all have our priorities. You made that pretty clear when you chose your family's *integrity* over me just now." He folded his arms across his chest and didn't say anything the rest of the ride down.

Once they reached the reactor room, he stared up at the machinary. *These things'll turn this place into a crater...* Listening to Tony's directions, he nodded. "Alright. Three rights. Got it." Axel put the helmet on. "And... good luck to you too."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 08, 2014, 09:46:08 AM**

Emilena nodded and began the trek to the cloning room. They passed several Purifers in the hallways, but just looking like they were supposed to be there did wonders.

"Now there's going to be some sort of science team, so we eliminate them quickly before they can sound the alarm," she cautioned, and once the coast was clear threw the door open to the cloning chamber to find...nothing. No personnel. "Huh..." Shrugging, she began setting up the cloning machine. "All right, now we gotta grab Lily while this warms up."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 08, 2014, 11:09:14 AM**

(Purifier Compound)

Aaron's finger twitched as he viewed the scene through his scope.

He sniffed the air; the heady scent of high explosives hung in the air.

(Abandoned Bakery)

Anne's tremors began to worsen. She bit her lip as the offer of drugs.

"E...Excuse me." She bolted out of the room.

Soren shrugged. "I know you're hiding some more info, spill. Or do I need to introduce your body parts to some machinery?"

The watery sunlight filtering in through the dusty windows provided sufficient illumination.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 08, 2014, 02:32:49 PM**

Axel looked over Emilena's shoulder at the machinery as she prepared it. The mess of buttons, keys and switches left his head spinning. He nodded at what she said and crossed back over the room to the door. "Where... where are all the scientists?" he asked nervously as he creaked open the door, peering out the crack. The hallway was empty.

He pulled the door open further and held it for Emilena, pushing the helmet back over his eyes.

Felix's breaths became faster, his hopes of escaping vanishing along with Anne. He looked at Soren and gritted his teeth. "What? What the hell do you want to know?! You probably know as much as I do... They made a bomb, it's gonna go off *really fucking soon*, and then they're gonna make their move. You want to know what time we take our fucking lunch breaks, too?!" he spat, pulling against the chair. "*Shit*!"

Slumping back, he shook his head. "Look... you won't be able to stop it. You'd be better off if you just got out of Lanthae... as far away as you can. I, I won't tell them about you! I'll leave the Purifiers! Just let me go!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 08, 2014, 02:44:41 PM**

Soren nodded. "Keep going. What's the base like? Any defenses? Approximate strength of troops?"

Anne reached inside her dress and pulled out a white tablet from a blister pack. She popped out the tablet and quickly gulped it down. A electric jolt ran through her as the stimulant began to take effect. Her jitters began to fade away and her mind became razor sharp.

She crackes her knuckles and entered through the machine shop again. She leaned against a beat up lathe. "Anything good?"

Soren sighed. "We haven't gotten shit! I'm starting to think your plan fucked us."

Anne raised her hands. "Hey, how the fuck was I supposed to know we'd get newbies? What's your plan? Go in full throttle? Fat lotta good that did us the last few times ya tried!"

Soren opened his mouth but instead, closed it with a scowl. He turned to the women with him. "You all deal with this fucker. I'm going to ask Nairda some questions."

The door slammed as the Human exited the machine shop.

"Nairda!" Soren called. "Have you found anything useful in his clothes?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 08, 2014, 03:39:47 PM**

"Uh... I don't know, last thing I saw they were bringing in a lot of guns. There were a lot of people, I, I think they were preparing for some kind of attack against them." Felix blinked the sweat out of his eyes. "Defenses, uh... apart from the guns, I'm not sure. They were hooking up some kind of machine, it was a, a shield I think, I don't know for sure."

When Soren left, Felix tried to control his breathing and looked around at the others. "Why're you even trying? It's going off in an hour, you've got no chance of stopping it!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 09, 2014, 12:29:31 AM**

Emilena strolled casually towards the laboratory where Lily was being held. *Just like last time. Keep your face set. If you look like you're supposed to be here--*

She walked into the lab. It was empty.

"She's not in one of the pods," Emilena reported after a quick sprint through the labs. "Well, no wonder they don't care at all about this part of the lab. Where the hell is she?"

Nairda had dressed himself in the clothes of the captive. "Blingin'!" he whooped, turning 360 and modeling his new attire. "Oh, and this."

He handed Soren...Felix's passcard! Complete with a small schematic of the Purifier base on the back, and a magnetic stripe that grants the holder *z*-level security clearance. It also had a little red sticker noting that Felix was an organ donor...*or would be...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 09, 2014, 03:45:04 PM**

"What?! Nonono, she has to be here, she *has to*..." Axel moaned, pushing past her and craning his neck around, looking for himself. Emilena was right, there wasn't anything - or anyone - here. He turned back, hand grasping the side of his helmet in anxiety. "Oh jesus... come on, come on, where are you..."

Leaving the empty lab, he turned right and kept following the corridor along. Axel couldn't tell if the dull booming he heard was from the attack outside or the blood pounding in his ears. From further up came the clattering of boots, and Axel fought to keep his expression neutral as a group of Purifiers came charging around the corner toting heavy assault rifles. They rushed past him and Emilena, not paying them any attention. Axel turned left into the corner they came from... and halted mid-step. Further up the corridor, a heavy metal door was guarded by two burly rottweilers. A small man in a white lab coat was speaking to one of them. They nodded and stepped aside, letting him through. Axel half turned to Emilena and jerked his head in their direction, then strode up to them, steeling himself and trying to look confident.

"Rhaegmar says we're taking over your shift," he said, standing up straight and setting his shoulders. "He wants you out front."

The rottweiler closest to him frowned and looked at his partner. "Rhaegmar? Don't you mean Rhaegson?"

Axel glared at the Purifier and leaned in, their noses practically touching. "The *fuck* do you think I just said? He wants his best men out there, or are you too fucking stupid to know there's about to be a goddamn war out there?! If you're too pussy, I'll go tell him myself..." He turned to leave.

"No, wait!" the second rottweiler blurted out. "We *are* his best. We're damn *soldiers*!" The other guard nodded in agreement. "Yeah. Soldiers. Getting bored of babysitting these guys anyway."

"Then get out there, prove it and stop wasting my fucking time." The two guards nodded at each other and lumbered off. Axel waited until they were out of eyesight and looked at Emilena, letting out his breath. "I... guess they don't look for brains when they hire here..." he said shakily, his shoulders returning to their slight slouch. "Come on..." Gesturing towards the now vacant door, he pushed the handle down and shoved the heavy structure open with his shoulder, nervously fingering his pistol. He made his way through, stepping aside to allow enough room for Emilena to enter, and scanned the room. Four scientists - three humans and a golden retriever - were milling around computers and other machinery Axel didn't recognise.

"She's a little more stable, but we're going to need to keep an eye on her," one was saying. When they registered Axel and Emilena in the room, they all paused and looked at them curiously. Axel ignored their gazes and looked past them, his eyes drawn to a table at the far end of the room... and he felt himself go numb when he realised what - who - it was. Neck, wrists and ankles strapped down to the metal table, Lily was fastened down tightly. Needles were stuck into her, clamps biting into her skin. Several cables snaked out from each, leading to the parts of machinery scattered around the lab. He couldn't tell if she was conscious or not. Axel felt his hands trembling, and he heard a ringing in his ears. He slowly pushed the door shut behind him.

The golden retriever put down the pen he'd been writing with, and walked over. "Uh... excuse me, are you-"

Axel raised the pistol and shot him in the head, gore spattering the wall behind as his body dropped heavily to the floor. One of the other scientists squealed and rushed across the room, trying to make for the emergency alarm. The rat tracked him and pulled the trigger three times, each bullet tearing through the man's chest. The scientist fell sideways into a cabinet, instruments clattering to the floor, and lay coughing, choking on his blood.

Axel turned to the two remaining scientists who were cringing at the far end of the room, his pistol shaking as he pointed it at the both of them. "Get her out of there! *Now*!" he screamed.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 09, 2014, 04:44:56 PM**

Soren took the card. "Thanks! At least you're good for something."

He then entered the machine shop.

"All right, 'Felix'," he said, holding up the keycard. "It seems we have something. Now, care to explain what 'z-level' security clearance is?"

Anne smiled as she leaned against an old laser CNC milling machine. The computer was long gone as was the laser module but the motors were still intact. "You could just have given that up and we'd let you go."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 09, 2014, 07:03:23 PM**

The first scientist scrambled over and grabbed the controls.

"Don't!" the second one shouted. "They'll kill us if we do what they want!"

Emilena shot the second one. "Don't listen to him," she said to the first one, not even bothering to put believability into her words. "We'll let you live if you release her and explain what this machine does."

Quaking, the scientist rushed over and detached all the diodes, clamps and needles. "At-at the m-moment, its in stasis mode..." he stammered. "We drained her of psionic energy, a-and now we're waiting for her to recharge..."

After he removed the last hypodermic needle, Lily stirred. As the scientist attempted to step away, her hand lashed out and her claws embedded into his thigh. As he screamed and tried to tug out to safety, she bared her teeth and dragged him closer, digging her claws up from his thigh and into his abdomen, sending his intestines spilling onto the floor. As his hands flew to his stomach, her other fist swatted them with a force that snapped his arm bones audibly. Finally, she ended his life by baring her teeth and ripping his jugular out of his neck.

Following this Lily slunk out of the chair. Teeth bared and shoulders hunkered, she hissed at them and paced around the table, eyeing the exit they were blocking her from.

Emilena took a step back, drawing her katana defensively. "Uhhh...Axel, you have any ideas?" she asked.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 10, 2014, 12:17:44 PM**

Axel drew back, keeping close to Emilena as Lily prowled around, making sure he was out of range of her claws. "We need to... restrain her somehow..." His eyes darted around the lab, looking for something that could be used. One of the clamps the scientist had removed was connected to a thick, sturdy cable that snaked across the room, its end attaching to a machine near Axel. Slowly, not taking his eyes off Lily, he reached over and yanked it out then reeled the rest of it in, the clamp skittering across the floor.

Axel quickly glanced at Emilena. "Alright, just... just keep her attention," he breathed, curling the ends of the cable around his hands. "I need to get behind her..." Cautiously, Axel edged back and strafed his way across the edge of the room, his heart hammering as he tried to move with as little noise as possible. He prayed that, whatever they'd been doing to drain her psionic energy, it had left Lily physically weaker than normal... otherwise this could end very badly.

Felix rose his head when he heard Soren say his name, and swallowed when he saw his keycard. "Z-level... it'll get you access to the shitters in the compound, not much else." He grinned bitterly at Anne. "Must have slipped my mind. Next time you want to play at being James Bond just to use the fucking john, let me know."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 10, 2014, 04:30:10 PM**

Emilena gritted her teeth and leapt forward. Lily snarled but retreated.

"Dammit, if I'm too aggressive I'll just make her tougher to flank..." she murmured to herself. Backing off, she tried to look nervous so that Lily might press the issue but Lily didn't seem interested.

Drawing her pistol, Emilena fired wide, sending Lily cowering. "Make up your mind! Fight me or not!" Emilena snapped at her. She took two more steps forward, sword brandished. Lily took two steps backwards.

Finally Emilena just fired repeatedly at Lily, leaving her huddling in the corner. "I'll try not to hit you!" She called to Axel.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 10, 2014, 05:11:56 PM**

Gritting his teeth, Axel raised his hand in a thumbs up gesture. *That'd be nice*. He'd managed to skirt his way around the room so that he now stood just out of Lily's line of sight. He swallowed tensely, his throat feeling as dry as sandpaper. With her animalistic, unpredictable movements, getting close to her was tough - and Axel didn't want to think about what Lily would do if she suddenly turned just as he was creeping up.

Another shot from Emilena sent Lily cowering further back, closer to Axel... and he made his move. Leaping onto Lily, he planted a knee in her back and drove her to the floor, face first. As they fell down, he looped the cable around her front and drew it tighter when they landed, pinning her arms against her waist. Axel looked up desperately at Emilena as he put his full weight on Lily, struggling to keep her down and the cable tight around her as she thrashed, clawed and snapped beneath him. "*Get another cable! Tie her feet!*"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 10, 2014, 05:18:32 PM**

might as well come clean pal.'marita replied to felix..' z-level clearance isnt given to newbies.. you had to have shown some ability to get this level of clearance..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 10, 2014, 05:49:08 PM**

Emilena vaulted over the middle table and grabbed the shredded coat of the diswmboweled scientist. Rat-tailing it into a rope at top speed, she tackled Lily's backside and quickly restrained her lower appendages.

Lily thrashed and snarled, but something kept her from howling or making loud noises; perhaps she still knew that there was no such thing as rescue or safety from those around them. In addition, she was already exhausted and drained from the machine, and soon enough she was limp and couldn't fight back as Emilena hoisted her over her shoulder.

"You're gonna have to serve point," she groaned, staggering somewhat. "God only knows who's gonna see us with this thing..."

She stumbled out the door, letting Axel take the lead.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 11, 2014, 01:01:31 PM**

Axel followed Emilena out the door then stepped ahead, leading the way as they wound their way back through the hallways, Lily in tow. He could feel his pulse racing. They were nearing the cloning room, and so far they hadn't come across any Purifiers. *So far, so good...*

They turned into the corridor that lead to the cloning room... and Axel stopped dead when he saw the two rottweilers he'd lured away walking down towards them. They were engaged in a heated conversation with each other, and didn't immediately notice the three intruders standing in front of them. "-told you we shouldn't have listened! Next time I see that guy, I'm gonna..." The rottweiler who was speaking trailed off when he glanced ahead and saw them. "Hey! You! What the hell's your problem, making us..." His eyes narrowed as he noticed Lily draped over Emilena's shoulder. "What the fuck are doing with *her*? She's supposed to be locked away!"

For a long while, Axel and the two Purifiers stared at each other. Then the second rottweiler's hands scrambled for his gun, and Axel quickly raised his pistol, firing a volley of shots at them.

The second Purifier crumpled as a bullet tore through his skull, and his partner collapsed back, coughing, against the wall as two holes appeared in his chest. Then Axel's gun clicked as it ran dry. The Purifier staggered away from the blood smeared wall and looked weakly up at Axel. The rat desperately pulled the trigger again to no avail, and gasped when he saw the rottweiler's shaking hand reaching down to draw a sawed-off from the waist of his trousers.

Axel felt his stomach drop. Letting his pistol fall to the floor, he quickly turned and yanked Emilena's katana from its scabbard, then started to sprint up the corridor. The Purifier managed to pull out his weapon and raised it. A panicked noise escaped Axel as he tucked his head lower and threw himself forwards. There was a deafening *boom* as the sawed-off was fired... but the Purifier's aim was slightly off, and Axel felt heat along his side as the shot just missed him. The rat brought the sword in low as he drew even with the rottweiler, and the razor-sharp blade sliced through his middle, spilling out coils of intestines. The blade caught on his spinal column and stuck, throwing Axel off balance. Gurgling, the rottweiler slammed an elbow down on the top of the rat's head, and Axel was forced down - but he was still gripping the sword's handle, and the movement pulled it free of the bone with a grating screech. Screaming, the rottweiler fell back to the floor. Picking himself up, Axel stumbled over him and raised the sword, then brought it down, stabbing through the Purifier's chest again and again until he stopped moving.

After a moment, he looked up at Emilena, his face spattered with blood. Gasping for breath, he motioned for her to hurry up. "Come on... we... we're almost there..." As they drew near the door to the cloning chamber, he held out Emilena's sword with a trembling arm to her free hand. "Here. Need to do this quickly... there's no telling who heard those shots...."

Felix laughed in Marita's face. "What level of clearance? I just told you it's the worst kind. It's the *only* kind they give to new members, you stupid bitch."

He slumped back in the chair. "Look... there's nothing else I can tell you. I don't give a shit if you all get yourselves killed trying to stop this thing. But I've got to tell you, this isn't exactly a picnic for me. So if that's what you're going to do, then let me go and fuck off. Or if you're going to hurt me, stop acting all high and mighty, and just get it over with." He spat on the floor and glared up at them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 11, 2014, 01:37:17 PM**

"You are no longer the boy I had to drag along back at Soren's house," Emilena complimented. "Keep the sword for now, until I can put this down..."

They entered the cloning room and headed over to the readied pod. But before they could get there, they heard voices blocking their path.

"What was it this time? Tell me!"

"I refuse to talk about it..."

Putting her finger to her lips, Emilena stumbled forward as quietly as she could. Around a corner, Agent Lupis was talking with a freshly cloned rhino.

"Goddammit, how many of us have you killed?" The rhino was shouting angrily. Tears were running down his eyes. "We're *not him*, you asshole! Each time we die, we stay that way! I dont want to die!"

"I never plan for it to happen, John," sighed Lupis, but the rhino cut him off. "--No! Don't call me that! Give me a new name, let me leave, and figure out your own problems without sending me to die like you did all the others!"

The two stared silently.

"You've had this conversation before, havent you?" The rhino spat. With that he stomped off in the other direction.

Lupis rubbed his temples with his thumbs and groaned with irritation. He then walked away as well.

Emilena paused a few moments, then when nothing had been heard for a few minutes continued creeping toward the aisle with the prepared pod. "Well, that was--" she began, when suddenly Lupis came barrelling out from behind some tanks, smacking I to her and sending she and Lily skidding along the floor.

"*Why won't you die, Officer Echo???*" he snarled furiously, pinning her and lacerating her chest with his claws.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 11, 2014, 02:50:43 PM**

"Marita, why don't you use the card reader on your laptop to see what's on the ID?" Soren asked. He turned to Anne, Marie and Rose.

"I'm gonna need all of you to help me have a 'private discussion' with him."

Anne nodded. "Cool."

Soren and Anne picked up the office chair and carried it over to another section of the machine shop. There, a decrepit spindle sander and a drill press were present.

The Human rubbed a finger across the sandpaper. It was a very rough grit intended for roughing up a metal surface in preparation for applying a coat to it. He pressed the on switch and the motor hummed to life.

He placed a hand on Felix's shoulder. "Now, you see that spindle sander?" He pointed to the aforementioned machine tool. "We're gonna make that and your balls good friends."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 11, 2014, 03:49:54 PM**

Axel stumbled backwards as Lupis suddenly charged Emilena down, tightening his grip on the sword. In the split second it took for him to get over the shock, he recognised the wolf and his lips drew back in a snarl. It looked like he hadn't been noticed, but from what he could see it looked like Emilena was getting torn apart - he had to act *now*.

Coming up behind Lupis, Axel drew back a leg and kicked Lupis as hard as he could, the blow connecting solidly with the wolf's ribs. As Lupis rolled off Emilena, Axel pursued him and raised the katana. "*Fuck you*!" he screamed, starting to swing it down, aiming for the wolf's face.

Felix's body started to shake when he looked at the sander Soren was pointing out. He swallowed, tears starting to flood his eyes. "Torture f... for no reason, huh?" His voice trembled and Felix closed his eyes. "You fucking... fucking psycho! Just fucking do it then! I can't tell you anything else!"

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **Nick22** on **April 11, 2014, 04:21:27 PM**

Marita ran the id through the check and three names popped up, Ffelix's, a human named grivis and a salmander named Rico.. 'so this id was used before' she said 'twice before it seems..' she got up. and headed into the room with the others ' so, Felix, why are there two other names associated with your id?'
 she asked pointedly.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 11, 2014, 04:45:36 PM**

Soren smiled. Anne's ears involuntarily lay back. The smile was a murderer's smile.

"Psycho?" Soren replied softly. "How dare you call me a 'psycho' when your band of Luddites plan to slaughter every Augment in the city and kill everyone who's worked with them?"

As the door opened he then turned to Marita. "That's odd. Is the clearance level what he says it really is or is he full of shit?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 11, 2014, 05:02:38 PM**

its not z-level,, its aa level' Marita said smirking at Felix. ' aa level is 5 levels above z level indicating a rather high rank. so not only are you not the only person identified with this id, the security level it provides is much higher. so felix, yes, is full of crap.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 11, 2014, 08:15:53 PM**

Lupis tried to deflect the sword with his hand. This worked about as well as could be expected.

He cried out as his hand was severed at the wrist. Lashing out with his foot, he kicked at Axel's stomach.

Emilena staggered to her feet, her chest plate having prevented most of the damage. But Lupis drew a pistol out of his jacket and hit her twice in the same chest plate, which shattered it and sent her staggering with a grunt.

Lupis turned to shoot Axel when something hit him from behind. Lily had freed herself and in a desperate attempt had hit him with a flying tackle. Clamping her jaws around his neck, she hadn't expected a heavy knee in the crotch to send her rolling over his front.

Staggering to his feet, he blasted a cloning pod, sending the green fluid spilling onto the floor around them. His wounds were already recovering; his wrist stump had already clotted over. His other hand blasted Emilena's pistol out of her hand.

"What the hell?" muttered Emilena, trying to get to her feet.

"Genetic regeneration," smiled Lupis. "My father was an experiment from Pelvanida, back when they dabbled in bio-eugenics in the early 2000s."

With the last bullet in his clip, he shot out one of the many wires leading to the incandescent lighting fixture above the pods. This sparking wire dropped down and flooded electricity through the green puddle all four of them were standing in.

Title: **Into the Black**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 12, 2014, 08:41:58 AM**

Lupis' foot had connected heavily with Axel's stomach, and he was knocked back. Winded, he'd started to try to move back in, shoes splashing in the liquid. Then he saw Lupis shooting up at the lighting, saw the wire tumble down, and his eyes widened. "Look out!" he started to shout, attempting to back peddle out of the liquid... then the wire touched down, and it felt like he was hit by a truck.

The next thing Axel knew, he was lying on his side, staring at the floor with a blinding pain tearing through his head. He wasn't in the pod's liquid anymore - his momentum from trying to escape must have carried him out, though not fast enough to prevent electrocution. A shivering sensation was coursing through his body, and he couldn't breath. Faintly, Axel realised he was in shock. In the position he'd landed, he couldn't see the others and his limbs couldn't seem to obey him. Thin breath whistling through his teeth, Axel desperately tried to push through the pain in his head and get up.

Felix blinked at Marita. "Two other people? What... what the fuck are you talking about?! I don't know anything about them!" He swung his gaze to Soren. "I just joined up a week ago! I got that card, and that's all I know! Maybe there was a... a mistake on it or... or something. *Shit*, I don't know!" Felix swallowed. "Look, if I was high ranking, do you honestly think I'd be wasting my time checking out a fucking augment shop? Are you fucking kidding me?!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 12, 2014, 10:59:39 AM**

Soren sighed. "Well, at least we got one thing out of him. Think he knows any more or can we just dump him over the side?"

Anne shrugged. "Maybe you're the team leader? I'm not military but I know enough ex-servicemembers to know that the team leader is always higher ranked than their subordinates. Speaking of which..."

Soren then walked over to Marita. "What areas does this aa clearance level allow access to?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2014, 11:18:32 AM**

After a few minutes, the circuit breaker tripped and the electricity cut out. All was silent for a few minutes.

Then Lupis slowly and shakily got to his knees and elbows. He panted heavily, the electric burns covering his body already starting to heal. He was halfway to the door when he heard a noise behind him.

Still sparkling with electricity, Lily got to her feet at well. Her muscle mass had bubbled out as if she were covered in tumors, and her fists were meaty and rippled with energy. She looked enraged.

Lupis tried to crawl faster but Lily was on him in a heart beat. Tearing savagely into him with equal parts brute force and razor-sharp claws, she ripped his limbs from his body and fried the remains with bolts of electric shock.

In a few minutes, Lupis barely resembled a corpse. Sitting up, Lily glanced at the fallen bodies of her friends. Axel and Emilena were both alive, but neither would be for long.

Walking over to the cable that had caused the short circuit, she wrappdd her hand around it and grunted as she absorbed a second dose of electricity. Then, she walked over and administered a defibrillating shock to Emilena's heart.

Emilena heaved and vomited blood. Buckling over, she choked and coughed and breathed for the first time in minutes. "Oh god!" Was all she could say at first.

Lily smiled but soon left Emilena for Axel. Touching his cheek softly, she put her hands on his heart and administered a similar shock.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 12, 2014, 12:15:35 PM**

everything except an area thats classified' marita said ' 50 credits says thats where they are holding lily.' she turned to the others ' i think we've gotten everything we can out of this guy.' she waved the id card in felixs face ' alright, we've gotten enough out of you. we'll let you go, but we'll hang on to this id..'
- wait. we're letting him go' rose started. 'all the info we needed was on the id.' Marita replied ' it allows us clearance to just about anywhere on the base.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 12, 2014, 12:56:32 PM**

Axel's legs jerked as the electric jolt shot through his chest. Rolling onto his stomach, he wretched, opening his mouth wide and sucking down lungfuls of air as the dark edges to his vision gradually faded. After a moment, he tried to push himself up, his arms trembling. He looked up, then gasped when he saw Lily crouching over him. Axel twisted and weakly tried pushing himself back across the floor, stopping when his back hit one of the containment pods. His eyes took in the scene; the torn pieces of somebody (*Lupis?!*) scattered around, Emilena struggling to get up... and lastly, Lily herself - who didn't seem like she was going to attack.

He paused, then edged forwards cautiously on his hands and knees, his body still feeling unpleasantly numb. "Li... Lily?" Axel slowly held out a hand to her.

Felix started. "You'll... you'll let me go?" He tugged at the ropes binding him. "Come on then! Hurry up and untie me!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2014, 03:35:32 PM**

Lily nodded and kissed him gently. The electricity had knocked the primary conscience out, allowing her to control her body for the last few moments in it.

Emilena staggered to the cloning pod and opened it. A familiar 20-something dark-skinned body greeted them. "It's...ready..." she panted painfully. "You've just got to..."

Lily nodded. Stepping forward, she helped Emilena remove the mindless clone body and lay it on the ground. Then she climbed into the pod and allowed Emilena to seal it shut.

Emilena closed and sealed the door. "This won't hold the creature for long. Hopefully we're long gone by the time it wakes up."

They waited. And waited. The clone body remained lifeless.

Emilena grew nervous. "Without a mind, this body won't last for much longer without suffocating itself. What's taking her so long???"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 12, 2014, 05:02:21 PM**

Axel looked from the pod to the body lying on the floor, his hands clenching into fists restlessly. He looked at Emilena and clenched his jaw. "Did... did you do something wrong?" Axel walked unsteadily to the pod, looking at the switches and buttons next to it. "Damnit, I don't... I don't know what any of this stuff does..." Thumping a fist on the glass, he called through to Lily. "Hey! Hey, Lily, come on! You've gotta hurry up!"

Giving up, he collapsed to his knees next to the clone's body and shook her shoulders gently. "You have to do it! Please!" *It couldn't go wrong... not now, not when they were so close...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2014, 05:49:24 PM**

Further minutes passed. Nothing.

Emilena growled and thought over the steps, leading up to now. *Everything is perfect...* she thought with frustration. *Why the hell isn't she...?*

She took a deep breath. *There's* the problem. She's been thinking of HER role in all this, not Lily's. Had Lily ever shown an ability to throw her conscience at will?

As Emilena began to understand the problem, a solution slowly presented itself.

"Axel..." she started, trying to put this as delicately as she could, "Lily needs an impetus to jumpstart her conscience's expulsion from the old body, such as someone trying to kill her. Normally, a near-death experience is enough, but she knows neither of us would ever kill her after all this. Now, while seeing through her eyes, I saw all her near-death experiences...and, though I didnt understand why, your moment with her in the tree..."

Emilena opened the pod and dragged Lily's mutated body onto the floor. "The alien has no concept of life after reproduction. It's a primitive animal; once you reproduce, you die.. It thinks you're trying to kill her through impregnation." She trailed off. She hoped he would get the hint.

She hefted her sword and Lupis' pistol. "I'll, er, guard the entrance..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 12, 2014, 06:49:24 PM**

Soren shook his head. "Marie, we can't let him go. He's gonna arm up again and come after us. We need to dispose of him, *now*!"

Anne sighed. "As cruel as it sounds, Soren, I think you have a point." She pulled her pistol out from under her dress and clicked off the safety. "Sorry, but we'd like to make our raid a bit easier."

Soren shook his head. "Let's not waste ammo. We're on an elevated platform. We'll just dump him from it."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 12, 2014, 07:16:24 PM**

Killing him, wont solve anything' Marita said.' we have the info we need, now we can let him be on his way. if we run into him again along the way, and he dies then, thats one thing.. but this is another..

- soren, dont be a dick ' marie said. we'll drop him off somewhere and head to to rejoin the others..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 12, 2014, 07:37:51 PM**

"His group has already killed numerous innocents." Soren's face was icy cold and neutral. "And what if we just release him and he goes ahead and rearms himself?"

"Marie, these people are fanatics. Do you want to put Augments like myself at risk?" Anne asked, pointing to her horn for emphasis. "Don't be mistaken, I'm not in favor of wanton slaughter but he's too high up in the command to keep alive. You saw what his keycard's clearance is."

"Which is why we need to kill him!" Soren snapped. He then gently brushed Felix's nakes chest with the muzzle of his rifle. "Pity, you really weren't a z-level operative. We might have let you live if you were."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 13, 2014, 02:26:40 AM**

Axel gaped at Emilena, flushing. "Huh? I need to..." He blinked and looked down at the mutated Lily. "She thought I was trying to kill her with... with *that*?!" *You're losing time!* Swallowing, he nodded quickly at Emilena and ran a hand through his hair awkwardly. "Alright, alright, I'll try. Just... yeah, just guard the door."

As Emilena walked away, Axel crouched down in front of Lily, his eyes roving over her body. He loved her, but... in her current transformed, bloodied state, sex wasn't exactly the first thing that came to mind. Axel spread her legs apart gingerly, and winced. She was spiky down there, too. He let out a shaky breath and started unbuckling his jeans. "Alright... come on..."

Pushing them down, Axel grimaced when he saw there was another problem. After being shot at, beaten, electrocuted and killing people, he was finding it difficult to get his friend in the mood. "Aw, you son of a bitch! Not now..." Rubbing up against her, he accomplished nothing aside from getting poked by something sharp. Leaning back, he tried desperately to help himself along with his hand. Still nothing. "Goddamnit!" he growled after a moment, stopping and punching his leg in frustration. *The one time you could use it to save someone's life!* Grinding his teeth, he looked around for inspiration... and his gaze settled on Lily's clone lying just to their side. Axel remembered the first night they'd met, how he'd felt the first time he'd looked into her eyes. Leaning over, he grasped the clone's outstretched hand tightly and closed his eyes, memories flitting through his mind of how happy she'd been that morning at Soren's house, when she knew she wasn't alone. And he felt himself stirring.

A small laugh escaped Axel. "Alright! Just... just keep it up..." Pushing forwards, he entered the mutated Lily and gasped as he poked himself on something again, keeping his eyes closed. Keeping a hold of the clone's hand, he started to pick up his pace, his breaths getting quicker.

Felix glared up at Soren with hatred. "I told you, I *am* Z-level." He spat in his face. "If you're going to kill me then hurry the hell up, you fucking bastard. I don't have all day."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 13, 2014, 03:36:21 AM**

There was a sharp intake of breath as the creature stirred. But Lily kept the conscience forced down. She had already worked herself into a bit of a panic when she couldn't escape, but once she realized what Axel was doing, she became determined to use it.

The tattoo on her chest was at one. This was the only chance she was going to get. Like before, she felt herself leaving the body and settling into Axel's.

No! she thought with determination, *Not there!* She used Axel's gaze to pinpoint the clone body to her left. He was holding her hand, making it even easier for her to lead herself to her intended destination.

And then...it was done. Sitting up now and breathing for the first time, Lily took several deep breaths and opened her eyes. She felt herself. This body didn't feel like hers, even though it looked like it; this would take some time to get used to.

"Axel..." she whispered, trying to sit up. "Axel...you did it."

The creature under Axel, freed of Lily's control, pushed him away and scampered out of the room. Having remembered how this rat had bested it in ambush before and was proceeding to display the ultimate act of dominance, the creature was more than willing to flee instead of fight.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 13, 2014, 12:42:27 PM**

When he heard Lily speak, Axel's eyes flew open. "Huh?! Oh! *Argh*!" he cried as the creature pushed him away and he was tugged out roughly. He groaned, holding his crotch as the mutant scrambled away, then looked back up as he heard Lily trying to move. "Oh my god! *Lily*!"

Dragging himself across, he put an arm around her and helped her to sit up. "Holy crap! It actually worked!" Axel pulled Lily closer and kissed her, then looked her up and down anxiously. "How... how are you feeling? Does everything feel okay?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 13, 2014, 01:18:48 PM**

"Yes..." Lily smiled, but upon attempting to breathe again she began coughing. Her face turned slightly purple and she clutched her throat.

Emilena rushed back into the room at the sound. "Her lungs are full!" She announced, recognizing the symptoms immediately. Hoisting Lily onto her knees and elbows, she spanked her violently until Lily had cleared her lungs, like a newborn baby.

"Now to clear her trachea...sorry Axel, but it looks like I get first kiss," Emilena pushed Lily back down and administered CPR until Lily vomited green fluid. "Okay...okay, we're good now," Emilena sat back as Lily sat up, looking queasy.

But that didn't stop her from hugging Axel. "Thank you..." she smiled weakly. "I can't believe you managed to..." without further words, she pressed her lips against his, even while crying softly with overwhelming emotion.

Emilena averted her eyes and couldn't repress a disgusted grimace; cloning fluid breath would have to be the worst possible thing to kiss...

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 13, 2014, 05:04:21 PM**

Soren wiped the saliva off his face. "Okay. Anne, mind giving me a hand?"

Anne nodded as she picked up one half of the chair and Soren picked up the othe half.

"Okay," Soren said. "Someone needs to hold the door open."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 13, 2014, 05:37:40 PM**

Lily's breath *did* have a chemical quality to it, but Axel didn't care. He returned the kiss, eagerly pressing against her mouth in unbridled adoration. He could barely dare to imagine that she was finally okay again, and it was as if by maintaining contact, he was reassuring himself of the fact that she was safe. When they finally broke apart after what seemed like forever, he smiled down at Lily and brushed some hair from her eyes. "I said I wouldn't leave you, didn't I?" Leaning his forehead against hers, he whispered, "I love you so, *so much*."

Axel unzipped his hoodie, pulled it off and wrapped it around Lily to keep her warm. "Here, I, ah, know it's a little big for you... and a little, uh, bloody. Sorry." Looking across at Emilena, he nodded gratefully to her, tears in his eyes. "Thank you."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2014, 10:24:53 AM**

Suddenly the lights in the building where Soren and the others were dimmed, and then a single spotlight silhouetted Nairda and a mic on the second floor.

With a two-finger kiss in Felix's direction, Nairda hit the background music, and busted some passionate chords. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHEvx9GTHVI)

Lily, with Axel's help, got to her feet. "Thanks..." she said gratefully for the sweater.

Emilena glanced at the door. "Wish we had time to get you a shower; I know that stuff isn't pleasant on the skin. But right now we need to get in contact with those two characters we broke in with. Do you have any way of contacting them Axel?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 14, 2014, 03:54:36 PM**

Nairda's lyrics could use some work, but Felix had to admit - the guy sang with *heart*, dammit. He twisted around in his chair to look at Nairda as he finished his rap. "Hey! Yeah, we've got chemistry! Loads of it! I can feel it too! We *can* be Bonnie and Clyde! Just stop these goddamn crazy pricks from killing me!"

Axel nodded. "Yeah, right here..." He fished his cell phone out of his pocket and flipped it open, then winced. "Damn..." The phone's screen had a large crack running through it, but at least it was still working. He quickly tapped out a text to Tony:

Have Lily. Didn't see or hear anything about bomb. Ideas?

He closed the phone and put it back in his jeans, then looked at Emilena. "The bomb, it's... it's still around here somewhere. I have to try and stop it. But if you still want to leave, I... I won't stop you." Axel swallowed and turned to Lily. "If she does, you should go with her. Staying here... it'll be dangerous."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 15, 2014, 12:25:05 PM**

Tony had been waiting patiently in the generator room for the past half hour or so. It was approaching the 40 minute mark now, and he couldn't hear anything further from outside, namely because he was starting to doze. Had the attack failed? But no... the shield they had erected didn't last very long. It soon suffered critical failure, and dissipated like early morning mist. The mob had insiders everywhere, and their insiders had killed the Purifiers manning the shield generator and promptly ensured it could never be used again. Rocket and mortar fire resumed, with the rumblings in the street indicating the mafia were bringing forward a large tank with a bulldozer blade fitted to its front. It clanked rapidly down the main avenue, heading right for the front gate as its 88 mm gun opened fire on the compound's doors.

The vibrations from outside stirred Tony back to wakefulness, and he shook his head, wondering what time it was. Feeling his phone vibrate in his pocket, the ferret reached in and pulled it out in bored fashion, tapping the screen and seeing Axel's message. Oh right... about time. Tapping back *Get back here. I'll start the reactor to blow this place if you're ready.* he sighed, then slid the phone back into where it had come from. Still leaning against the mammoth generator, the ferret gazed out into the empty room, his sense of unease and low morale only getting lower with each passing second.

Turning, he silently began throwing some switches and twisting some knobs, listening as the reactors rumbled to life with deep, throaty hums, awakening after decades of disuse. He was only starting them up, not raising them to critical level just yet, but that could easily be done in a matter of seconds, and then he'd sabotage the whole thing to ensure they couldn't be shut down again.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 15, 2014, 02:11:18 PM**

Emilena folded her arms. "I Did not come thus far to just trust that Lily can keep herself alive as an unarmored human. Consider this done once we've gotten her to safety."

Lily smiled at her. Emilena expected Lily to ask why Emilena was doing this, like everyone else had, but somehow she already understood.

Lily turned to Axel. "I'd never leave you. But I don't understand...how are you planning on destroying the machine? That's not possible...unless that's where the others are right now."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 15, 2014, 02:31:38 PM**

Axel shook his head. "No... No, Soren and the others are still out in the city. Tony's down setting this place to blow." He frowned. "Wait, what do you mean? Why would it be impossible? I mean, once we find where they're keeping it, we just need to... to sabotage it. Right?"

He walked over and put a hand on Lily's shoulder. "Look, I know it might be hard for you to remember, but did you hear anything, anything at all about where they're keeping it? Some kind of storage area or... or lab maybe?" Axel swallowed. "We're running out of time..."

Marcus looked up as the shield overhead broke down. The mortar fire continued down and hammered against the walls and grounds of the compound. Several Purifiers guarding the walls flinched, and made to run for cover. The doberman snarled and fired in the air. "*Don't run!* We have to keep them out as long as we can!" Turning back to look out at the grounds, he spat and raised his radio. He hadn't wanted to play this card so early, but since the shield wasn't working... "Sniper teams!"

From the tops of the high rises dotted around the industrial district, Purifiers armed with sniper rifles stared down at the action below. "Here," several voices returned.

"Have any teams managed to locate the mortars yet?"

"Team A."

"Team C."

Marcus nodded to himself. It made sense, they were the two teams posted the furthest away from the base. "Take them out. And make sure no more take their place." From far in the distance, there was a series of tiny, indistinct pops, and the mortar fire abruptly stopped. "Other teams, scan the approach and get ready to fire. They've got to make their move soon..." Marcus frowned when he looked up and saw the tank rolling down the main path to the front gates. The gun opened fire on them, and they started to crumple inwards... then the tank rolled over one of the mines that had been set up, and was promptly blown up. Marcus grunted as the burning wreckage crashed to the floor. *Did they really think it was going to be that easy?* He could only hope the mob would be as careless when they began moving across the grounds. Turning to the Purifier next to him he barked, "Find someone to repair that gate!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 15, 2014, 04:15:35 PM**

"Axel..." whispered Lily softly. "It's off-site. They drained me and sent the energy via wires, but the bomb itself isn't in this base. They weren't going to leave their trump card where everyone knew to look..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 15, 2014, 06:41:08 PM**

(Purifier Base)

Aaron swore as a piece of shrapnel kicked up by the mortar fire pinged off his helmet.

He aimed at at one of the attackers about 500 meters out and squeezed the trigger. The German Shepherd had never shot at anything so far away but the HMD and its associated scope made him into a near-perfect sniper.

The Poodle next to Marcus slung his rifle across his back and nodded.

He then darted into the base where several of the Purifiers were waiting for orders.

"Drop yer cocks and grab yer socks!" he shouted. "One of you fuckers needs to fix the gate!"

The troops immediately leapt to attention and filed out to get their tools.

The Canine sighed and pulled out a burner from his pocket. Yanking the small metal tab, he took a deep draw of the now smoking tobacco.

(Abandoned Bakery)

"Shove it up your ass!" Soren snapped. If he wasn't holding the chair, he would have unslung his rifle and smacked the fucker right in the groin with the muzzle of his rifle.

"Not interested in a bigot like you," Anne replied. She smiled, Nairda, for all his obnoxiousness, was actually not a bad rapper. She turned to the three women. "Look, could someone open the door? We don't have all day!"

(OOC - Damn, I loved that rap!)
(OOC - Nick, you're up.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2014, 07:04:03 PM**

mArita went and opened the door, a so the others could carry Felix out. Nairdas singing was actually quite decent, she thought. ' you know nairda, once you get that voicebox of yours fixed, you should take up singing as a career' she said as she looked down the hallway, at of which and staircase could be seen, or at least the top of one.. ' lets get this over with, so we can go find tony and the others, hopefully they are having better luck finding lilly than we are with this guy..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 15, 2014, 07:10:01 PM**

Soren and Anne quickly hustled him down the stairs.

Soon, they arrived at the "ground level" of the abandoned bakery. Grass grew from between the cracks in the decrepit lot

Small scorch marks, drug vials and beer bottles indicated that this area had probably been used for late night parties more than once. Pockmarks and cracks in the walls hinted that the parties had gotten violent multiple times.

Anne and Soren grunted as they lifted the chair onto the concrete ledge. On the other side was a drop of at least 150 feet to the ground level where more industrial buildings and city infrastructure lay. All it took was a single push from the two to send Felix on a one-way trip to hell.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2014, 07:53:57 PM**

marita pulled out her phone and sent axel and tony a text' -have info on compound thanks to a purifer we caught. have you found lily yet? the sooner you get her out of there the better Marita.' ' hopefully that text gets to them ok..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 16, 2014, 02:42:03 AM**

Felix screamed as he plunged down the huge drop, landing with a wet crunch and turning into what looked like a red soup. The world would never know what adventures he and Nairda could have had together.

Axel didn't say anything for a long time. He stared back at her, his eyes wide. "Wha... no. No, no, that's not..." He trailed off when he realised how much sense it made. Why *would* they leave their main weapon in a place as well known as this? Axel slumped back against one of the pods. "*Oh god...*" He thought of the thousands of innocent people that were about to die... and it occurred to him numbly that he was about to, as well.

He felt a vibration in his pocket. Taking out his phone, he saw the text from Marita. Blinking back tears, Axel texted her back: *Got her. BOMB NOT HERE. GET SOMEWHERE SAFE.* As he sent it, he saw the time on the screen. They had 10 minutes left. There was no way they could stop the bomb now. They'd lost. He swallowed. "I guess that's it, then." Axel looked at Lily. "I'm... I'm sorry..."

He started, then glanced between her and Emilena. "Wait! *Holy shit*, I think I know a way we can..." Axel ran a hand through his hair. "Lily, remember before, when you ran into this place? That lab, I... I don't know if it was the walls, or what... But while we were in there, the Purifiers set off a, a kind of mini-pulse, and it didn't affect me!"

Axel swung his gaze to Emilena. "If we can get there, then maybe... maybe we'd be okay!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 16, 2014, 09:01:51 AM**

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they've got Lily' Marita said, upon receiving Axel's text ' problem is the bombs not there. they must have movced it off site ' we need to get out of here and find a safe place to bunker down" she said to tghe others its 1150, so we have 10 minutes. we have to move NOW!
_ so they have lily' Marie began ' but they didnt find the bomb? Oh Crap" rose replied.' don't worry about that.. we need to get out of here' marita said..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 16, 2014, 12:16:20 PM**

(OOC: Thanks, felt inspired when I finally got one hour of free alone time in my apartment and wanted to do something hilariously embarrassing to celebrate!)

Bowing his head sadly, Nairda dropped his mic over the side of the building to rest with Mr. Died.

"Well, let's go to the base and finish this," he said, steely-eyed, before instantly becoming wild-eyed and shouting, '*It's fixed!!! I can speak normally again!* The rap was too intense for the language filter, and it broke down! I can talk without randomly inserted 'biiiatch'es!"

Tears welled in his eyes. "I've been saved....by the power of *rap*..."

Emilena narrowed her eyes. "That's right; the lab is sealed against psionics, and this is a psionically-charged pulse. That could work."

She peeked out the doorway and plugged two Purifiers who had been running past the door down the hallway. "We might be able to figure out how much time we've left once we're there.

Lily hugged Axel nervously. "We've got to get you to safety. I don't you to die because of...something I played a big part in operating..." her voice wavered.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 16, 2014, 02:42:30 PM**

Axel put his hands on Lily's shoulders and looked her in the eyes. "I don't want you to blame yourself for this. *Ever*. Okay? What they did to you... You didn't ask for that. It *wasn't* your fault." He lightly ran a hand through her hair then started to lead her towards the door. "Besides, big scary guy like me, I'm not gonna give up that easy," Axel continued, giving her a nervous smile, before ducking out next to Emilena.

He nodded at what she said. "Right, 10 minutes to get across to the lab... we can do it." The hallway was clear, so Axel slunk out and pulled a shotgun from the grip of one of the Purifiers Emilena had just shot. Shouldering it, he turned to the two women and gestured. "C'mon, let's get going before more of them turn up..."

In the center of the city, an indistinct white van was parked on the side of the road. It had been there most of the day, and pedestrians walked past it without giving the vehicle a second thought. Stored in the back, a large, box-shaped structure glowed blue, the colour pulsating like a heartbeat. On the top was a blank digital screen. It beeped, and suddenly numbers flashed onscreen - counting down. *00:10:00... 0:09:59*

In a car across the street, Rhaegson smiled and put a silver, remote-like object back in his jacket pocket. A burly man in the driver's seat next to him frowned. "You didn't need to be here... shouldn't you be somewhere safer? There'll be *some* fighting back, you know."

Rhaegson looked at him and shrugged. "I don't want you to have all the fun. Everyone's in position, anyway. Anyone who fights back is going to be put down. And the mob's being kept busy back at the compound. It's all going to plan." He looked down at his watch. *10 minutes left...*

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 16, 2014, 04:12:26 PM**

(OOC - I'm assuming Doctor Jiang didn't quite program the vocoder properly and it just reverted back to normal.)

Soren looked over the edge. He turned away, not out of disgust but out of indifference. "Okay, let's finish this shit off."

He and Anne returned into the bakery just as Marita spoke. The Human's eyes widened. "Okay, let's find the bomb, disable it and then slaughter as many Purifiers as we can find!"

"But the pulse!" Anne cried out. "We can't search a six square mile city of forty million people in ten minutes!"

"Once that pulse hits, we'll know who the Purifiers are. We'll strike then."

Anne's eye twitched and stomped over to Soren. "Is that all you care about?" she growled, her ears pinned and swiveled back. "Revenge? This isn't about your fucking workshop any more! If this pulse goes off, Axel and myself could very well be killed! How goddamned selfish do you have to be to not give a flying shit about your friend and only about your workshop! Put aside your fucking revenge-boner and actually consider what could happen if these freaks get the upper hand!"

Soren could only gape as Anne verbally ripped him a new asshole.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 16, 2014, 04:57:59 PM**

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shes right' marie spoke up. " this more than about any of our petty gripes anymore. there's several million folks who have augments in one form or another, and you're willing to see all of them maimed ior even killed? what kind of nut are you?'
-
we need to get to somewhere thats shielded from am emp, likw underground, for instance, or in a bunker..'marita said ' we need to move guys.. argue once we're safe..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 17, 2014, 03:20:27 AM**

"There is another way..." Nairda said, steely-eyed. "We don't have to search the entire city if we *destroy the entire city..."*

He tried to think of how they could do that and drew a blank. "Just providing a third option," he chuckled nervously. "Heh heh...luckily I'm not the boss so I don't have to make the call."

Emilena led the way towards the laboratory, and they reached it via brisk trot in a few minutes.

Too bad at this point there were several personnel present; scientists, specialized guards, anyone who worked for the Purifiers but had an augment for job purposes had relocated here. Emilena was about to suggest they try to blend in when she spotted a few individuals who were rogue cops and would almost certainly recognize her.

"What are you doing?" squealed Lily as Emilena hoisted her gun.

"We're using the only thing we've got; the element of surprise," Emilena replied. There was no time for anything else.

Rolling into the room, Emilena targeted the two guards with heavy weapons first, then dove for cover hoping to get a clear shot on her former colleagues.

Back in the other room, Lupis stirred. Any other being would be dead, but his regenerative factor was slowly working its genetic magic. Anything short of a beheading was recoverable; he couldn't move yet, but he'd be able to soon.

Then a shadow loomed over him. Extasis was back. Grinning grimly, Exstasis drew a knife and placed it on Lupis' neck. He was the only person in the world who knew Lupis' only weakness.

Lupis' eyes went wide and he shook uncontrollably. He tried to speak but he wasn't healthy enough.

"Don't worry..." Exstasis whispered back, guessing what Lupis wished to convey "...if we ever want you back we can just *clone* you."

The knife tore through skin and bone.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 17, 2014, 10:49:24 AM**

One of the guards started to turn, startled, as the sound of Emilena's gunfire filled the room. He started to raise the Uzi that he was clutching, aiming at her as she went for cover. Charging in after her, Axel swung the barrel of the shotgun to face the guard and pulled the trigger - the blast tore the Purifier's arm from his shoulder, a red mist spraying out over the terrified scientist who was standing next to him. Gritting his teeth, Axel awkwardly racked the shotgun and fired it again, sending a tattooed poodle flying backwards with a gaping hole in his chest.

The rest of the guards had managed to raise their own weapons by this point, and started to return fire, taking cover on the other side of the lab. Swearing, Axel kicked a table over and pulled Lily down behind it, his breaths growing panicked as bullets *pinged* over their heads. A clock on the wall behind them was shot down, the glass shattering. Axel saw the time as it tumbled to the floor, and he swore again. "6 minutes!" he shouted across to Emilena. "We've gotta clear this room *now*!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 17, 2014, 05:50:31 PM**

Tony pushed off from the generator, sighing again as he glanced at his phone. No new messages... "Let's get outta here." he stated.

"What? But you haven't set the reactors to blow yet!" Vergil responded.

"Yeah well... we have ten minutes left... which is 20 minutes too long before these reactors go off if I set them now. Meaning we've already lost. IF Axel and Emilena and Lily were coming back here, they would've been here ten minutes ago. It was timed beforehand... and now they're not here. Something's clearly gone wrong. No messages, no calls, no fucking nothing!" Tony elevated his voice at the end there, stamping his foot paw into the ground. "Best we can do is hope they weren't killed and pull back into the tunnels to avoid the pulse... cause if my phone gets fried again... not that that's the worst of my worries..." he murmured here, thinking about how many were about to die.

Tapping out a quick *We're pulling back. No idea where you are. Lost contact. If in trouble, let us know.* to Axel, the ferret headed back for the manhole cover, knowing he was gonna lose reception once he entered the tunnel.

"Go ahead." Tony nodded, letting Vergil hop down first. He waited an extra minute before descending the ladder, waiting to see if Axel needed help.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 17, 2014, 07:00:36 PM**

Emilena ducked under the table, shot someone in the foot, then shot them in the face when they helpfully fell to the ground and exposed it.

We need another advantage... she thought. With the remaining bullets in her clip, she sniped as many lights as she could to increase concealment. Several scientists were radioing for help; this served only to expose them to her line of fire.

As she focused on gunning down the scientists, she didn't notice the last pocket of rsistance, the small cadre of rogue officers who had taken cover behind the computer array in the far corner of the lab. One of them primed a grenade and, under the cover of darkness, chucked it at Axel and Lily.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 17, 2014, 07:46:26 PM**

"We're on an elevated platform. There's no basement!" Soren snapped.

Anne looked around. "There's got to be a metal lined room somewhere we can hide!"

"We don't have the time! We'll need to get to the ground level as fast as possible! There's an elevated highway nearby that goes to telecommunications center on the ground level. If we can just carjack someone, we'll be good to go!"

Anne looked at stolen watch. "We better hurry then!"

"Right!" Soren took off in a sprint for the main road. "Everyone else, when you see a car coming, throw something at them. Once they stop, I'll carjack them!"

He readied his rifle and clicked off the safety.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2014, 08:02:10 PM**

or there might be a car parked somewhere' Marita said as she ran after Soren. rose and marie were right behind her at this time of night there was not many cars on the road.. marie sighed as she looked up and down the road- there were no cars in sight ' marita looked at her phone ' they had 4 minutes left.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 17, 2014, 08:22:25 PM**

Soren never thought he'd hope there was traffic but sure enough, he found himself wanting.

Even the steady drone of repulsorcars and flying frames had vanished. All that he saw was the pallid glow of street lights.

"Okay, there's no traffic. And we've got four minutes left." Soren sighed and put the safety on his rifle back.

"Well, I guess we're boned." Anne got out a packet of pills from her dress. "Well, I'm dying on my own terms, not theirs!"

"Anne! Don't do that! We'll think of something!"

Soren looked around. "Any ideas?"

Anne looked at the pills and shrugged. She put them back in her dress. She then noticed a "No Tresspassing" sign on the battered fence. "Guys, I have an idea. It's *seriously* illegal and wrong but I don't think we have a choice."

Soren snorted. "I already carjacked someone and committed murder. Albeit, murder of a bag of shit."

Anne looked at her watch. "Look, we get the police to respond, kill the cop, dump the body and swipe the car."

Soren looked askance. "Are you fucking *serious*!?"

"Got any better ideas?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2014, 08:33:04 PM**

marita suddenly noticed a car lying in a ditch further down the road; guys look..' an abandoned car! she said pointing to it.. ' soren, you know how to to hot rig a a car right..' she shouted as she ran towards it. upon reaching it she noticed the windows were dusty:the car had been there awhile.. ' someone must have abaindoned this here..' she said..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 17, 2014, 09:29:25 PM**

"Modern cars can't be hot-wired. They need a radio signal from the key to start," Anne cut in. She then smiled and tapped her horn. "And I got a universal key!"

She led the group over to the car and climbed into the driver's seat. She closed her eyes and focused as the microprocessor in her skull tried to spoof the reciever in the car.

The electric motor suddenly started up with a whine. "Okay, I managed to use my horn to trick the domputer into thinking there's a key." She looked at her watch. "We've got like two and a half minutes left."

Soren bundled into the passenger's seat. He decided against buckling up as he may need to use his rifle.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2014, 09:36:48 PM**

marita jumped into the back seat, and Marie and rose joined her. just drive anne!' rose cried. ' we need to find a safe place..' marita sighed with relief as the car pulled onto the road.' we just need to drive towards the outskirts of the city..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 18, 2014, 02:46:15 AM**

Axel popped his head out of cover, aiming the shotgun at the rogue officers taking cover on the other side. Yellow flashes of light illuminated the room as they exchanged gunfire, the darkness making it hard to see if he was hitting anyone. Finally, his gun *clicked*. He dropped back down and let the gun fall to the floor in frustration. "Crap! I'm out!" *As long as Emilena doesn't run out of bullets, we should be okay...* He couldn't see how much time they had left, but it couldn't be much longer.

Axel shook his head. He couldn't just sit here and do nothing. He looked at Lily. "I'm gonna try and grab a gun from one of the bodies..." he started to say. Then a metallic clink stopped him as something landed in between them. Axel squinted down at it, and felt himself go cold when he realised that it was a grenade. He stared at it blank faced for a second then dived for it, a strange whistling noise escaping him. "Ohfuckohfuckohfuck!" Fumbling for it, Axel grasped the grenade, stood up and blindly lobbed it back across the lab in the direction of the rogue officers, then knelt back down and squinted his eyes shut.

The man who'd thrown it yelled as he felt something bonk against his head. He caught the object as it fell, and his face paled as he and the other officers saw what it was. "Motherfu-" In the closed confines of the lab, the explosion was deafening. Shrapnel, and parts of the computer array system were thrown across the room. With a wet splat, a foot landed next to Axel.

He waited, then slowly stood up when he didn't hear anything else, his ears ringing. Nothing but bits were left of the rogue officers. "I... I think it's over," Axel said, helping Lily up then nodding across to Emilena. Feeling his phone vibrate, he took it out, trying to control his shaking fingers, and read the text from Tony. *Taking cover in lab, safe from bomb. Hide, regroup when it's over*, he sent back, then started when he saw the time.

"1 minute! We've got to seal the room!" Axel shouted. He turned to the door and heaved it shut... then froze when he heard a huge crash behind him. Turning slowly, he saw that a large section of the lab's wall, weakened by the grenade's blast, had collapsed outwards, flooding the room with light and exposing it to the outside. Axel blinked. "Well, shit."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2014, 11:52:21 AM**

Emilena blinked. "We're...uh...we're fucked," she finally admitted, looking at the plastered remains of their protection against the pulse. "I mean, really you are, Axel. Lily and I will survive, the only augmented parts of me are my hands."

Twenty seconds left.

Lily balled her fists. "No..." she whispered, and it wasn't a whisper of desperation or disbelief; her tone was commanding and defiant. *I've been fighting to control a psion in my mind for the past week; I* psionically powered this very bomb, *I am not about to let it let it tell me what that pulse will do to my loved one.*

As the remaining seconds ticked off the clock, she wrapped her arms around Axel and touched their foreheads together. Emilena just stood off to the side, seeing if she could spot any way to save her hands from the coming EMP pulse. Sadly there was nothing in the way of a shielded box or anything.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 18, 2014, 03:10:10 PM**

20 seconds... Rhaegson sniffed and pulled out a radio. *10 seconds...* The man sitting next to him licked his lips and drew back the safety on his assault rifle. The timer kept ticking down. *5...4...3...2...1...* Rhaegson smiled. *0*. Inside the van, the bomb beeped, and started humming. Slowly, the noise built up, growing louder and louder. Citizens walking past the vehicle started to pause, looking at it curiously. They started to back away nervously when the windows in the van started to rattle. The bomb started to shake, its vibrations growing violent...

And then, with a sudden roar that resonated through the body of everyone nearby, a huge blue wave erupted from the van. The windows exploded as it shot up in the air, then spread out in a growing dome formation, the blue light washing over buildings and shooting down the streets as the dome traveled outwards, spreading over the city of Lanthae.

From inside the car, Rhaegson could hear screaming, cars crashing. One of the people who'd taken an interest in the van, a dalmatian, fell to the floor and started convulsing. Raising the radio to his mouth, he pressed the button on the side. "We're a go. Have fun, boys." The man next to him grinned, and got out of the car, making his way towards the shaking dalmatian.

Throughout Lanthae, the Purifiers began their slaughter.

Marcus shot down another approaching member of the mob, then ducked back down behind cover to reload. The Purifier next to him shouted for more ammo, and Marcus tossed him a spare clip. "Keep fighting!" he shouted, his voice hoarse. "It's almost time! Just..." The doberman stopped when his ears picked up a faint buzz.

Turning, he looked in the direction it was coming from. Far in the distance, a blue glow was getting brighter... and then Marcus saw the pulse itself, rushing towards the base, the buzz turning into a roar that grew louder with every passing moment. As the Purifiers around him started cheering, Marcus smiled.

Axel swallowed numbly, Emilena's words drowned out by the panic rushing through him. Looking dazed, he stepped towards Lily. As she put her arms around him, Axel felt his frame start trembling. He gritted his teeth and let out a breath as he heard a rumbling from outside get louder and louder. Axel hugged her tightly.

"I love you. *I love you*," he choked as their foreheads touched. He squeezed his eyes shut as a blue light rushed through the hole in the wall and flooded the lab.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 18, 2014, 10:37:06 PM**

Anne screamed as the pulse washed over her. She was far enough that the pulse didn't fry her augments but it still caused massive amounts of pain. The car was now at the outer rim of Lanthae where they were now actually at ground level. Sprawling fields of algae and assorted farms as well as a few factories provided a huge contrast to the towering black neon lit monoliths of the Lanthae city core.

She gritted her teeth and clutched her hands to her forehead. The car swerved wildly as she took her hands off the steering wheel.

"Anne! Get a fucking hold of yourself!" Soren screamed as he reached over and wrestled with the steering wheel to keep them from ending up inside an algae farmer's tank. The mare was still screaming in agony as the remaining pulses continued to wash over them.

(Dr. Jiang's Clinic)

The clinic was shielded so all the Augments inside were unharmed.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said of the security systems. Thanks to the pulse, they had been fried ó and anyone seeking to do harm could just walk in.

"We need to move," a Krait nurse exclaimed.

Doctor Jiang turned on the TV. Live images of Purifiers running amok and slaughtering Augments and allies" alike ó in horrifyingly sadistic and innovative ways; the screen showed a group of Purifiers throwing a young Augment, not much older than ten years old, off an elevated sidewalk and onto the train tracks below.

Chants of "Death to Gleamers!" and "Burn in hell, orgo-traitors!" filled the night air.

The Chinese doctor then turned the TV off. "We can't move now. It looks like the whole city's affected. If we leave now, we'll all be killed. We need to stay here until the furor dies down ó and then we move."

He reached into desk and swapped out his left hand for one that contained a two foot vibroblade. It was intended to laborers to use in cutting concrete and other hard materials but like many class 2 augments, it has been often been misued as a weapon.

(OOC - Orgo-traitor is a term that refers to a Baseline who has a relationship with an Augment. It doesn't matter if the relationship is sexual, friendly or even just professional. Needless to say, this is a *highly* offensive term.)

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2014, 11:26:21 PM**

pull over soren! Marita said loudly, as rose and marie held onto the dseats in front of them. ' get her back here so we can calm her down! pull over to the side of the road; ' marita looked at her phone,the pulse was far enough away that her phone wasnt fried.'obvious;y the bomb has gone off and those loons have begun attacking anyone they can get theor filthy hands on..'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 18, 2014, 11:34:09 PM**

Soren straddled the center console and wrestled with the wheel as he pulled the car over to the side of the road. On the other side of the fence was an algae farm.

Anne staggered out of the car. "My head," she moaned. She collapsed onto the hard tarmac.

Soren sighed and got out of the car. He placed both arms under the mare's armpits and tried to drag her into the backseat.

After a few minutes of backbreaking labor, she was safely in the backseat. Soren wiped some sweat off his forehead.

He turned to Marita. "We need to get in contact with Tony and the others!"

Soren looked off into the distance. "If they successfully do a pogrom in Lanthae, what's to stop them from doing a nationwide one?" He shuddered at the implications. What he had once thought was a small-time group of thugs had now turned out to be a group of genocidal anti-Augment fanatics.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2014, 11:48:38 PM**

i'll send Tony a text message' Marita agreed sghe began texting 'Outside of city, pulse too far away to fry phones but did gave Anne massive painful jolts. will need to regroup. what is best place to meet up?' marita sent the text then sighed.'those poor people ' Marie said, the full knowledge of what was going on, sinking in, and the golden retriever began to weep. rose was cradling annes head and trying to keep her stable.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 19, 2014, 07:38:40 AM**

As the pulse washed over the lab, Emilena cried out and fell to the ground as her hands sparked and sent her to her knees. Her hands literally would not function anymore, and blood started to trickle out from her cuticles as the inner wires frayed and short circuited.

Axel, on the other hand, was unharmed by the pulse. As it washed over them, Lily squinted her eyes and clenched his hands in her fists. The pain he would have have felt was absorbed into her body and the harmful effects of the pulse could not enter her domain.

Some of the surviving wounded on the floor cried out as the pulse didn't spare them from its effects. A few seconds later, the pulse had passed.

Emilena, half preoccupied with her bleeding hands, still spared Lily a surprised look. "How did you...?"

Lily smiled softly. "Psionics are a mental strength, and I've had training from hell these past few days..."

Inside the car, Nairda's broken body convulsed as it finally succumbed to the pulse it had sustained over the past few milliseconds. As he flatlined, he managed the strength to grab one of his teammates ignoring him and pull the girl close to him.
"T-tell...Emilena...tell her I...love her..."
He choked out, then, as his hand went limp, he managed the ghost of a smile as a single tear rolled down his face. He would later be buried in an unmarked grave, without ceremony or mourners, just another casualty of the city that he had fought for.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 19, 2014, 09:06:35 AM**

Tony managed to jump down into the tunnels just in time, killing his cell service and sealing the cover shut. Panting, he waited, though was unable to tell the effects of the devastation up top. The pulse served to fry everything, knocking out the city's defenses and cooking hundreds of thousands of augments at once.

"Wait!" Tony held up his paw, wondering if the others had made it to the lab and survived. "Just wait... give it..." he checked his phone, "ten minutes."

As the defenses dropped citywide, agents of Kalis observed the spectacle, having taken proper precautions to avoid the pulse by moving to just outside the city's limits. There was no point to being in the city anyway, after what was about to be unleashed.

Broadcasting the news out to the fleet, the message was received without problems. Kalis's fleet admiral once again approached him. The dark warlord was standing calmly on the bridge of his flagship, still staring out into the dark. "Lord Kalis..." the admiral began.

"I know... I sensed it..." Kalis responded in his wheezing, raspy voice. "So much death... it's wonderful! It courses through my veins... enlivens me with a certain kind of vigor! Open the gate, Admiral Carrack."

"Yes, my lord." Carrack bowed at the waist, and turned. "Open the gate! Prepare to jump!"

Soon, a blue spark exploded in front of the gathered fleet, growing larger and larger until a portal took form, appearing like a miniature blue-black hole that rotated clockwise in on itself. It grew in size until it was several miles across, easily large enough for the fleet to pass through. Gate-jumping was a process that bent the fabric of space-time and allowed faster than light travel across vast distances provided there were relays existing at points A and B. Most major cities had relays for the delivery of goods long distances, and Kalis's fleet had an array of relays equipped on its carriers that were normally reserved for experimental space travel but could be used to traverse the planet just as easily. With Lanthae's government now in total chaos, there was no way to prevent Kalis's fleet from making an unauthorized jump into the city.

The ships' engines rumbled to life, and began moving towards the gate, which quickly sucked them through like a vacuum, and they streaked across the sky like meteorites before suddenly appearing over Lanthae's morning sky.

Massive ships began blotting out the sun, and the attack was swift and merciless. Explosions and sheets of flame blossomed around the city as the aerial bombardment commenced.

Inside the Purifier base, Tony was just emerging back into the dusty reactor room after ten minutes when he could feel the ground shaking all around him. "What the hell?" he demanded, struggling to keep his balance. "Is this part of the Purifiers' attack?" he wondered aloud, looking around.

"No!" Vergil exclaimed, pointing upward out the windows now. "Look!" Tony craned his neck and gazed out the windows, gasping as he saw a titanic aerial battleship looming overhead, resembling a giant hammerhead shark as it opened a heavy caliber fire on the Purifier base. The shots ripped gaping holes in the complex and started to leave craters on the grounds large enough to drive multiple big rigs through rather comfortably.

"What the... hell?" the ferret whispered, and noticed Vergil seemed shocked to see this particular ship.

"No... it can't be!" the white gecko gasped.

"What? What?" Tony proclaimed, trying to press Vergil for answers.

"It's Kalis's fleet! I... I recognize it!" he replied, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Kalis? What's he doing here?" Tony asked.

"Wish I knew!" Vergil responded, still looking at the ship as more shots tore into the base.

"We... we gotta get out of here!" Tony stammered. It was clear the base would be flattened in a matter of minutes if this kept up. Tearing his phone out of his pocket, he silently prayed it was still working, and much to his relief, could see that it was. The tunnels had protected it, and he sighed in relief as he fumbled with the screen, noticing he had a message from Marita, and quickly read it. *outside the city!* he replied, and began writing a message to Axel. *You guys make it? We gotta get to the car! Still at the tunnel* he wrote. The one small glimmer of hope was that the labs were located close to the old reactors, so it shouldn't take very long for Axel and the others to make their way back here if they could. He also noticed a message from one of his father's capos, indicating they were pulling back in the face of the aerial attack.

As the attack over Lanthae commenced, the government was sending out what distress messages it could, pleading for help. The nearest aerial fleet was some distance away, but did respond to the message, and began making for Lanthae. As they lacked gate-jumping capabilities, they would have to travel at sub-light speeds to the city, but even despite this, Admiral Bryce McCormick vowed to do his damnedest to reach the city in a timely fashion with the 9th Fleet, as Kalis was a wily and dangerous warlord they'd been hunting for some time now, and had finally appeared over one of the world's largest cities.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 19, 2014, 10:02:00 AM**

broadstree was defending the police department from assault by purifiers, their bodies lay blocking the doorway as one by one they fell to broadstreets bullets.. the city was in ruins, and the death toll was likely near 1 million. broadstreet cursed the purifiers as the last attacker fell dead.' we need to gget out of the city and regroup..'take whatever vehicles you can get, and bring along any survivors you can pick up..' he ordered. the surviving officers saluted him and hjeaded out.broadstreet then went to the armory, picked out a bulletproof vest and.put it on. he then grabbed a pair of guns and as much ammo as he could, then headed out the back of the police station to his car. like many police issued car the windows were bulletproof. broadstreet headed out of the police parking garage and headed towards the city outskirts. _ tonys alive! ' marita said upon receiving the text message ' nairda isnt' rose said indicating his limp body..'we'll have to bury him somewhere'' marie replied as marita sighed upon seeing nairda's body.' that'll have to wait until we get reunited with the others. I'm driving for now' marita said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 19, 2014, 12:29:41 PM**

"Forget burying him!" Soren shouted. "We'll just have to ditch his body by the side of the road!"

Anne fished in the pockets of her dress. "Any of you got some headache pills?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 19, 2014, 12:43:17 PM**

i have some' marie said ' i have them for when i get dizzy from climbing stairs' she said digging into her purse and coming out whuiith a white asparin bottle ' here take a couple' she said giving the bottle to anne.' marita started driving the car' we'll dump him off once anne is better' she said. she sent tony a text' nairda is dead. everyone else ok.reply once you are out of city.'

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 19, 2014, 01:11:49 PM**

Anne took about five of the pills and gulped them down without water.

Soren looked around the farms that surrounded them. "What are we going to do now? We can't fight against all these nuts!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 19, 2014, 01:55:41 PM**

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we are going to have to start over somehow' marita said.' we'll need to stop these guys, however, in order to do that..how we are going to do that.. well i dont knowe..

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 19, 2014, 05:25:28 PM**

As the pulse entered the room and Lily's grip tightened, Axel shuddered at the tingling sensation that ran through his body... then it was over. Hesitantly, he opened his eyes and was surprised to see that his vision still seemed to work. Glancing down, he flexed his fingers and gave a small laugh, disbelievingly, when they actually moved. "*Holy crap*, I'm... okay!" He looked at Lily and smiled. "I... I've got no idea how you did that, but... thank you..." He hugged her and kissed the tip of her nose.

When Axel pulled back, he saw the state Emilena was in and his eyes widened. "Oh jesus... We've got to get out of here..." He started to make his way over to her when a dull *boom* from somewhere in the distance made the ground tremble. Axel paused for a second. "What's..." There was the sound of another explosion, this one much, much closer and the floor jolted beneath him, hard enough to send him stumbling into one of the metal cabinets. "What the hell's going on?!" he gasped. Feeling his phone vibrate again, he snatched it out and saw Tony's message. "Ah crap..." *On our way!* he sent back, then looked quickly between Lily and Emilena.

"Tony's waiting for us in the tunnels, it's our only way out of here!" Axel rushed over to the Emilena and helped pull her to her feet. "Come on, we've gotta go!"

Marcus shoved a Purifier out of the way of the ship's gunfire, then rolled back to avoid it himself. His mouth twisted into a snarl as, sliding to his feet, he looked up to take in the flying ship that had opened fire on them. *What the fuck is going on?!* Gunships?! Where the hell had *they* come from?!

A tower started to collapse behind him. It smashed onto the ground just behind him with a deafening crash, crushing several unfortunate people, dust and debris flying outwards. Marcus leaped into one of the craters to avoid the parts flying lethally through the air, then scrabbled back up the other side, spitting out dust and looping the strap of his assault rifle over his shoulder. Glancing at the base as it crumbled before the ship's gunfire, he could see staying here was pointless. "*We're retreating!*" Marcus shouted across to the Purifiers who'd managed to take cover and avoid being torn apart. "Get moving! *Now*!" Charging through the alleyways of the base, sprinting to avoid the bullets that tore through its structure, Marcus led the remaining Purifiers across the compound to the exit on the western side.

Rhaegson blinked sweat out of his eyes as he took cover from the aerial bombardment, looking up into the sky. His men had been given orders for different strategies to adopt in the event of various problems arising... but warping spaceships? *Didn't see* that *coming... Now that's just fuckin' rude...*

He spat to the side and looked around at the men who'd gathered with him. Staying up on ground level obviously wasn't an option. Across the street, he could see an entrance leading to the subway system - if they could make it down there, they'd be able to take cover, regroup and come up with a new plan in response to this, he regretted to admit, unforeseen set-back. Rhaegson just had to hope the other Purifiers would realise the same thing.

He pointed across. "Get into the subway! Go!" Rhaegson waited for them to look at where he was gesturing, then sprint across. Gritting his teeth, he tore after them, ducking his head as he ran through the flaming debris that rained down on them. Raising his eyes, Rhaegson saw they'd all managed to make it down - he was the last Purifier left up top. A few more steps brought him closer to the stairs. He was almost there...

Then a massive explosion next to him threw him to the side. He landed with a *crack*, his left arm snapping as it twisted under his body. When Rhaegson regained consciousness 10 seconds later, he coughed and rolled over onto his back. Looking up, he could see the ship hovering way up overhead, continuing to fire down at Lanthae. He couldn't hear as building parts crashed to the floor near him, couldn't hear anything, and it occurred to him, almost absent-mindedly, that he might be deaf. *Gotta get moving...*

Rhaegson tried to get to his feet... but he couldn't move. Frowning, he raised his head, looking down at his body... or at least, what was left of his body, which now ended at his waist. Below was just a red smear, with the start of an intestinal coil poking out. Looking around, he squinted and could just make out one of his legs, torn and bloody, lying a couple of meters away. The strength in his neck suddenly gave and he let his head fall back to the ground, his vision starting to darken, the colours fading. *Well, that puts a crimp in my day,* Rhaegson thought. Then he died.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 19, 2014, 05:56:06 PM**

Kojurro coughed out blood as he staggered down the street. he hasd fought off a group of 5 purifiers who had attacked him, and while he had killed them, he was pretty banged up.. the sight of the carnage around him filled him with fury at those responsible.; gotta get out of here' he thought, as as an injured St Bernard Augment grabbed his leg, and pleaded for help ' please' he begged ' Kojurro sighed and helped the injured dog to its feet,one of the Bernard's hind legs had a large piece of metal sticking out of it..names Manny' the Bernard said through gritted teeth ' Kojuuro' Kojurro said Manny weighed 200 pounds and it was not easy for Kojuuro to lift him, finally he sat down on a sidewalk ' we have to get that debris out of your leg.. i'm no doctor.. Kojurro said.. he reached inside of his shirt and found the the beeper Broadstreet had given him to activate the bug. Kojurro pressed the beeper which gave off a noise. a few minutes later Broadstreet pulled up next to him in his car.' you have more lives than a cat.. Broadstreet said to him. then noticed Manny. ah an injured civilian. Didnt know you gave a damn Kojuuro. You surprise me.. Broadstreet went over to Manny and with a sharp pull removed the blood soaked shrapnel from Mannys leg . Manny yelled out in great pain, as Broadstreet tossed the debris away. ' put him in the backseat. theres a first aid there with bandages and gauze' Broadstreet said to kojuuro.' we're getting the hell out of here. the two helped manny into the backseat of the car, and kojurro climbed in after huim. broadstreet climbed back in and took off again, while Kojuuro bandages Mannys leg.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 19, 2014, 07:27:39 PM**

Emilena got to her feet awkwardly since she couldn't use her hands. "I hope you can keep all three of us alive, rat," she grumbled. She attempted to pick up her katana but could only waggle her fingers around it like raw strips of bacon.

Lily bent over and helpfully clipped the sword to Emilena's belt. "Let me take your hands for a second," she offered. Closing her eyes, she bit her lower lip and focused.

Emilena sighed reflexively as the pain started to disappear. Glancing down, she noticed with alarm that blood was starting to trickle out of Lily's nails and her hands were shaking. Realizing the nature of Lily's healing abilities, Emilena snapped, "Not right now!" and snatched her hands away, causing Lily to gasp in surprise. "I'm fine! Your hands are more valuable than mine at the moment." She rubbed them, then followed Axel. "Let's get moving."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 20, 2014, 05:44:02 AM**

Axel quickly bent and snatched the Uzi from the guard's severed arm, grimacing as he pulled the gun free from the fingers wrapped around it, then crossed the room. "Alright, let's... get going," he grunted as he shoved the lab's door open. Whatever was going on outside, the noise had become relentless, and Axel could feel his teeth setting on edge as the compound around them shook, dust falling in waves from overhead and settling on them as they dashed through the halls. On the way, they came across a group of three Purifiers dashing down towards them, their eyes widening in surprise at seeing the intruders. Before they could say anything Axel mowed them down and jumped over their bodies, his legs carrying him faster as the racket outside grew deafening.

Turning the corner, Axel could see the door that lead to the reactor room. "Come on, we're almost there!" He started leading them down the hallway... and suddenly, behind them, the wall began collapsing inwards as something punched through. Axel turned and gaped. Was that gunfire? *What kind of guns can do that?!* Whatever it was, dust, glass and rubble started flying towards them as the destruction tearing the place apart rushed up the corridor in their direction.

"*Fuck! Run!*" Axel yelled, seizing Lily's hand and sprinting down the corridor. The door was getting closer - but, from the sound of it, so was the gunfire that was shredding where they'd been just moments before. *No way... we aren't dying now, not when we're so close!* Reaching the metal door, Axel kicked it open and shoved Lily and Emilena through into the reactor room. Diving after them, he tripped and tumbled down the stairs, landing at the bottom with a groan as the ship's gunfire tore past, destroying the doorway and bringing down the roof behind them.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 20, 2014, 11:20:05 AM**

"Jesus, you made it!" Tony exclaimed, seeing the group charging towards him as the base began to collapse and come down. "We gotta get the hell outta here!" Holding his paw out for them, he helped first Lily down into the tunnel, then Axel, and finally, noting Emilena couldn't seem to use her hands, he grabbed hold of her armpits before she could protest, and let Axel grab her from the lower half so she wouldn't fall down the ladder and break her neck. "Here!" He said, quickly following down after her as the building was torn apart, the room they were standing in starting to act as if a giant were punching its walls.

The ground shook violently, a virtual earthquake going on around them as the battleship's big guns ripped the base apart, shredding it as effectively as if it were a toy being put through a pulverizer. "Hope this goddamn elevator still works!" Tony said through clenched teeth as they ran down the tunnel, the ferret hearing the sounds of tearing metal and collapsing walls further back from the complex.

Vergil was the first to reach the elevator, piling in and slapping the up button to the ground floor, but then jamming his bulbous finger down on the door open button to ensure everyone got inside. Once they were, his white finger mashed the close button, and they were soon making their painful way upwards, Tony silently praying that the elevator wouldn't tumble back down as the building they were in shook like a leaf in the wind.

The elevator rattled and rumbled its way up to the ground floor, and Tony let out an exhale as the doors opened and he ran out first to get the car ready. Everyone could fit in the car, and they wouldn't need the trailer, but Tony knew the car was powerful enough to reach 100 even with the trailer attached. Throwing himself behind the wheel, the ferret fumbled with his keys, eyes on the destruction of the Purifier base ahead of him, and he swore as he dropped the keys briefly. "Shit!"

Reaching down, he retrieved them and started up the big V-12. Vergil got into one of the back seats, and once everyone was inside, Tony gunned the engine and whipped the car around in a 180 degree turn, tires squealing as he pointed the car towards the highway, but then thought better of it. Looking at the sky, he could see the aerial fleet was concentrating its attack on major buildings and thoroughfares, and the highway was the place to avoid right now. OK... time to take some back streets to escape the city.

"So... I take it Lily's back?" Tony asked when he was certain he was safely away from the Purifier base, and could focus a bit less on driving like he was being chased by all the forces of hell, which in a way, he kind of was. He felt his phone vibrate, and he pulled it out to quickly glance at a text message from his father.

On the bridge of the ***Red Castle***, Kalis was gazing with satisfaction at the destruction of the city. If they submitted, fine, but he doubted he'd have time to occupy this place. Already his fleet had intercepted emergency distress calls to the 9th Fleet, so he knew they were at least inbound. Still... nothing wrong with a little chaos every now and then. Even if he wasn't ready for a stand-up battle just yet, this was an opportunity he wasn't going to waste.

But there was something here... a distant presence he was sensing... a presence he hadn't felt in a long time. But that presence was impossible. There was no way he could be feeling it. Narrowing his eyes, he pushed it from his mind, and instead focused on watching the explosions and the decimation below him, reveling in the sight as if he were at some intense sporting event.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 20, 2014, 03:54:04 PM**

"That's me," Lily said shyly. "I know I look different from how you've seen...but this is how I normally look. Thank you for putting up with me when I was...less than hospitable."

Emilena narrowed her eyes as she watched the destruction outside. "Where exactly are we going?" she asked. She suspected Tony was returning to his father, and Emilena suspected she shouldn't be at the planned reunion.

Nairda's body hit the street and tumbled as he was forcibly ejected from the car. In a few seconds he stopped rolling when he hit the side of a barn.

A few hours later, he came to in the bed of the farmgirl that nursed him back to health. As she unsubtly came on to him, clearly sheltered and desperately inexperienced in the ways of men, her father kicked the door down and angrily chased him from the town with a burning pitchfork.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 20, 2014, 05:59:32 PM**

Axel hunched over in his seat as Tony sped the car through the narrow side streets, feeling exhaustion seeping into his limbs now that they were out of the immediate danger of the base. *As long as we don't get bombed by those things in the sky, it'll be smooth sailing...* Rubbing an arm across his face, he took Lily's hand in his own and leaned across to Emilena. "Whatever happens... you're welcome to stay with us. I... I don't know if I can repay you for what you've done." Axel looked at Tony and smiled. "You too. If you hadn't shown us that way in... Things could have gone differently. Thank you."

He sighed and leaned back, then stared out the window at the huge ship hovering over Lanthae. Axel swallowed. "Vergil... what... do you know what the hell's going on?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 20, 2014, 08:50:25 PM**

"For now, out of the city. I can drop you off if you have a specific destination in mind and it's not being bombed to hell." Tony responded to Emilena. He glanced in the rearview mirror at Axel now. "Uh... sure, no problem." he responded, nodding. "You don't have to repay me." Plus I don't think you can, he didn't add. It was certainly high praise for having done essentially nothing but show him a way into the base. Still, it had helped get Lily out of there, and that was their main goal. This Kalis or whoever he was... he was doing their job for them now by helping to eradicate the Purifiers... but it was coming at a very high cost.

Axel also seemed to have gotten over the whole "you chose your family over me so I'm choosing her over you" thing. Tony figured not to bring it up, especially if the rat wasn't going to do so further. He needed to put it behind him, and just go on with his life. Whatever the future held, he wasn't sure, but there were things still remaining to be done, with or without his friends.

Vergil glanced up again as they wound their way through small side streets, staying clear of the aerial attack and away from major centers of commerce. It was working out well so far, as the ferret's route was keeping them clear of the bombing. "Well... I can't say with any certainty... only that Kalis is here... I don't know if it's for me, or just because he's a warlord bent on ruling the planet, but he's here." Vergil stated with some finality. "This attack is too big for me... and I don't know why he'd concern himself with someone like me anyway. I don't know how prominently I factor into his past, if I factor in at all." he murmured here. "But I DO remember this fleet distinctly. I can't... say if I served in it at some point in time or not, though. It's all just... a blur." he muttered with some dejection.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 21, 2014, 01:08:33 AM**

"Few miles out of town would be great," said Emilena, who was focused more on gauging her location using the remaining landmarks still standing. She didn't particularly like Tony so the sooner she could be on her own, the better.

"Hey," Lily said firmly, waiting until she had Emilena's eye contact, "Axel was serious about his offer. We both owe you, and you need somewhere to live. We could all use each other, and we've earned each other's trust."

Emilena smiled weakly, not out of insincerity but lack of practice. "Thank you for the offer. I'm pleased to have cleared my debt to you. But I have to insist that we part ways." Axel has wisely kept his full name secret from most relevant parties and Lily will be tougher for the Purifiers or mafia to recognize in her fully-human appearance. In contrast almost everyone on every front knows Emilena's name and face, and most of them would like to see her dead. She would only jeopardize the best chance Axel and Lily have of successfully slipping under the radar.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 21, 2014, 08:37:58 AM**

Axel nodded. "Alright... well, just know that the offer always stands. If you ever need somewhere to stay, then... uh, you know." He blinked, then looked at Lily. "And, ah, speaking of which... *we* need to find somewhere to stay! I mean, I don't have a second house in the country or any surprises like that." Sighing, he looked out the window. "Well, as long as it's far away from all this... and as long as I'm with you... It'll be okay." Axel felt something sharp dig against his leg and, wincing, he pulled out the remains of his phone - it must have broken when he fell down the stairs. He swallowed. He'd have to trust that Soren, Marita and the others were okay.

After a while, Axel glanced at Tony and Vergil. "How about you guys? I'm, ah, guessing the Straccis don't need to worry about being homeless?"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 21, 2014, 12:40:46 PM**

Tony shook his head. "No... my dad is going to relocate though. He's getting some larger movers in to get all our stuff... no use sticking around in a ruined city, after all." Tony sighed. "I grew up here but... I guess it just wasn't meant to be. But... at least my dad's made arrangements to save all our stuff... including the cars." Tony smiled here. "Maybe I'll get to drive one to the new location. My dad's got homes all over, after all." he shrugged here. "But... I... yeah I guess I'll just stay with him for now." he concluded, sounding unsure.

Vergil shook his head. "No idea what I'm going to do or where I'll be staying. I need to find out about my past and who I am after all... as well as my link to Kalis. Maybe I'll start traveling... interviewing everyone I can find who was connected to the Scorched Earth War and who might've known about my service... and well... I'd like to learn about Kalis's former boss... who he was, why he suddenly turned traitor... I feel I'll find answers that way." he explained as they exited the city. Open fields stretched on before them, and Tony drove towards some woods he knew about to the southwest of the city.

Slowing the Pierce-Arrow down, the ferret could see refugees in this area were minimal so far. "This place good?" he asked Emilena, looking over at her now.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 21, 2014, 02:54:10 PM**

"Perfect." Without so much as a thank you, Emilena exited the car before it had even fully come to a stop.

Lily smiled sadly. She seemed to guess Emilena wouldn't be swayed. "At least give us some way to contact you, then. In case you change your mind."

Emilena paused. "If I change my mind, I'll be able to find you. It used to be my job to find people, you know."

And then she took off at a brisk sprint until the smoke and ashes emanating from the neighboring city had swallowed her.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 21, 2014, 04:00:14 PM**

(Farmlands outside Lanthae)

Soren looked at the column of smoke rising from the ravaged city. The booming of the fleet's massive cannons echoed around the countryside.

He sighed. The countryside was a throwback to earlier times. Except for the tall gleaming towers of refineries, factories and vertical farms dotted throughout the are.

The Human sighed. "Well, the city's fucked. And we're equally fucked. What do we do now? Meet up with Tony and Axel?"

"What else can we do?" Anne replied.

Soren nodded. "Can someone text the two again?"

(Purifer Base)

Sirens screamed throughout the ravaged compound as the relentless bombardment continued.

Aaron swore as the hallway he was in shuddered, knocking him to the ground. His smart rifle was just an ordinary rifle and the HMD associated with it were all but useless, fried by the EMP. Pausing a moment, he ripped the HMD from his combat helmet and the scope from the rifle and tossed the two useless pieces of electronics away.

The German Shepherd panted from the near constant running. His lungs and legs burned fiercely as he sucked in the dusty air.

It was then he saw it, the green glow of the exit sign and the lights of the outside. The flickering of the exit sign indicated he had little time left before the exit collapsed.

He urged his muscles to worker even harder and shot through the opening. And not a moment too soon as the reinforced concrete finally failed, entombing anyone unfortunate enough to be left inside.

The Canine looked around the group of Purifiers for Marcus.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 21, 2014, 04:25:48 PM**

I'm Not getting any Response from Axel, i'm guessing the pulse must have fried his phone.' Marita said she she texted Tony" Outside city near some farms. got a place in mind where we can meet up?' she finished the text and turned to the others. ' at least we have each other. its not much, in the grand scheme, but its better than nothing.'
-
broadstreet drove through the ruined city and made it out to the outskirts. by his count, he had just 14 officers left, not including 8 he had been unable to contact. this was out of 125 under his command, and broadstreet blinked back a few tears for all those lost, officer and civilian alike. manny growled softly behind him as kojuuro bound his injured leg.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 22, 2014, 01:35:55 PM**

Tony felt his phone vibrate again, and pulled it out as Emilena got out of the car. It was from Marita. Looking behind him at Axel and Lily in the rearview mirror, he cleared his throat. "Ahem so... where can I drop you guys off?" he asked, starting to drive forward at a slower place once more.

He texted back *Not sure I'm meeting you. Need to help my family first. We're relocating* to Marita. He really had no reason to link up with the others right now, and the texts he was getting from them meant they were safe for now, so he didn't have to worry about that.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 22, 2014, 02:05:54 PM**

Marita got the text and smiled " Understood. At least you guys made it out of there. Go handle your family business first, its more important than worrying about us..thanks for your help Tony.' she sent it and turned to the others.well guys it looks like we're on our own. Tony and the others made it out and but are headed off to handle thier own business. so i suggest we head towards a new town."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 22, 2014, 03:31:53 PM**

Axel watched through the window as Emilena ran off, his ear flicking as she disappeared into the smoke. He turned as Tony spoke, biting his lip. "I, ah... I don't know. I mean, there's gonna be plenty of small towns around here in the country..."

He looked at Lily and put an arm around her shoulder. "What do you think? Take our chances... find somewhere quiet, settle down and try to make a new start?" Axel smiled at her. "Late lie ins... Dinners in front of the TV... I can make a *mean* macaroni-cheese on toast."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 22, 2014, 11:49:48 PM**

Lily laughed. And cried. And hugged Axel. It was beginning to dawn on her just how lucky this all turned out. "Of course," she sobbed with equal parts elation, devastation, and fatigue, "God...anything. Anywhere. I love you!"

She flung her arms around him again and cried uncontrollably.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 23, 2014, 12:59:51 PM**

Axel held Lily tightly, resting his head against hers as she sobbed. "It's alright. Everything's over now," he murmured, stroking her cheek. "*We're* going to be alright."

He looked up to the front of the car and nodded at Tony. "Drop us off at the next town. We'll... we'll take it from there."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 23, 2014, 02:06:17 PM**

"No problemo!" Tony responded with a grin. "Can do! Fortunately, my dad's manor is kind of in the next town over anyway, so we should be able to work that out. I'll drop you off before then and I'll be on my way!" He drove through the open fields, and finally managed to get on the Garden State Parkway, having made his way there over bucolic country roads. The Pierce-Arrow seemed to blend in perfectly with this atmosphere in a way, as the countryside, while having high-tech farms, wasn't over the top with its technological sprawl like Lanthae was.

Reaching the town where his father lived, Tony slowed down on the main street and then pulled over at the curb. "Here we go! This good?" He asked, rotating in his seat to look behind him at the couple now. "Hey! Stay in touch, OK?" the ferret asked, raising his brows.

Back over Lanthae, Kalis was growing a bit frustrated. He had sensed her presence in the city, but it had vanished rapidly, and the warlord was convinced he'd missed her. "Damn!" he wheezed, shaking his head "Clever of you... but I knew you were here."

"Lord Kalis! The 9th Fleet is approaching!" came a shout from one of the bridge techs.

"Mmm... very well. Prepare to withdraw. We've sown enough devastation today..." Narrowing his eyes, Kalis glared out the front viewport. "I'll find you..." He murmured. "Don't think you can hide from me forever!"

A few minutes more, after delivering more devastating shots to the city below, Kalis's battle fleet began withdrawing, opening up the gate once more to prepare to jump. Several minutes after that and it was all over, the powerful fleet nothing more than a very close memory as the skies over Lanthae cleared.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 23, 2014, 03:52:43 PM**

Lily smiled. "We'll keep in touch," she beamed back at Tony. "Thank you for everything, and best of luck in getting home."

She got out of the car and turned to say thanks to Vergil next, but stumbled when she made eye contact. There was something...dark in his subconscious. Not even in his thoughts. In his destiny.

She managed a weak smile. "I...I'm sorry..." she tried to hide her discomfort but did poorly. "You've got a lot of power, and even more potential...just, when you get the chance to use it...remember compassion."

Not knowing what else to say, Lily stepped away from the car and averted her eyes, waiting for Axel to say his goodbyes so they could leave.

Emilena stumbled along the side of the road, coughing almost as rapidly as she was sprinting. Her burning lungs be damned, she needed to get as far away from Lanthae as she could.

Still, part of her was glad at how everything turned out. She'd paid her debt, and was free to live the rest of her life alone and away from everything in her past. She would never have to see any of these idiots ever again--

"Woooahhh!!!" Someone came out of the smoke too suddenly for her to avoid and crashed into her, making a stupid noise she was all too familiar with.

"Nairda..." she snarled, stifling an exasperated groan. "Of all people..."

"Sorry about that, madam!" Nairda brushed some ash off his shoulder, thereby making it the least ashy part of his body. "There's a psychotic farmer chasing me who wants my gonads on his pitchfork!...or at least there was when I started running thirty minutes ago..."

She slapped him to get him to shut up, and he double-took. "...*Emilena!?*"

Despite herself, she grinned. "God, you're an idiot. Come here."

Grabbing him by the collar, she smothered him in a passionate kiss.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 23, 2014, 05:27:21 PM**

Climbing out of the car, Axel walked over to Tony's window and leaned through. "Sure, we'll keep in touch. You haven't heard the last of us, Stracci! Maybe someday *I'll* take one of your dad's cars for a ride," he grinned, nudging the ferret's shoulder. "Or, ah... maybe not. Thanks, Tony and... take care of yourself, alright?" He looked over to Vergil and nodded. "You too. I know you've got some... *a lot*, of questions but be careful out there."

With a last smile, he stepped away from the car and took his place next to Lily on the sidewalk, raising his hand in a wave. "I guess we'll see you guys later!"

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 23, 2014, 05:43:36 PM**

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marita turned topwards the car when marie tapped her on the shoulder ' um, marita before we head off theres one thing i want to say.. thanks.. for letting me tag along, and not leaving me on my own after the night club blew up..' marita smiled at her ' well marie you've become a friend. i'd be glad to share an apartment with you.' Marita offered ' just as roomates' marie asked.' marie..marita started but didnt get to finish as marie kissed her on the lips.marie kissed her for a few seconds then broke away.' well, if you feel that way..' marita shrugged. i still have my drug problem to deal with rose said as she approached them. ' we'll get you detoxed' marita priomised her..rose hugged her, then hugged marie, who kissed her in response. rose blushed as she pulled away from Marie' well i'm ready to get going ' she said.

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 23, 2014, 06:06:53 PM**

Eventually Emilena and Nairda found themselves in the lonely stretches of the desert outside the Northern suburbs of Lanthae. The next city over was a night's walk, but for the time being Emilena had set up the tent she'd been lugging since she left her parent's home, her hands having regained most of their functioning by now. The remainder of her food provisions were cooking over a fire, and Nairda was looking hungrily at them.

Instead he quickly found himself pressed forcefully to this ground by a naked vixen. "Hey Nairda," Emilena's eyes flashed mischievously. "I figured out why lovemaking with you was so goddamn boring."

"You...uh...you did?" he asked nervously, as she ripped his clothes off him.

"Yeah," she grinned, "you were missing the funnest part."

She punched him. Then punched him again. Then kept punching him until he punched her back in self-defense. Then she kneed him in the crotch until he kicked back. Soon the two were a whirlwind of claws, sex, and dirt.

Hours later, panting heavily, Nairda dragged his exhausted but satisfied body over to the food. "Where do...what's our plan now?" he exhaled, ripping into some jerky.

Emilena was squeezing blood out of her hair. "Who the fuck cares. Go anywhere. Fuck the world."

That night the two ignored the tent and slept outside, the desert wind wafting along their bruised skin.

"It's not an easy life you know..." Nairda murmured, wrapping his body around his lover. "We'll be outsiders, slandered, treated like dirt...its not an easy life on the streets..."

"Oh, shut up," Emilena rolled her eyes. "Just watch me." She glanced at the plumage of blackened smoke forming a mushroom on top of Lanthae. "We brought the last city to its knees, and it was the crime capital of the nation. The next town won't know what hit it..."

Title: **Into the Black**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 23, 2014, 07:10:38 PM**

Soren nodded.

"Where would everyone like to go?" he asked.

"Drop me off at the nearest maglev station. I'll hitch a ride to the nearest big city and then make my living there," Anne replied.

As Soren drove along the highway, he looked around the area. The farms and factories around him still had the dirty industrial look to them but they were nowhere near as bad as Lanthae.

All there was along ths lonely road and bathed in the icy white of LED streetlights and light emanating from the many farms and factories in one of the busiest farming corridors of the nation was a single stolen Fisker Karma and its occupants, heading off to who knows where.

(End RP!)

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The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Unfinished RP's => Topic started by: Pterano on April 28, 2014, 10:32:53 PM

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 28, 2014, 10:32:53 PM**

Oddly enough, the blue 1948 Delahaye 175 (http://www.ritholtz.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/dela-9.jpg) didn't seem out of place as it whizzed down the highway of one of Corona's busier circuits. Its rakish lines and exotic look seemed to match quite well with the surrounding digital cars that surrounded it and elegant skyscrapers that rose like monoliths around the vehicles.

The only thing that was off about it was the fact it was gliding on tires and not hovering over the ground. Its engine produced a throaty hum that was louder than the modern cars, but it made the ferret sitting behind the wheel relish the drive all the more. There was nothing like a drive on a beautiful day with the top down in a vintage car to make you truly appreciate life. The wind whipped the ferret's fur, blowing it back a bit as Tony Stracci cranked up the speed. He was still mostly obeying the speed laws, but going slightly faster than the limit. While the Delahaye may not have had the horsepower of some of his father's more powerful cars, it certainly looked exotic enough that it was turning more than a few heads as it drove on its way.

Tapping his paw on the steering wheel a tad, Tony thought about what he could do today. There were basically two choices. Well three, really, but he was already mostly doing the third. That third option was drive around aimlessly. But it was one of the other two that most appealed to him. He wanted to swing by Axel's place to see how the rat was getting on. It had been a bit since he'd last stopped in, mostly due to family business coming first, but he had a free day, and he wanted to use it. He was in the area, so he took the exit, and started heading in the proper direction.

On a high-speed train currently making its way to Corona, Vergil Speicher was sitting back in a comfortable chair studying some articles and tapping a pen on his chin thoughtfully. The white gecko had a look of deep concentration on his face. Articles on Rex Sardolemuel and Kalis were spread out all around him. The seating was vis-a-vis, but only the seat next to him was currently occupied by all his papers. The war, the two generals, their going rogue... it was all documented rather well. He was trying to find mention of himself in there, or some clue, but unfortunately, common soldiers were rarely named.

He'd found out some more, at least. Rex had been the brother of Mace Sardolemuel, the founder and current CEO of the Zaloga Corporation, one of the four main weapons' manufacturers in Corona. While Mace had the business brains, Rex was the military talent. He'd enlisted young, and had quickly proven himself as a military genius, if a bit unconventional. Then there was Kalis, Rex's gargoyle gecko second-in-command. But what was missing was the personal story. *Why* had these two decided to suddenly go rogue and attempt to conquer the planet? They were outcasts before, sure, but why take so extreme a measure?

Vergil sighed, and closed his eyes, settling back into his seat. He needed to talk with survivors... people who had known these two. If he could just learn more... he might be able to find out who he was as well, and if he'd indeed served them during their war of conquest. He would get to the bottom of this story if he could. Flashes from his past kept coming back to him, but nothing too solid. One memory was standing out however. It was of Rex and Kalis investigating some ancient ruins somewhere, and he was positive he was with them then. But what was it? What did it mean?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 29, 2014, 01:37:12 AM**

"Hey! Easy with the soldering iron!"

Soren used his free hand to wipe some sweat from his brow. The apartment he was working in was home to a dour looking Chow-Chow. The dog in question was wearing a basic t-shirt and track pants and leaning back on a battered easy chair. The apartment was simple, much like the cyberneticist's own apartment, which he shared with Rose, Marita, Anne and Marie.

There was however, an incongrous item: a *very* elegant looking ó and expensive ó Ming dynasty vase. A dramatic contrast to the plain and downright cheap apartment.

"Sorry, it's just that many of the components in your arm are severely damaged. What the fuck were you doing? I've already dug out two bullets!" Soren carefully unscrewed the mangled laser module from the arm and placed it aside.

The Chow-Chow growled at Soren. "That's none of your concern!"

Soren nodded and continued removing more debris from the arm.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2014, 09:15:02 AM**

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three streets across from where Soren was working stood the apartments where Rose was living with Him, Anne, Marie and Marita. Rose was coming home from her latest practice, a role named Cherie, based in 1930s new Orleans. She was now approaching three weeks being sober from biproxytol, which had been a very painful-and expensive- undertaking, if not for Marita and Marie she wouldnt have made it. Marie.. Rose smiled. the two of them had been co-workers at a rinky joint called the Black Sheep, Marie had been a waitress there, Rose had been a stripper and dancer. but the place had blown up and burned down during the last adventure which had swept up her, Marie and her old girlfriend Marita in a devious and diabolical attempt by a group called the Purifiers to wipe out all Augments in the city of Lanthae, and topple its government. the attempts had failed thanks to a aerial bombardment by someone called "Lord Kalis" which had reduced the city to rubble, killed millions, and nearly wiped the Purifiers out of existence. The three girls were among those lucky to escape and made their way here. Marita, who was a computers genius and master hacker had found a place for the three of them, and they had offered Anne and soren a place to live, and which helped lower the rent burden the three of them were carrying. Marie now worked at a casino, dealing cards, which made her quite a bit of money. The girls had made Rose go through detox upon settling in, as she was starting to go through withdrawal. after weeks and months of painful therapy, Rose was now sober. Her singing and dancing were greatly improving and drawing notice from the theater director and critics. She was hopeful about the future for the first time in a long time, since she had first met Marita several years ago. the recent crisis had forged strong bonds between the three of them, and Rose liked having someone around who was a match for her in bed. Marita was submissive in bed, a reverse from her outgoing personality, and Marie was the opposite, introspective in public but a take no prisoners sort in her chambers. Rose and her had made love for the first time shortly after her detox was complete, Rose got the sense Marie had wanted to have her for a long time, but never got around to asking management if she could have a fling with her, out of fear perhaps that they or Rose would turn her down.

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Rose reached the floor where she lived and knocked on the door, which was opened by Marita. Rose and Marita were both Great Danes, Marie was a Golden Setter.'"How did rehearsal go?" Marita asked after greeting her with a kiss, her red lips locking with Rose's red lips. ' fine. we're about halfway through the play.. and the director says my singing is making great strides" Rose said proudly. 'That's excellent. Maries still at the Flipped Card, she'll probably get home sometime around 7. Soren said hes got a client in the neighborhood and I don't know where Anne is..." Marita said. "Good thing about Computers is, you can work from home.. "

she smirked. hopefully soon, we'll get a better apartment, once one of my current jobs is finished.. the payout for this job is 1 million credits Rose, enough to get us a better place.' Marita smirked. 'Does it involve your "special gifts" Rose asked ' Of course it does, especially in this town, with the Four Titans paying out big credits to undermine each other' Marita said as she brought Rose a cup of hot cocoa. "At least this place is better than Lanthae' Rose sighed, taking the cup "Rose, honey, Berlin in 1945 was better than that dump. We're out of there, you're sober now for the first time in what, 12 years? We're back together and Marie makes a nice trinity. Once my current tasks are finished we'll have about 5.7 million credits in the till, enough to buy a very nice place and settle into a upper class lifestyle.' That's a ton of credits" Rose said as she set her stuff down.' yeah, but in order to truly hit the big time, we'll need 100 million. Marie has the Megastakes card tournament coming up. she gets picked to deal the last table, she gets a massive bonus. and if you sell out your show you'll get more money coming in too. we won't have to ask Soren or Anne for any rent.' So they'll just be freeloaders' Rose smirked.' Nah, they're friends we're doing them a solid. we might have enough to buy Soren a place for himself to restart his business, and Anne a place of her own too.'Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 29, 2014, 11:26:32 AM**

Axel swivelled in his office chair, spinning in a circle as the voice on the other end of his cell phone moaned on. A mess of various computer parts were strewn around the room, and on the desk in front of him was stacked a pile of papers – order forms for yet more parts. The voice paused to take a breath and Axel rubbed his nose, jumping in while he had the chance. "Mr Kramar, that's… yeah, that's a virus." The rat shook his head. "No… no, that's where you went wrong. Downloads that say they'll give you five million credits… I mean, why would you even believe that?" He blinked and put his feet on the floor to stop himself spinning. "No, not even if they say they'll make, ah… *that* bigger. Alright… look, just bring it in tomorrow, I'll take care of it. Yeah. Okay, see you then."

Hanging up, Axel tossed his cell phone onto the desk and sighed. Business had been slow lately. When he and Lily had moved into the small, single story house, Axel had set up his own computer repair business to try and provide for them. The neighborhood they lived in was nice enough, sure, and inexpensive… and at least it was outside of the slums that bordered the city of Corona. But it wasn't good enough. Axel wanted the best for Lily, and the way things had been going lately, it looked like being able to relocate to the more upmarket region of the city would take longer than he'd hoped. There was a clunk. He looked across the room, and saw the air conditioning unit had broken down. Again. *Awesome…* With a heatwave settling over the city, that was just what he needed. Sighing again, Axel got up and left his ëoffice', making his way down the short hallway that lead to the small kitchen. The windows had been cranked open wide in an attempt to get a breeze blowing through. He opened up the fridge, twisting open a bottle of water. "Lily, air-con's broken again," Axel called out. He took a swig. "Jesus, this heat is killing me…"

Rio panted as he sprinted across the rooftop. His black hair, greasy with sweat, was plastered across his angular face, and perspiration covered his tan skin. The boy gritted his teeth as the edge of the rooftop approached. Picking up speed, he leaped over, his small body sailing through the air… and landed on the roof opposite, rolling into the landing to absorb the impact. The colourful *Captain Super Man* backpack slung over his shoulder, bulky and heavy from what was packed inside, made running hard. But Rio had no choice. If they caught up to him…

"Little fucker jumped!" someone shouted behind him. Rio glanced back over his shoulder. Two large, roughly dressed men were standing on the edge of the rooftop he'd just jumped from. One looked down, saw the distance he'd fall if he messed up the jump, and paled. The other pulled out a cell phone. "He's heading right for you!" the man yelled into it. Sucking in breath, Rio scrambled to his feet and kept running, vaulting nimbly over the ventilation units that were dotted around, making his way for the door that lead down. He was a few steps from it when the door slammed open, and a large bull burst through. Trainers skidding slightly, Rio quickly changed direction. The roof opposite was too high for him to reach – but he jumped anyway, and connected heavily against the wall, fingers scrabbling for purchase against the window ledge he'd aimed for. Groaning, he tightened his grip and quickly shimmied to the side, hopping over and grasping the metal drainpipe that ran down the side of the building. It shook for a moment, but seemed to hold. Rio wrapped his legs tightly around it and slid down. One floor from the ground, the drainpipe had broken off. Looking around, the boy looked for a something that could offer a soft landing, and saw a tramp sleeping in the alley just beneath him. Holding his breath, he let go and fell down, landing solidly on the man who awoke with a pained shriek. "*You… piece of shit…*" the tramp coughed, rolling onto his side and clutching his stomach where Rio had landed.

Flipping the man off over his shoulder, Rio darted through the trash, and emerged from the alley onto the main street. In this neighbourhood, the difference between the two wasn't obvious. Looking around quickly, he couldn't see anyone on him yet. Lowering his head, he started sprinting again. If he could just get escape this part of town, maybe he had a chance of hiding out…

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 29, 2014, 03:25:40 PM**

http://gyazo.com/dfd333542c77b3d4f552200478b056e6
(http://gyazo.com/dfd333542c77b3d4f552200478b056e6)

Lily returned to the kitchen from the bathroom, where she had laundered a fresh set of towels. "Oh no...I'll see what I can do," she offered, smiling as she always did when she saw her husband. Technically, they couldn't legally wed because she was listed as "missing presumed dead" by the Lanthae police records, plus she has evidence that she was once married to a lawyer in Cornova and never divorced, but all things considered they lived like it regardless.

She soaked one of the newly washed towels in the sink. "Here, try this." She wrapped the damp towel around Axel's neck. She was often fixing up household appliances and keeping the rooms clean while Axel worked in his den. This didn't bother her in the slightest; after the harrowing week where she first met Axel and endured incredible amounts of trauma, the thought of living a normal life in a middle class suburb was the closest thing she could imagine to paradise.

After applying the towel she started giving Axel a short backrub, guessing that his shoulders were still wound-up from hunching over the computer the last few hours. "Hey, maybe today, we can cheat a little and eat ice cream for dinner," she whispered with a tinge of humor. "I just restocked yesterday. Strawberry."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 29, 2014, 04:14:56 PM**

Tony was now winding his way through the quieter suburbs of Corona. While Corona was a sprawling metropolis, it was also a plethora of neighborhoods. From towering skyscrapers to seedier districts to relatively pleasant areas like this, there was a bit of something for everyone. Driving down the streets of suburbia, Tony had no need for memory recall here, since he knew the way to Axel's by heart at this point.

Taking a right onto the street Axel and Lily resided on, Tony subconsciously counted the houses as they passed by, and finally slowed the Delahaye to a stop in front of the small home that had become rather familiar to him over the past few months. The ferret killed the engine, and stepped out. While he did lock the door, he saw no need to put the car's top up; it was a nice enough neighborhood that he wasn't worried about someone jumping into the driver's seat and attempting to hijack it.

There was a bounce in his steps as he bounded up the stairs, stopping in front of the door and giving out a few knocks that would be audible enough to those within.

As the train whizzed over a large lake on its track, Vergil frowned thoughtfully. "Hmmm..." he elicited the noise pensively, staring down at the papers strewn all about him. Where to go from here? He'd read all he could from these internet searches and articles, so where to next? Closing his eyes again, the gecko concentrated as hard as he could on the memory of Rex and Kalis in front of the ruins.

Yes... there it was... ancient stone structures that rose up around him like teeth, abandoned for thousands of years. But what about the voices? What were they like? What were they saying? Come on Vergil... focus...

"But this map is incomplete, Rex! It's worthless without the other components! We're still no closer to finding Torment's Cataract than we were when we started!" Kalis was saying, but his voice was far more normal, as he wasn't wearing that facial mask Vergil was used to seeing him in from the reports he'd read. Vergil could see Kalis was a gargoyle gecko, and a rather fierce looking one at that. He appeared very frustrated.

Rex, the fiery red gecko warlord stepped forward now, golden eyes narrowing. "Patience, Kalis. We ARE closer to finding Torment's Cataract. This map has shown us part of what we need. We find the others... we find the Cataract. It'll take time... but it will be worth it in the end."

Opening his eyes, Vergil took what he'd heard and decided to see if he could find anything further. Reaching over to his datapad, he quickly searched for "Torment's Cataract" but nothing came up in the search. Big surprise. Another dead end. Still... the details of those ruins... the way they were aligned and shaped... there could be something there. Perhaps it was time to make a trip to Corona's Archives to see what he could dig up.

"Attention please: we will be arriving at Corona in 15 minutes. All passengers debarking in Corona, please have your personal effects ready for departure. Once again..."

Vergil sighed, and began packing up his papers and belongings. Right... time to see what more he could find out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2014, 05:17:39 PM**

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across town at the Flipped Card, Marie was in the middle of dealing a hand. across from her were a human, a ferret and a green gecko, all wearing expensive clothes and jewelry . three cards lay in front of her: a 7 of diamonds, a queen of spades and a queen of clubs. bets are 40 thousand'; she said in a clear voice. the human looked at his cards then tossed in 40 thousand. the gecko raised to 60 thousand, and the ferret matched his bet. the human looked at his cards again then at his stack, he was the short stack ' all in'he said pushing in 110,000 chips, there was now 390000 chips in the pot, this soon rose to 610000 as the human and gecko threw in 110000. turn over your card Mr Silur' Marie said ' Silur flipped his cards over and smirked he had a queen and a 7, a full house. the human named Marcus flipped over his hand, he had two 7s giving him a full house as the gecko named Genki flipped over his cards he had a pair of kings. Mr Silur has a full house queens full of 7s, Mr Marcus has a full house 7s full of queens Mr Genki has two pair. Marie flipped over the next card- called the turn- an ace of hearts, which was meaningless ' you need a king to knock me out Silur said to Genki, who took a swig from a martini. the last card was called the river and Marie turned over- the king of hearts, as Genki burst into a huge grin. ' time to hit the bar' Silur said getting up from his seat as marie pushed all the chips towards Genki who was about 100000 chips from winning, which he did on the next hand. ' well that a good million for me' Genki said as he flipped a 100k chip to Marie ' nice work mam' he said feeling good about himself. ' thank you Mr Genki, business doing well i take it ' she said as she took the chip' good enough. allows me the freedom to play some cards ' Genki said as he took his drink and coat and headed off to collect his winnings. the floor manager came up to her ' i want to congratulate you Marie. he said giving her a note . ' You just earned herself a table at the Megastakes' the manager whose name was Mona said with a smile.' he added as a big grin grew over Maries face' you've earned it. you're one of the best dealers i've ever seen and I've been doing this gig now for nearly 20 years. I cant believe that you've only been doing this for 2 months. , go home and party with your girlfriends ' Marie hugged him then blushed 'sorry, i'm just really excited ' its alright just get your things c and go home. see you in a couple days' Mona said as marie headed towards the employee check out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 29, 2014, 07:13:42 PM**

"Mmn." Axel leaned forwards, enjoying the backrub. After all this time, seeing Lily happy was still the best feeling in the world for him. It felt as though all the hardships they'd endured six months ago were just a bad dream. "Strawberry, huh? My favourite..."

Turning around, he lifted Lily up and sat her on the table then grinned and put on his best 'suave' voice - that was to say, not very suave at all. "Well, if we're having *that* for dinner, I know what I want for desert," he said, pressing forwards and starting to kiss her neck, his hands roaming down her body... then there was a knock at the door.

Axel groaned. "If that's a jehovah's witness, I'm gonna kill him," he said, pushing himself off from the table and keeping hold of her hand for a second longer as he made his way across to the hallway. "Just... keep thinking sexy thoughts! Sexy!" Axel called back as he made his way over to the door, smoothing out the front of his T-shirt. Opening it, his face broke into a smile when he recognised his friend. "Tony! How's it going?" Over the shoulder, he saw the vehicle the ferret had turned up in. "Ah, jeez, couldn't you have picked something fancier? This is a classy place, you know," he joked. "Oh, er... hang on." Axel turned his head slightly. "Honey, Tony's here! Abort the thoughts!"

Looking back at Tony, Axel stepped aside, holding the door open. "Come in. Want a beer? We've still got a few from last time, I think."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 29, 2014, 09:32:01 PM**

Tony grinned as his friend opened the door. "Hey, Axel! Oh yeah... you like the wheels?" he asked, turning to show off the ride a bit more. "One of my father's Delahayes. Certainly love it, and he's got several all made by different coach builders." He nodded as Axel offered him a beer and to come inside.

Removing his flat cap and holding it down in front of him, the ferret stepped into the home he'd gotten used to over the past few months during his visits. "Beer sounds good! Things have been... well you know... about the same, I guess. I'm getting more responsibility, but still pretty luckless in my love life." he chuckled, shrugging. "My relationships still don't last very long. How are things going, anyway? I've got the day off, so I figured I'd swing by and see how you were doing. Was thinking of heading into the city center a bit later, but wanted to cool my heels a bit first." he explained.

Vergil gazed upwards at the ornate mosaic on the ceiling of the Corona Archives Building. It was a burnt orange and brown sun that was casting its rays into splashes of green gardens and blue streams. It was certainly one of the most beautiful works of art Vergil had ever seen.

Looking down, the gecko moved across the busy tile floor to the front desk, which was more like the middle desk, as it stood smack dab in the middle of the floor. "Um... ahem!" He cleared his throat, and one of the receptionists looked down to see his head just coming over the top of the desk. "Hi. Um... do you have a section on ancient ruins, and also, something called the Torment's Cataract?" he inquired in his deeper voice.

The receptionist pulled back and tapped away on her computer. "Nothing on the Cataract you mentioned, but the ancient ruins section is on the 15th floor." she informed him, adjusting her glasses slightly.

Smiling, the gecko nodded. "Thanks." Stepping away from the desk, he headed for the elevators, and a short time later asked the librarian who headed the 15th floor for advice on ruins that were black in coloration and resembled teeth. After being directed to several potential subjects, Vergil was sitting at a table and eagerly paging through one of the books. He soon found what he was looking for: the ruins of Narcosti. It was an older civilization that had been unearthed a few years ago. Frowning thoughtfully, the gecko flipped the page, and continued reading.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 30, 2014, 02:39:07 AM**

"Hi Tony!" Lily called brightly from the kitchen. "So nice to see you again!"

She quickly grabbed and popped the caps off two beers, along with glasses of ice in case either wanted their beer that way, but politely waited in the kitchen for them to arrive. She knew that men tended to like some time to talk before being interrupted by womenfolk. Besides, this would give her a chance to look at that air conditioner; it was *significantly* hotter than acceptable when hosting respectable company.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 30, 2014, 12:08:50 PM**

marie made it home right around 7:30 she was feeling very proud of herself and she entered the apartment with a spring in her step ' Helloo Girls!" she said going up to marita and kissing her. Marita held the kiss for a few seconds then pulled away, her tongue sliding out of Maries mouth ' so how was your day' Rose said as marie came up to greet her.'' Great! i earned a table at Megastakes!; Marie said and she kissed Rose tenderly ' great! so you're getting some good money? Marita said ' Good money? Marie said. ' i'm making more money than at any point in my life! we won;t be staying in our current apartment for much longer, once the month is up we'll move to a better place.' " those cost more than our current rent though...ROse said. ' we can talk this out with Soren and Anne when they get back' Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 30, 2014, 01:37:52 PM**

Axel shut the door behind him then led the way back down the hallway. "Hey, don't worry. I know that some day, you'll find the one girl who's as dangerously obsessed about cars as you are." He glanced over his shoulder at Tony and grinned to show he was just teasing. "And yeah, it's... it's the same old for us. I mean... I was thinking that maybe at the end of the year we'd be able to move out, maybe get a bigger place but... the way the business is going..." He shook his head. "Well, whatever. It'll turn out okay."

Reaching the kitchen, he saw that Lily had already opened up two bottles. "Aw, thanks hon," he smiled. Handing Tony his bottle, Axel poured half of his own into the glass and offered it to Lily. "Come on, join us. We can fix the air-con together later," he said, knowing glumly that with his negligible skills in fixing things around the house, he'd probably make things worse. *It's the thought that counts though, right?*

Taking a seat at the table, Axel took a gulp of beer. "Hey, I was thinking. It's been a while since I heard from Soren and the others. We should all get together sometime, like a, a big dinner or something." He looked at Tony. "Kind of like when we ate at your place that one time... except with, ah, you know... Less butlers. Has Soren not found his own place yet?"

Rio leaned against the wall, gasping for breath. The heat was sapping his energy, and he'd been running for about fifteen minutes now. Looking around to try and get his bearings, he could see that he'd left the dense, packed slums behind him and had emerged into one of the slightler nicer areas. Having grown up in the poorer regions, the sight of individual houses, backyards, cars parked on driveways... it always seemed uncomfortably alien to him.

Pushing himself on, Rio tried to consider his options. He wasn't a pushover, he knew that... but he knew he *was* still just a kid, and there was only so much he could do. There was no way he could go back to the slums now, Slate had men everywhere there. Sleeping out on the streets was always a choice, but out here, even in the slightly more upmarket areas, he knew the cops had a zero tolerance attitude to vagrancy. And if he got caught and taken in, and they saw what he had in his bag... questions were probably going to be asked. Rio swallowed. And that was another point. What *was* he going to do with it all? He supposed he could always...

There was a screeching of tires behind him. Rio turned, and his heart skipped a beat. Barreling down the road towards him was a dusty black SUV. Just behind the tinted windows, he could see arms gesturing wildly - gesturing at him. *Godammit!* Breaking into a run again, Rio cut across the road and ran up the driveway of the single story house facing him. Dashing around the side of the property, he found himself in the backyard where a family was having dinner. Rio jumped up on the table and used it to launch himself over the back fence, ignoring the crash of plates and the family's cries of outrage as their pudding splattered on the floor. Rolling on the other side, he jogged up to reach the road opposite, looking up and down the street. There were enough properties and branching roads that he should be able to lose them easily enough. He hoped.

Setting off, his pace slowed when he came across a large, expensive blue car parked in front of one of the smaller houses that he'd seen so far. It was a convertible - and the roof was down. The boy grinned, and vaulted himself into the driver's seat. The grin faded when he saw the keys weren't left in the ignition. Rio quickly checked under the seat, in the glove compartment. Nothing. He punched the steering wheel in frustration, then looked up sharply at the sound of a rumbling engine, growing closer. Sweat dripping from him now, he pulled himself out and looked around desperately. His legs were exhausted, and he didn't think he had much much left in him. Then he noticed that the windows of the small house he was in front of were open. As quietly as he could, he made his way along the side of the house. From one of the windows, he could hear voices. Moving past it, Rio stopped at one of the windows further back, and jumped up, silently pulling himself through and landing stealthily in what turned out to be a bedroom. From outside, the noise of the engine droned on, incessantly. They were still looking. Crouching down, Rio took off his backpack and waited.

"A white gecko? Yes, he just went up to the 15th floor. Ancient Ruins section."

The green coloured spider gecko nodded quickly, almost dismissively at the receptionist. "Thank you." She started to head towards the elevator.

"Are you helping him look for... for Torment's Cataract? I'm sorry, I tried looking for it in the system, but nothing was there. Maybe you'll have more luck."

Triste Acyle's mouth set firmly. She didn't acknowledge that the receptionist had continued talking, and kept heading to the lift. *Damn it... at least I found him in time...* She hammered the button for the 15th floor, and clenched her fist as the lift shot up, her short, slender body tensed. *I've located him. About to make contact.*

Good. Hurry. *We need him as soon as possible*

Triste narrowed her eyes. *Affirmative.* The elevator made a ding noise, and the doors slid open. Stepping out, her thin legs carried her along the corridor, to the section marked 'Ancient Ruins'. Turning off, she walked the isles, looking up and down... then stopped dead. *There you are... Vergil.* The gecko was bent over a table, his back to her, pouring over a large book.

Triste gritted her teeth, then rearranged her features into something resembling a sympathetic expression. "Vergil?" she whispered, her voice disbelieving. She took a step towards him. "Is... is it really you?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 30, 2014, 01:52:47 PM**

Soren entered the shared apartment a while later. He placed a stack of cred on the table. "Not bad, I made about 15,000 today. Not bad for eight hour's work. Granted, I made more in Lanthae but it's not like I can be picky."

He got up and helped himself to a cup of tea from the fridge. "Anyways, how was your day?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 30, 2014, 02:18:36 PM**

Marie got picked for the Megastakes gambling tournament . Rose 's training for her role in the play is going well, and my jobs are progressing nicely. how would you like to move to a better apartment ? and have you seen Anne lately? Marita said, as she took the credit and swiped them into a credit counter ' total creds 6.1 million ' it read ' we have over 6 million creds now' Soren. enough to buy a better place

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 30, 2014, 02:34:30 PM**

Tony grinned as he took the beer and swigged gratefully. "Hey Lily! Good to see you!" He offered her a big wave as he drank. Now *that* beer was refreshing! "Yeah well... I can only dream, right?" he asked in response to Axel's comment about finding a girl who'd be into vintage cars. Speaking of the Delahaye, he was totally unaware that there was some kid currently in the driver's seat looking for the keys he had in his pocket.

Tony sat down at the same table Axel was at. "Your AC's busted?" he asked, swiveling to look at it with a raised brow. "Maybe I could get it running again... I work on my dad's cars after all." the ferret offered thoughtfully. "And hey, yeah! That sounds like a great idea! We should all have dinner! What are you doing tonight? I could make arrangements... uh nothing too fancy, of course!" he quickly added, knowing they couldn't afford some of the nicer places he dined at.

"And yeah..." The ferret nodded here, looking down at the table. "He uh... yeah he's still looking... but he's not doing too badly for himself though, relatively speaking." He wasn't aware that the little intruder outside was now in the house, and Tony casually leaned back in the chair, tilting it onto two legs as he took another swig.

A distance behind Agent Acyle, riding the next elevator up to the 15th floor, several nonchalantly clad individuals stood waiting patiently for the elevator to complete its journey. "We have her." a black and white tapir said into a small headset. "She's going up to the 15th floor."

"Right... remember, we need her *alive*. She's useless to us dead." The voice replying on the other end was only audible to the tapir, who nodded once.

"I know, I know. What about the white gecko?" he asked.

"Who?" came the response.

"She's following some white gecko. He important?"

A moment's hesitation and then "No. He's incidental. Kill him if he intervenes, but make sure you take her in one piece."

"Got it." the tapir murmured, and shifted his attention back to the numbers as they continued counting up.

Vergil looked up as he heard a female voice addressing him. Yes... *him*. His name! She had said "Vergil" and had even asked if it was really him. His big orange eyes moved upward until they were resting upon the spider gecko. He displayed no emotion except passive surprise, his wide eyes blinking as suddenly, he was hit by the memory again.

Yes... the memory of watching Rex battle that other reptile on the bridge of his flagship... it was her... standing before him right now... in the flesh. Gasping, he slowly stood up, fixing his gaze on her as if he were looking at a ghost hovering before him. "You..." he breathed. "You were... you were there..." he said slowly, fingers resting on the table top. "You... do you know who I am?" he asked softly. "I remember you... you fought Rex Sardolemuel onboard his ship... I witnessed it... I can't... I can't fully remember what happened but... it IS you!" he insisted. "What's going on? Who am I? Who are you? Do you... do you know?" His words rattled out like a machine gun, rapid and quickfire. He then blinked again, and shook his head. "Sorry I... I didn't mean to be rude it's just... you're the first person I've seen that I can CLEARLY remember! My mind's been all... hazy and... I have no idea who I am or what I was doing until before six months ago." he explained, holding his head a bit.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 30, 2014, 03:28:15 PM**

"You wanna have a look, go ahead," chuckled Lily. She acquiescently poured herself a small glass of beer, but someone who knew her well enough might be able to detect a slight tightness to her smile once the topic of a reunion was brought up. She's not a superstitious woman, but she suspected that a meeting with the old crew had a high chance of drawing undue danger or adventure on them, and she had quite enough of that from before. Plus they had never seen her as a regular human being, only as the psychotic grey-skinned creature that had hijacked and mutatsd her body beyonfld her control. This made her slightly embarrassed to consider seeing them again.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 01, 2014, 04:45:27 AM**

Rio sat back and leaned against the wall, listening to the rumble of the SUV as it roamed around. Then he cocked his head as it grew quieter. They were going away! He knew he couldn't assume they'd given up, but... at least he was safe for now.

Breathing a sigh of relief he closed his eyes, the exhaustion of running for most of the day catching up with him. The muted sounds of the voices coming from further in the house were almost comforting. Rio knew he should move, or at least find a place to hide, but his limbs suddenly felt as though they were made of lead. His head slowly leaning forwards, he drifted asleep.

Axel nodded when he heard how Soren was doing. "Well, that's good. I'm glad. He deserves it." Looking across at Lily, he noted the slight look of apprehension on her face. Reaching out a hand, he touched the top of her fingers and gave a small smile. "We might be busy tonight, but next time we're free we'll definitely let you know. It'll be good to see everyone again." He knew the idea made her slightly uncomfortable, but he thought that maybe if she saw everyone again, as her normal self, it might stop her from feeling ashamed of what happened to her before, as if it were her fault. Deciding to drop the idea of a reunion for the moment, he turned his attention back to Tony.

“Yeah… I mean, if you want to give it a go, we’d really appreciate it. Thing keeps dying on us no matter how many times we try to fix it.” Draining the last of his bottle, Axel stood up. “I’ll go get the toolbox. Thanks Tony.” He started to head out into the hall, and called back over his shoulder, “Hey, if you ever want help fixing a car I’ll, ah... try and give it a go, I guess.” He started to head for the storage cupboard, then remembered they’d left it in the bedroom after repairing a broken drawer that had fallen on Axel’s foot. Turning, he made his way down the end of the hallway to the bedroom and opened the door. The bed was arranged lengthways in front of him as he stepped in. To his right, adjacent to the headboard, was the set of drawers with the toolbox placed on top. Axel made his way over then stopped, sensing another presence in the room. He turned, and his eyes widened when he saw the small shape leaning against the wall beneath the open window, facing the foot of the bed. The figure didn’t move, and appeared to be out cold. *What the hell…* “Ah… guys? There’s someone in the bedroom…”

Making his way further in, Axel approached the figure cautiously. It still didn’t stir. *Is that a kid?!* Standing over him, he noticed a colourful backpack lying just next to him. He bent to pick it up, and was surprised by how heavy it was. Narrowing his eyes, Axel turned and placed in on the bed behind him, then crouched down and slowly reached out a hand to the sleeping kid. “Hey, are… are you okay?”

Rio’s eyes flew open, and he jerked his head up in shock as he took in the lanky rat crouching over him. “Fuck off!” he yelled, kicking his foot out by reflex and landing Axel a mighty blow in the crotch. All the strength left the rat and, with an *Oof*, he collapsed back, cupping the afflicted area and groaning.

Rio jumped to his feet and looked down for his backpack, the colour leaving his face when he saw it was gone. *What the fuck?! Where is it?!* In his panicked state, he didn’t notice that it was on the bed right in front of him.

“No, don’t… don’t worry about it,” Triste said, stepping closer. “I’d heard you were back in Corona, Vergil, but actually seeing you again, in person, it’s… it’s a shock for me too.” Her yellow eyes looked him up and down. “You really don’t remember? *Anything*? Our squad? The attack on Rex Sardolemuel’s ship? When Kalis fired on us, we all… I thought you were dead…” Triste said softly, reaching out and touching his shoulder as if to confirm he was really there. “My name’s Triste Acyle. We’re members of the Ivitz Federation. I don’t know what’s happened to you since the assault on Sardolemuel but…” She swallowed. “Maybe we shouldn’t talk about this here. Vergil… come with me. I know where you can get answers.” *I’ve got him. His memories… they’re shattered.*

A pause. *Bring him in. Quickly.*

From somewhere behind, there was another quiet electronic beep as the second lift arrived.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 01, 2014, 12:42:05 PM**

"Yeah! I'll give ya a call sometime! We like to fix 'em on good days with lots of sun!" Tony called back to Axel. "Cause we'll usually take 'em out for a spin after the work's done." Closing his eyes, he continued leaning back in the seat. It wasn't so unusual that Lily would turn down an offer to dine together as a group. Far as he knew, they still didn't have much contact with the others, and Tony typically saw them separately when he visited.

But then, an unfamiliar voice yelled out for Axel to "fuck off" shortly after Axel said someone was in the bedroom, and the ferret's eyes shot open. "What the hell?" he asked, springing forward as he launched himself out of the seat. Tony no longer traveled unarmed, but the small laser pistol he carried for self-defense was currently concealed up his sleeve along a drawer slider. Racing to where he thought he heard the voice, he skidded to a stop as he saw Axel doubled over. "Axel!" he exclaimed, going wide-eyed as he assessed the situation and saw the kid.

"What the hell... who are you?" he demanded, not moving from the entrance of the bedroom for the moment.

Triste Acyle worked to reassure him, and keep him calm. In spite of himself, Vergil did indeed feel himself relaxing as she approached him. There was something very pleasing about her voice to him... she was trying to make him feel at ease, and it was certainly working. He seemed to freeze as she reached out to touch his shoulder as he glanced down at her hand. So... he was part of her squad... amongst a friend, in that case. Yes, that made sense! He was former military, after all!

He couldn't quite place his finger on it, but something about her put him at ease, and made him feel safe. Realizing he was just staring at her hand, he blinked and shook his head, looking back up at her now. "Er, yes! Of course!" he quickly stated, nodding. "I'll go if it means I can find out who I am! For sure!"

The elevator doors opened behind them now, but Vergil could see who was getting out. It was five people: three humans, a tapir, and a serious looking tayra. Well, they all looked pretty serious in fact. The tayra hung back and moved around one of the bookcases while the other four approached Triste from behind, the tapir leading the way.

"Ms. Acyle! There you are!" the tapir spoke up now, smirking a bit as he came to a stop behind her. "New orders. You're to come with us at once as you're needed urgently on another project. So if you don't mind..." The three humans stood in a semi-circle around her with hands clasped in front of them. The tapir had a small but powerful taser concealed in his right hand, which he kept hidden by making a fist around it.

Vergil tried to catch her gaze to let her know something was off about this, and that while he couldn't read minds, this group was definitely *not* being sincere.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 01, 2014, 03:48:20 PM**

Soren got out some crab dip from the fridge and soy/algae crackers from the pantry. "Snack?" He offered the tray around.

He then turned to Marita. "Good call. To be frank, I'm not exactly comfortable in this area. A lot of my clients are people of...shall we say, questionable repute. And let's not forget those goons dressed in full battle gear we sometimes see outside."

The Human stole a glance at his rifle, ballistic vest and combat helmet in the corner of the cramped kitchen/living room. He never had to use it, thankfully. But he was glad it was there when some corporate thugs rampaged through the housing complex a few weeks ago, looking for some poor Augment who fell behind on payments for their upgrade.

"As for Anne, I haven't see her since this morning."

Soren looked at the picture of Axel and him enjoying a pint at The Electric Sheep back on Axel's birthday a year ago. "You know, I wonder what happened to Axel and Tony?"

Anne looked around as she darted into an alleyway. Even in the business district, there were a few alleyways that were less than pristine. An antique 2012 Lamborghini RevËnton thundered past her. She scowled as the scent of the exhaust trailed behind. The vehicle definitely belonged to some rich stuffed suit; no one else could afford a burner like that.

The mare scowled. Her contact was supposed to be here. And sure enough, a messenger drone flitted down from one of the many elevated walkways crisscrossing the area. Despite that, sunlight was in no short supply as mirrors were carefully positioned so light reached all levels of the Business District.

The drone hovered and a voice with a soft Hong Kong accent came out of the speaker. "Here you are."

Anne swiped her cred chit on the drone's reader. It was a quarter of her day's wages at the warehouse she worked with. It was only a part-time job and she would have preferred working in one of the oil farms at the city borders. Unfortunately, her drug test came back positive. The drone beeped and a finger sized packet came out of the drone's cargo hatch.

She pocketed the package and looked around to make sure there weren't any cops around. Unlike Lanthae, bribing a Corona police officer was more than likely to result in an immediate arrest. Not to mention, they didn't take too kindly to public drug use or purchases.

(OOC - "burner" – slang for a combustion powered vehicle)
(OOC - If y'all are wondering, that drone belongs to the *Bak Long* Triads.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 01, 2014, 04:55:29 PM**

Broadstreet sat at his computer at his corner office. with the destruction of Lanthae, the surviving members of the opolice dep0rtment had been absorbed into Coronas, with broadstreet maintaining his rank and being placed in charge of nearly half the cir\ty's forces. the pay was beter, and the police under him here werent completely on the take as in lanthae. ' things were doing well for him at least.
-
Hopefully she'll get in soon.' Rose said we'll be moving out at the end of the month and moving into the inner part of the city" this was where the richer part of Corona lived, it was safer and cleaner there.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 01, 2014, 09:46:05 PM**

"Oh dear, are you...are you all right?" Lily stammered nervously, running into the room. "It's okay!" she tried to console the rat. "We're not going to hurt you!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 02, 2014, 11:40:00 AM**

Rio looked quickly between the ferret and the woman who'd just rushed in. He finally noticed the backpack lying on the bed, and considered making a dash for it, but it was too close to them, and besides... where would he go? He swallowed. It was worth a try. His eyes grew wide and innocent. "Please, I'm... I'm so scared... I need help!" Rio turned his doe eyes to the downed rat, his voice trembling as if he was going to cry. "I, I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm so, so sorry! You just scared me! Please, I'm just a little boy..."

With Lily's help, Axel stood up slowly. His legs shook, then buckled, and he sat down on the bed with a groan. "What's... in bag?"

"Huh?"

Reaching next to him, Axel picked up the backpack and shook it weakly. "What's... *Ooohh*...

What's in this?"

Rio's face reddened. "Oh, nothing! Just, er, just toys and stuff!" Suddenly, the bag's zipper gave... and from it poured bundles and bundles of credits, raining on the bed and floor. Axel watched blankly as they tumbled out, and when at last the final one fell he turned his gaze up to the kid.

Rio's posture slumped. "Oh, fuck me." He sighed. "Alright. I'll cut the bullshit. But I *do* need some help." He licked his lips. "Could I maybe get a glass of water, or something? I'm really fucking thirsty."

Triste looked over her shoulder when she heard her name being called, and when she saw the large group gathered behind her, Triste turned around. "Another project. Really." ***Three humans, a tapir, and a tayra. The Ivitz didn't send them to find me, did they?***

No. Not on our records.

The spider gecko narrowed her eyes at them. She couldn't just discount them - they knew her name. "I'm not going anywhere with you," she said lowly. "Get out of here." Knowing the chances of *that* happening were fairly low, Triste shifted her posture slightly, defensively.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 02, 2014, 01:30:54 PM**

Tony blinked, and looked down at the whopping amount of credits sprawled out on the bed. "What the... hell?" he asked, noting it was a good amount, and much more than anyone would ever normally carry. "All right... where'd you get all this?" he asked suspiciously, picking one up and studying it to see if it was a forgery or genuine. "Furthermore, what's a guy with this many creds need to break into other people's homes for anyway? This stinks worse than a beached fish at low tide."

He had to admit though... his father had grown up kind of similar to this, and he wasn't completely without sympathy for the kid. "As for the glass of water, I don't see the harm in that, but this isn't my house, so it's not my call." he ultimately stated.

"I thought you might say that." the tapir said more menacingly this time, and smiled wickedly as his hand whipped upward and produced the taser in one swift motion. It only culminated in the actual firing of the small dart which lanced out the end of the device and headed right for the spider gecko with a slight crackle...

Vergil had seen this coming about a half a second before it occurred, and was already springing into action, but he had the table between himself and the group, so right as the taser fired he was leaping across said table, bounding over it and reaching down for his energy blade at his side right as the human on the far right started to turn towards him in a delayed reaction...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 02, 2014, 02:00:59 PM**

Lily had already rushed back to the kitchen and brought Rio a glass of water, having used the one she'd already set aside for Tony's beer. "Here you go," she smiled softly. "We won't harm you, it's all right."

She turned to the others. "Why does it matter where he got the credits? Look at his clothes, he's clearly a street urchin. I think we should replace his bag and help him on his way. We could buy him a train ticket and he could start a new life in a nearby town. Chancellorsville perhaps." As a former fugitive herself, Lily had a soft spot for others who were on the lam with nobody to turn to, and was incredibly quick to forgive even the most suspicious of appearances. After all, if Axel had not given her the benefit of the doubt when they first met, she would have died in an alleyway on her first day in Lanthae.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 02, 2014, 02:21:44 PM**

"I'm only asking because if he pissed off the wrong guys, it'll mean a world of trouble for him if that money doesn't belong to him. There are some very powerful people in this city, and I don't like to think about the things they could do to him if they caught him. Might sound strange, given my own family, but I just want to make sure he's not gonna get into greater trouble after leaving here... or indeed, bring trouble here for that matter." Tony explained. "I could say it's not my problem, and it's not, but all the same, still want to make sure he'll be OK before we send him on his way."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 02, 2014, 03:17:56 PM**

"What do you mean you lost the creds!?" Ruozheng "Rory" Zhao thundered, pointing a steely finger at the two unlucky underlings in front of him. The scent of incense hung faintly in the air, hinting at the meeting place's "official" purpose as a meeting place for a Chinese fraternal organization. Behind him was a small shrine to the gods of the Earth.

"It was not our fault, Sir," the Chinese Water Dragon said, his tail twitching nervously. "We were wrapping up a deal."

"Not your fault!? Why the fuck weren't you watching the bag?" The Triad enforcer then rubbed his temples with his mechanical hands. He slowly took a deep breath to calm down. "There's a bug inside the bag. I'll go send some 49ers after it."

He then turned to the duo. "You two, on the other hand. Get out of my office! And find some way to redeem yourselves before I have you fed to the catfish and crabs!"

The two 49ers scurried out of the office.

Rory pressed the intercom on his desk. "Yuan, Lin and Zhu to my office!"

Less than three minutes later, a Giant Panda and two Humans entered the office. All of them wore very sharp business attire. Both the Humans were Augments despite looking like Baselines, equipped with artificially enhanced senses as well as reinforced bones and artificial muscles far stronger than natural ones. However, one of them was bald.

"Your orders?" the Giant Panda asked.

"Find the creds those two *fan tung* lost."

"Yes, *Dai Lo*."

(OOC - *Fan tung* [transliteration is probably off] is a Cantonese word literally meaning "rice bucket" but is slang for "idiot" or "dumbass".)
(OOC - *dai lo* literally means "big brother" but it's also apparently a respectful term that subordinates use to refer to their superiors.)
(OOC - Lin is the Giant Panda. Yuan is the bald Human. Zhu is the other Human.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 02, 2014, 04:51:40 PM**

Rio took the glass, gulping down the water quickly with a satisfied gasp. "Thanks. Alright, yeah, the money might not be mine exactly." He looked at Tony. "And I wasn't breaking in here in steal anything. I swear. I was hiding."

Axel looked down at the credits uneasily. "Answer his question," he told the kid. The pain from the kick was starting to fade into a sick pain in his stomach, but at least he felt like he could breath now. "Who's money is this?"

Rio looked down at his worn trainers. "It might...kind of be, ah... the Chinese Mafia's money," he said shiftily. He looked up at the three of them. "Look, I know this sounds bad, but... I got payed to run ingredients over to the Triads. You know, for drugs, that kind of stuff. Yesterday, I was making another delivery to their warehouse, and when I was in there I saw this *huge* fucking stash of credits. I knew it wouldn't be there long, so this morning I broke in and just... stole it, kinda." Rio gritted his teeth, his hands fiddling with the glass uncomfortably. "Look, have you guys seen what it's like in the slums here? And I mean *the slums*, the real shit pits. Living there... it's the worst fucking thing I can think of and until I saw that money, I didn't think there was any way I could get out of it."

The boy slouched back against the wall, and now the emotion in his voice was real. "I didn't want to live like that anymore, man. Fuck that. So yeah. I took it. I thought it could be my way out." He glanced between the three adults. "I don't think they can find me out here, and I just need some time to figure out what I'm gonna do with all this shit. And I can't stay on the streets or, or go to a hotel or something. I mean, a kid with all this?" Rio waved a hand despondently at the credits. "Sure. People aren't going to notice *that*. Please, just... look, if you let me stay here just for a bit, I'll split some of the cash with you. Just for a while. If I go out there like this, I'm as good as dead."

Axel bit his lip. This sounded like trouble... serious trouble. But if the kid was telling the truth, and they just kicked him out... *Godammit.* Sighing, he looked up at Lily, unsure.

Triste saw the tapir's fist rising, and without thinking she lurched to the side, the dart missing her neck by millimeters. In a smooth motion, she seized the tapir's arm and pulled him forwards, pistoning her right leg forwards. Her foot connected with his knee, and with a wet pop his leg seemed to snap in half.

Stepping back to let him fall to the floor, she flicked her hand and suddenly a small, curved knife appeared in her hand. Triste twisted the knife around so it was held in a reverse grip and started to advance on the others, catching Vergil leaping over the table in the corner of her eye.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 02, 2014, 06:06:50 PM**

"Well, we certainly don't want any of the money!" exclaimed Lily. "If you stay, it'll be for free." And temporary, she wanted to add, but that would seem harsh. Truth be told, she didn't quite understand the degree of danger this lad had put himself in; her fugitive story cast significantly less blame on herself than Rio's, but she could understand the desire to escape the street life, especially as a child.

She glanced at Tony, seeing as how he knew more of this stuff than she did. "What if...we drove the bag of money out into the countryside and left it somewhere? Or just bought this young man a ticket to another country? It doesn't sound he should stay around here..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 02, 2014, 08:11:57 PM**

Tony closed his eyes at the mention of the Chinese mobs. "Christ..." he breathed. "Not... the best and safest way to get rich quick, kid." the ferret commented, shaking his head. "You're putting yourself in real danger... and I'm not talking the kind you see in movies. This is the real deal. I should know, since my father's a pretty famous don. Staying here's not gonna work. A lot of times, these mobs tag their creds so they can trace 'em. That way it's easier to regather the funds if they've been laundered... or stolen. You gotta ditch that money, kid. *Now*." Tony emphasized. "I understand you want out of that life but... stealing mob funds isn't the way."

He nodded at Lily. "Yeah... or we could return it. Either way's fine with me. We dump it somewhere to be found, or we give it back. Either way, the last thing to do is have him keep moving with it in his possession. They'll track him down. I don't mind spotting him cash for a ticket, but he travels with that money at his own risk, is all I'm saying." the mustelid cautioned.

"Axel... we gotta get rid of that money... or let him go off with it, but he's dead if he does that. I'm not sure how much time we have, but we can't sit here discussing this." Tony explained with dead seriousness.

The tapir screamed in agony as his leg was broken cleanly by Agent Acyle. "Gagggggh! You fuckin' bitch!" he wailed, going down to the floor. "Get her!" he shouted in agony, holding his leg as he fumbled around for the taser, which he'd released after the searing pain had shot through his leg.

Beginning to draw their guns, the human in the middle looked at the human to his right with some confusion. "We can't kill her!" he reiterated.

"Crippling her she'll still be in one piece!" the other guy retorted as he took aim with a pistol for Triste's legs.

The guy that Vergil was heading for just barely drew his pistol before losing his hand when the gecko's energy blade was ignited, the beam slicing the arm off below the elbow. He screamed in pain and shock as he toppled backwards, clutching the stump where his lower right arm had been.

"Shit!" The guy in the middle pivoted and fired on Vergil, the white gecko managing to dodge to the side just in time as a particularly thick tome on ancient ruins behind him took the full impact of the bullet that had been intended for him.

Unseen behind the next bookcase, the tayra poked his head out and saw the unfolding battle. "Dammit... we've got problems." he muttered into his headset.

"Second team is standing by down below... we'll move on your signal." was the response.

"Might need that now... but hold off on blowing the place." the tayra replied. "I want to try and minimize casualties if possible for the moment." He slid back out of sight behind the books, pulled out a pistol and yanked the slide back as he steadied himself. Not yet... as team leader, he couldn't expose himself just yet...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 03, 2014, 07:49:16 AM**

"Give it back?!" Rio spluttered. "No fucking way. No. I can't see them again. Even if I do, it's not like they're just gonna forget about it. And what would I do in another country?"

"There's no way you're staying here with it," Axel said.

"Alright then, I'll just... I'll do what that guy said! Hide it in the countryside somewhere, maybe I can find a way to use it..."

"He just said it's probably tagged," the rat interrupted him. "If you use it, or keep it anywhere near you, they'll find you. Don't you get that?" He ran an exasperated hand through his hair. "Jesus... what the hell were you thinking?"

Rio's mouth opened, then closed again. He swallowed, his fingers working at the glass as the reality of the situation he'd gotten himself into dawned on him. He'd thought maybe he could try to make a new start, somehow... but in the end he was going to be in the same position as always. Or in an even worse one - now it wasn't even safe for him to return to the slums. He had nothing.

Axel sighed and rested his head in a hand. "*Shit...* Alright, we'll drive it out to the countryside and dump it. The further we put between us and it, the better." He looked at Rio. "Did anybody see you come here?" The boy shook his head no. Axel nodded and leaned over, roughly shoving the credit bundles back into the bag. Making sure he hadn't missed any, he stood up and slung it over one shoulder, the strap set at a size far too small for him. "You can stay here for tonight. In the morning, we'll figure out what to do with you." Axel looked over at Lily, his ears drooping slightly. *We can't just kick him out onto the street.*

Triste sprinted for the human on the right as he took aim. Using her smaller size to her advantage, she drew within reach, slapped his gun upwards then hooked the curved edge of the blade around the inside of his thigh. Drawing it back towards her, the blade sliced through the human's muscle and femoral artery. As he fell to his knees in front of her, Triste slashed the knife sideways to open his throat. At the sound of a sudden gunshot, her head jerked sideways and her eyes widened as she saw the man firing at Vergil. *No!*

Pushing the dying human out of the way, Triste leaped up onto the man's back, wrapped a spindly arm around his neck and jabbed her fist forwards, the blade sinking between his vertebrae. She twisted the knife and there was a crunch as his spinal column separated.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 03, 2014, 11:20:47 AM**

Tony nodded at the rat's outline. "All right... I guess I'm the one who has to drive it. I'm not sure I'm gonna go entirely out into the countryside, since that's a bit far. I might just dump it as soon as I can, or... see if the triads' contact info is anywhere conveniently stashed in my phone. I'm wary about driving it all the way out of the city, since it's going to look like I'm fleeing with it." he explained.

He picked up the bag, giving it a woeful look. "Um... you mind if I take the beer with me? I'm gonna need some fortification before I get out on the road." Tony gave Axel a hopeful look. Drinking and driving was of course totally illegal, but the ferret wasn't planning on being overt about it, and one beer wouldn't bring him over the limit.

Pulling his phone out, he began searching through his contacts, seeing if his father had given him the info of any of the triads in Corona in case of emergencies.

Vergil paused as Triste rather effectively killed the two humans in the middle of the room. That just left the partially armless human, who was going into shock, and the tapir, who'd managed to finally fumble around enough to locate the taser. Vergil gave the fellow one look and just as he was raising to fire into Triste's back, the tapir was suddenly thrown backwards against the bookcase and let out a surprised gasp as he crumpled, unconscious amidst a pile of books.

"Well... friends of yours?" Vergil asked as he straightened up and looked around before whipping his tail into the back of the head of the human he'd "disarmed" earlier in order to get him to cease his bellowing. "Or should I say, friends of 'ours', since apparently, I was in your squad at some point?" He extinguished his blade, and dropped it back onto the belt at his side, his feathers standing a bit more on end from the adrenaline rush he'd just been through.

Behind the bookcase, the tayra silently cursed. Dammit! So much for his team! Sliding the gun quietly back into the waist of his pants, he tried to act inconspicuous as he began making his way back to the elevator, but then stopped, and figured he'd listen in from his position. Besides, he was dealing with at least one telekinetic, maybe two. The gecko had held his own, much to the team's surprise. Their lack of preparation had cost them, and now they were down a squad. At least they had sizable backups waiting in the wings so to speak...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 03, 2014, 01:16:45 PM**

Lin, Yuan and Zhu walked around Corona's business district. All three of them carried Beretta 92 pistols inside their sport coats. While the weapons they carried were practically antiques compared to the energy weapons that were readily available on the civilian market, they had a distinct advantage. Thanks to their lack of a battery and electronics, most scanners would not detect them.

Of course, no one suspected the trio to to Triads. They looked just like any other businessman.

"That's odd," Yuan said, looking at his tablet. "The money went to the edge of town."

"We'll go there," Lin said as he flagged down a taxi.

The trio bundled into the taxi. "Where to?" the Human driver asked, a slight German accent tinting his voice.

"To Crown Gardens," Lin said.

The driver gave the trio a funny look. "Do you mean Crown *Avenue*? I can't seeó" Crown Gardens was a working class neighborhood outside Corona city limits. Crown Avenue was a posh upmarket neighborhood near the Financial District.

"Crown Gardens," Lin said, cutting the driver off.

"Whatever you say." The repulsorcar lifted off vertically as he merged into the skyway above and headed for Crown Gardens. Where Axel and Lily lived.

Soren was about to put another lentil chip into his mouth when he saw Anne perched atop the roof of the next door building. "Holy shit!" he exclaimed. "Maria! Rose! Look out the window! It's Anne!"

Anne breathed in the air as she stood atop the building. She peered behind her, enormous wings of pure golden light shimmered. She had done it, she had somehow become a Cerosala. And now she would prove her acension by flying.

Of course, none of this was real. The marijuana joint she had purchased and smoked had been of an unusual strain. Genes belonging to the ergot fungus had been inserted into the plant via genetic engineering techniques. As a result, smoking a full joint was like taking multiple hits of LSD. At the same time. Normally, this strain was supposed to be used in miniscule amounts to make "space cookies" and similar psychoactive foods.

(OOC - Cerosala are equinoid angels with a unicorn horn and wings of pure light. They feature in myths in the *Into the Black* 'verse)". The term is from Latin combining the words for horn and wing.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 03, 2014, 02:17:19 PM**

"You can have anything you like!" exclaimed Lily. "Maybe some strawberry ice cream in case it gets too hot?"

She looked at Rio. "Of course he can stay the night with us. And then we'll give him what he needs to live for a while wherever he turns up." She said this last bit hesitantly, as she knew that Axel had been saving up in hopes of upgrading their current living situation, and that slush fund is obviously from where Rio's gift would be coming. Also, she suspected Rio would probably misuse most of the money and wind up in his original ways, not due to any fault of his own except youth and inexperience. But the alternative was letting him live with them longer than part time, and she couldn't ask that of Axel. While part of her had been wanting children for a while now, this neighborhood was hardly the healthiest place for a child to grow up, and she could never bring herself to ask Axel. She suspected he was too busy trying to keep their own lives afloat without having to care for yet another.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 03, 2014, 04:15:21 PM**

Axel smiled grimly. "Take it. Ice cream's off limits though." He was trying to make jokes, but inside his stomach was turning knots. "Be careful, alright?" he said, putting a hand on the ferret's shoulder. "And when it's done, give us a call so we know you're okay."

"Can I have a beer?" Rio piped up.

Turning, Axel frowned. "No."

A sulky look passed across the boy's face. "Fucking bullshit," he said quietly.

"Hey! Do you know what a risk this guy is taking? *For you*? You haven't even said thank you."

Rio looked at Tony holding the bag, his dark hair falling over his eyes. All he saw was someone taking off with the money he'd worked so hard to get, the money that could have spelt a new life for him. "Thank you," he said eventually. It didn't sound sincere.

Axel sighed. "Just... sit there and be quiet," he said, pointing to the corner of the bed. The rat turned back to Tony. "We owe you for this. Thanks Tony."

"You could say that. It was time I found some new friends, anyway," Triste said drily. She slid the knife from the man's back and wiped the blood from its surface on his shoulder. Sliding it back into the strap on her forearm, she looked down at the bodies around her. "Kalis' men, probably. They've been stepping up their attacks lately, and that makes me uncomfortable. Something big's coming, Vergil. And we're going to need your help."

She looked up at Vergil and tilted her head. "You still haven't lost it, I see." A smile played across her face. Gesturing, she started to walk back to the elevators. "Let's go. You won't find your answers if you're dead, Vergil." ***We were just attacked. Likely Kalis' men.***

You can't allow any harm to come to the target. Hurry back.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 03, 2014, 08:18:49 PM**

Tony nodded, and hefted the bag over his shoulder. "Friends can't be in debt to each other." he responded simply, and began heading for the kitchen, swiping the beer on the way out. "I'll be sure to call when I'm out of harm's way!" he shouted back into the house, and made his way quickly down the path to the Delahaye. Finally finding the number of "Rory" Zhao, he decided to try the Bak Long Triad first. They were by far the most prominent triad in Corona, after all.

Sliding behind the wheel, he started up the engine and got the expensive car rolling. Chugging the beer, he dialed Rory's number to find out what was up, and if he knew anything about the missing money. Of course... he'd need to tread cautiously. If it wasn't the Bak Long Triad's money, they might try and hunt him down anyway once they learned he was in possession of quite the amount of creds.

The tayra peered cautiously around the bookcase again, watching the two head for the elevators. He didn't make any sudden moves though.

Vergil nodded as he followed after Triste. "I still haven't lost it?" he smiled back. "Good to know I'm as good as I was... and Kalis? I knew it!" he snarled. "He made an appearance in Lanthae a half a year ago, and mostly leveled the place! I'm convinced he's part of my past and I was right! I've been meaning to try and seek him out for answers but... he doesn't exactly seem like the type of person you find... more like he finds you, and seems I'm not too far off. At least you and the others can provide me with answers." he confessed gratefully.

Something about how she said something big was coming unsettled him, and the gecko figured the faster they got to wherever she wanted to take him, the better. As the elevator doors closed and they began heading down, the tayra finally spoke into his headset. "They're on the way down! You'll have to work fast!"

"Copy. Police are already on their way. No point in wasting time." was the response from the second team's leader.

Inside the elevator, Vergil looked over at Triste. "So... how well did we know each other before the whole... thing on Rex's ship?" he inquired.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 04, 2014, 01:38:51 AM**

Lily was silent as Tony left the place. A few awkward moments passed.

"...so, uh, what did you say your name was?" asked Lily, coming up with the best icebreaker she could. "Do you want anything to...drink?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 04, 2014, 12:13:40 PM**

What the heck is she doing/ rose started as she rushed to the wiondow. the next building was roughly 3 stories taller than their building ' is she dealong drugs again?
- you know anne, its how she pays her portion of rent' Marita sighed.' We need to get her attention! Soren! does she have a phone? call it!' she said to him. marie gasped as she saw Anne on the roof, apparently ready to jump off..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 04, 2014, 01:08:37 PM**

"Something tells me that she went scavenging and blew her creds on something!" Soren grabbed the radio transmitter that Anne had scavenged from somewhere.

"Anne!" he said into the radio handset. "Back away from the edge! Step back from the edge!"

Soren's voice, distorted by radio static echoed in her head, courtesy of her antenna horn.

"Ehh, Soren? Did you ascend too?" she asked aloud and transmitted.

By this time, numerous spectators were crowded around the ground floor and staring at the spectacle.

Soren covered the handset with his hand. "I'll keep her talking. You three get to the next building and grab her."

"Anne," he said. "So tell me what you 'ascension' is like?"

"Oh it's wonderful! I can see for miles!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 04, 2014, 01:21:01 PM**

Marita , Rose and marie ran out of the room, and headed down the stairs. it would probably take them a few minutes to get to the top of the building. hopefully Soren could keep Anne occupid long enough for them to grab her. marita rushed in and reached an elevator which took a couple minutes to open. the three of them entered, she punched the button that said' roof', and the elevator began to ascend.' wonder what drugs shes on to do something that.." Rose said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 04, 2014, 01:48:52 PM**

The boy looked up at Lily as he sat on the corner of the bed, his lower lip threatening to protrude in a pout. "Rio," he said sulkily. "And I don't know why I *can't* have a beer..."

Axel grimaced. "Because you're... like, what, 10 years old? No way."

"I'm 13!"

"Whatever. You can have, ah... juice or something instead. This is Lily, by the way, and I'm Axel." Rio shrugged his shoulders. Gritting his teeth, Axel turned to Lily. "Can I speak to you for a second?" Leaving the bedroom, he walked with her to the kitchen and pulled open the fridge. "I'm, ah... I know I kind of said he could stay without asking you," he said as he took out a carton containing the last of the orange juice and poured it out into another glass. "I'm sorry. But, ah... you know... I'd feel pretty bad if we just kicked him out." Axel put the carton back and gave Lily a smile. "Tomorrow, I'll figure out what to do. It'll be okay."

Triste gave Vergil a sideways glance as the elevator traveled down. "Well, now I'm offended if you don't remember *that*." Her tail snaked out and lightly brushed up against his leg. "Let's just say we had our own... special training program. Maybe now that you're back, we can make sure we haven't gotten rusty."

Taking her tail away abruptly, she crossed her arms and faced forwards again. The numbers above the door continued to drop as they approached the ground floor.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 04, 2014, 02:24:27 PM**

"Axel," Lily smiled, "of course I want to help out Rio. I'd never turn away a guest, especially one in need."

She quickly prepared Rio's juice. "We can do what we can for him while he's here. This could be his first opportunity to try out a more normal life. We'll make it the best one we can."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 04, 2014, 05:43:41 PM**

Tony got no response the first time he called. OK, time to try the next one. After calling the Red Lotus Triad and informing them in very vague terms that he might have something of theirs in his possession but getting only a negative response to his prompts, Tony began to think that perhaps Rio had been screwing with them. Sighing, he drove the Delahaye down another residential street in the next neighborhood over. It would be a waste of to time to call every single triad out there, so he decided to do the next best thing he could think of.

The ferret slowed the Delahaye as his eyes scanned the street for what he was looking for. Finally pulling the car to a halt on a street he judged to be far enough away from Axel's neighborhood, the mustelid exited the car and proceeded to walk over to the nearest storm drain. Acting totally natural, Tony dumped the bag of credits down the opening and walked back to his car. Whistling to himself, he pulled the door open, slid behind the wheel, and started driving off, the bag now out of his possession.

Reaching for his phone, he dialed Axel.

Vergil's orange eyes grew rather wide as Triste's tail gently brushed along his leg with delicate force. Not usually one to think about such pursuits, the gecko had to admit he was feeling a bit of... longing right now. So, it had been like that, had it? They hadn't seen each other longer than ten minutes and she was already looking forward to seeing how in practice with his "special training" he was? He certainly wasn't going to protest that. Smirking, he nodded once. "Heh, very well. I'll see how well I hold up." he said with some measure of confidence.

As the elevator dropped, his hand suddenly lashed out and he hit 2 so the elevator would stop on the mezzanine level first. "They're waiting for us downstairs!" he warned. "I just hope there's a way out on the second floor." he murmured, the elevator stopping with a ding on the mezzanine now.

Upstairs, the tayra was frantically radioing down that the target might be getting off on 2. In the lobby, the second team decided to drop the pretense, and started whipping out high powered laser rifles from bags. Training them up above, screams erupted from patrons as they noticed the weapons. "Remember, take her alive!" shouted one of them.

"Pain in the ass!" a second yelled.

Vergil could see for the moment they were out of sight from the ground floor. "Windows to the right." He nodded in their direction. "You fast?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 04, 2014, 06:33:41 PM**

Axel smiled and kissed Lily on the forehead. "Right. It doesn't look like he's had it easy. And, hey, maybe it'll even be fun having a kid around for a bit. You know, practice for if *we* ever decide to, ah... Well, you know... Later, I mean. Ah..." Axel's ears started turning pink. The phone rang suddenly. Axel started, then took it off the handset and answered it.

"Tony? Is everything okay? Is it done?" he asked anxiously as they started making their way back to the bedroom.

Triste peeked down through the glass to the lobby below. Those were some high grade weapons... and with all the civilians down there, things would be complicated. Shaking her head, she turned to Vergil as he mentioned the windows.

"I guess you're about to find out," she said lightly, preparing herself. Triste motioned to Vergil. "After you."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 04, 2014, 07:51:05 PM**

Tony breathed a sigh of relief when he heard Axel pick up. OK, so far, so good. No problems with the triads... yet. "Yeah... as done as I could make it, at least. I dumped the backpack down a storm drain in the next neighborhood. Its weight should prevent it from being carried anywhere beyond the drain, and even if it's swept away... all the better. We'll have 'em chasing after that instead of poking around here." he quickly explained.

"Anyway, you got things covered over there? Need me to come back?" he asked, turning the Delahaye around and starting back in the general direction of Axel's neighborhood.

Nodding once, Vergil charged out onto the mezzanine, drawing the immediate attention of the team below. "There they are!" one shouted, and began blasting away at the white gecko while another behind him tried to shoot out the glass panels separating Vergil and Triste to cut her off. Vergil looked behind him, ducking as he did so to avoid his head being sliced off. Curious... they didn't seem to be too keen on using lethal force against Triste.

Turning his attention to the windows up ahead, Vergil focused and shattered the one directly in front of them, hoping there weren't any innocents down below, though he was pretty sure these windows opened up onto an alley. Already the sound of sirens could be heard wailing from outside, and he was at least thankful the Corona authorities were on the ball with this.

One of the members of the second team was racing up the stairs to the mezzanine to try and get behind Triste. Keeping low, Vergil skidded to a halt just beneath the window. "Better hurry!" he called back to her, checking to make sure they were still in good standing to escape.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 04, 2014, 08:23:39 PM**

Lily brought Rio his juice. "Here you go," she smiled.

She sat on the side of the bed. "Let's go make the couch in the guest room into a bed. You'll be close to the kitchen, feel free to eat whatever you like, and I'll show you where the restroom is."

She smiled. "And I bet I know something in the living room you'd like to try before going to sleep..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 04, 2014, 09:57:22 PM**

(White Dragon Headquarters)

Rory had just came from a lunch banquet with several of his fellow red poles. The meal itself was quite something. White cut catfish with scallion and ginger, soy sauce poached sea bass and a dessert of tofu pudding in a ginger and sugar syrup.

As was tradition, he did not have his cell phone with him.

He passed by the shrine of Guan Yu as he took a seat at his desk. He looked at his cell phone and saw he had a voicemail. And it was from Tony Stracci.

"Fucking hell, it's that *bak gwei* again."

He opened the voicemail and read the message. Tony had found the creds. This was gonna be ugly if his three 49ers met him. And it could lead to a conflict between the White Dragon Triads and the Stracci Family. Which was *not* a good outcome.

The Human opened a channel to the trio. "Lin, Yuan, Zhu! If you encounter a Ferret holding the creds, find out his name before you beat his ass! If he's a Stracci, you ask for the creds back but *do not* harm him!"

(Crown Gardens)

Lin kept an eye out while the two Humans scanned around the Crown Gardens neighborhood. He was aware that he and his fellow 49ers stood out in their business attire but he wasn't too concerned. As a Giant Panda, he was blessed with immense strength. And of course, the business suits were carbon nanotubes, made to be bullet resistant and fireproof.

It wasn't *too* bad. Though there was a lot of graffiti on the concrete buildings, elevated walkways and elevated highways. A few hooligans riding either hoverbikes or wearing flying frames flitted around, either racing or painting graffiti. A few working class men drank beer and chatted on the front stoop of one of the houses.

"The cash is in the next neighborhood," Yuan said, looking up from his tablet. It's not moving.

"Move out then!" Lin barked.

The trio headed up an elevated walkway that was a direct route to the neighboring development. They passed by various working class people who sometimes stared at them but other than that, they were mostly ignored.

(Mott Place)

Soren's heart pounded in his chest. "So Anne, how was ascension?"

Her voice came through the radio. "It was amazing. Your spirit's just floating up, up and away. It's like all your earthly cares just vanish."

Please hurry, he thought. He wasn't sure how much longer he could keep Anne talking. Knowing what happened here, he was sure those onlookers were exhorting her to jump.

(OOC - *bak gwei* is Cantonese for white guy. It's not a polite way to refer to a White Westerner. Rory's not a speciesist. But he is a racist.)

(OOC - If no one minds, I'll name Soren's neighborhood.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 05, 2014, 03:04:54 AM**

Rio took the juice, shifting a little uneasily as Lily sat near him. "Uh... thanks," he said as he reached beside him and plucked a pack of *Smokey Bear* cigarettes from the bed. Tapping one out in what seemed to be a well practiced move, he held it between his teeth and slid a cheap plastic lighter from his pocket.

"Yeah, we've got it covered here," Axel said brightly as he entered the room. "Thanks again, Tony. I guess we'll..." He trailed off when he saw Rio taking out a pack of familiar looking cigarettes. He'd promised Lily that he was going to give up smoking, but a few days ago temptation had been his downfall and *Smokey Bears* had always been his favourite. "Oh crap. I'll call you later, Tony." Axel hung up, and took a step further into the room. "*Hey*, what's, ah... what's this now..."

Rio lit the cigarette then paused. "Oh, fuck. Sorry, I'm being rude. Want one?" he asked through clenched teeth, putting away the lighter and holding the pack out to first Lily then Axel. "I guess they're yours. Found them in your underwear drawer."

Axel paled, and now it was his turn to shift uneasily. "What?! That's just, like, ah, not true, honey. I've never seen them..." He trailed off. "Wait, what were you doing in our underwear drawer?"

The boy shrugged and blew out a reasonable attempt at a smoke ring.

Axel walked up to him, plucked the cigarette from his mouth and snatched the pack away, putting it in his pocket and giving Lily a knowing glance. "For safe keeping..." He decided Rio could keep the orange juice.

"Hey! What the fuck!" Rio protested. "I can deal with no beer, but what the hell's wrong with a smoke?! *It's like breathing fresh air, only better!*," he said, quoting a poster he'd seen. Sighing, he looked down dejectedly at his glass. "...What's in the living room?" he asked Lily eventually.

Triste sprinted up behind Vergil, feeling an impact run along the floor next to her as someone fired a round at her feet. She caught up to Vergil and looked over the edge quickly. The window *did* lead into an alley... complete with an open dumpster full of trash. *How clichÈ...*

From behind, she could hear pounding feet as the second team charged up to meet them. The panicked screams of the civilians continued to echo about, a stark contrast to the utter silence that had met her when she'd first arrived at the archives. Triste looked at the gecko beside her. "No time like the present, Vergil," she muttered and pushed him out, aiming for the dumpster. With a last glance at the gunmen who'd finally managed to reach the mezzanine level, she leaped out after him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 05, 2014, 03:30:56 AM**

Lily pursed her lips when she saw the cigarettes. "Axel...honestly..."

She ushered Rio towards the living room. "*Nobody* in this household smokes," she said firmly. "Especially young boys."

The living room was warmly lit but a bit sparse. Only a few couches, a threadbare rug, and a counter containing a television furnished its expanse. The last of these Lily regarded with a smile. "*This* is what boys your age like! Television!"

She flicked the set on and sat down with him on the couch. The current channel was showing a laser golf match. "If you've never tried one of these before, you'll fall in love!" She handed him the remote. "Use these buttons to change what you want to watch. There are all sorts of things on, just look around."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 05, 2014, 04:41:39 AM**

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the girls reached the roof and headed out. knowing anne had great strengths, Marita had grabbed a syringe containing a drug anti-toxin, it was used to stop ODs and return users experiencing hallucinations to normal. which, judging from what Marita had overhead from Soren , Anne was now experiencing. Anne thought she could fly, it meant the drug she had taken was a powerful one to form such a powerful belief in the user.' Grab Her! marita said, and she grabbed anne around her waist and began to pull. Rose lent her assistance and Marie did as well.thanks to the element of surprise and their combined strength they had managed to bring Anne back from the edge and were now on the floor of the building roof . Marita could hear disappointed cries and some boos from below. the group down there had wanted her to jump. 'As Rose and Aarie held Anne down, she pulled out her phone and sent Soren a text message ' We got her Soren. Applying anti-hallucination drug now. if she gets nabbed by the cops shes going to spread many years in prison, the cops here are a far more ' law and order' bunch' than those in Lanthae. There you could get people off by greasing a few palms, here not so much. she needs to get into rehab, like Rose did.' Marita finished the text.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 05, 2014, 01:34:58 PM**

Tony hung up after Axel had to go. Grinning a bit to himself, the ferret realized that the rat practically had a kid to take care of now. He had to admit, it would certainly be good practice in case the couple decided to have kids. Well, that was one friend down. He knew Vergil was getting back to Corona today, but the mustelid decided to wait a bit before calling him. So that left Soren and the others... and maybe even Anne.

Reaching for his phone again as he took another swig of beer, Tony dialed Sroen as the Delahaye shot back onto the highway. At least that mess with the triad's money was behind him now.

The gecko didn't have any further time to react before he was pushed out the window by Triste. Crying out as he fell and suddenly found himself buried amidst the refuse, Vergil sputtered and tried to flounder his way to the top. Unfortunately, he wasn't fast enough, and was soon face to face with Triste's not insignificant chest. "Ooof!" He gasped as he tried to pull back amid the massive black bags. "Sorry!" he hastily apologized. "Quick! Get out!" he ordered as he grasped the top of the dumpster and hauled himself out, brushing his feathers rapidly as he did so.

As soon as Triste was out, Vergil telekinetically pushed the dumpster down the alley to the front of the building. It worked to draw the attention of the thug who appeared at the window. "This way!" Vergil called, waving as he ran in the opposite direction, to the street at the rear of the archives.

Behind them, Vergil could hear the dumpster collide with a parked car. He didn't wait around to hear if Kalis's men bought it or not. Rounding the building to the street, the gecko attempted to act as casual as he could under the circumstances. "Well I hope you have some form of transportation, because I'm afraid I'm fresh off the train." he explained. He had to admit, he was extremely eager to learn about his identity and his link to Rex and Kalis. "Where to from here?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 05, 2014, 02:30:58 PM**

(Mott Place)

Soren's phone buzzed. He breathed a sigh of relief. He texted the girls back. *Good. Now we gotta haul her into rehab and keep her away from the cops.*

When he finished, he got a call from Tony. "Hey, Tony. It's nice to see you again but I really can't chat. Anne just tried jumping off the roof. She just got toasted on some really strong shit. Right now, we have to get her into rehab before she gets arrested and/or kills someone or herself."

Anne struggled against the trio who were pinning her to the ground. "Get off of me! What the fuck do you think you're doing!?" The hallucinations had worn off but she was now quite pissed off.

(Hauer Square)

Hauer Square was a working class neighborhood just like Crown Gardens. Except it was a bit closer to the vertical farms so there it was much less well lit. Despite the seemingly perpetual twilight in the area, children of all species and races played on the sidewalks and streets.

Zhu waved back and smiled as a group of Komodo Dragon hatchlings stopped their game of tag to wave to him.

At Yuan's direction, they turned down an alleyway. "Right, the creds are somewhere in here."

"I think I see them!" Lin piped up. Thanks to his Ursine low-light vision, he could see the bag of creds in the storm drain. Thankfully, it hadn't rained so the drain was dry.

Grunting, Zhu lifted the heavy steel grate as if it weighed nothing. While Yuan kept an eye out, Lin used a piece of rebar he bent into a hook to grab the filthy backpack.

Zhu put the steel grate back in place and retrieved a plastic bag from his pocket. Making sure no one could see them, the trio transferred the creds to the opaque plastic bag.

Tossing the filthy backpack into a dumpster, they exited the alley and headed back to their headquarters.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 05, 2014, 02:39:26 PM**

Marita jabbed anne in the leg with the anti-drug serum and injected it into her ' You were on some serious drugs. you were pretty spaced out' marita said as she finished injecting anne, and put the syringe away.' we're putting you in rehab, the cops here arent very sympathetic at all to druggies, you get busted doing something like that. they arent going to put you in treatment it'll be 20-25 years in jail' Marita said.' come on marie said as she started dragging Anne towards the door that led down to the building.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 05, 2014, 03:54:36 PM**

"I've *seen* TVs before," Rio rolled his eyes exaggeratedly. It was true... sort of. Back where he used to live, there was an old, beat-up electronics store. Through the dusty window there was a tiny, out of date television on display. Rio used to spend time pressed up against the glass, peering through at whatever grainy, black and white image was being projected. He'd never seen one up close though... or one in colour. He took the remote from Lily and flipped the channel. A cutesy cartoon came on, two squirrels holding hands and singing. Axel wandered into the room, and when he saw what Rio was watching he grinned and leaned against the door frame. "*Farm Friends!* I used to watch this all the time as a kid..."

Rio looked back at him and grimaced. "What is this shit?" He flipped the channel and the ending of *Scarface* appeared. A coked up Tony Montana was waving a huge gun around, blowing holes in other gangsters. Rio grinned at the sudden cacophony of gunfire and death. "Whoa..."

Onscreen, Tony Montana invited his enemies to say hello to his little friend. Rio looked from Axel to Lily, delight on his face. "This is *fucking awesome!*"

Triste nodded as they crossed the street, pushing their way through the crowd that had gathered outside the archives, drawn to the sounds of chaos from within. "One of the Ivitz headquarters. It's not far, we'll be there soon." In the distance, she could hear sirens approaching. Picking up the pace, Triste turned the corner. Parked on the side of the road was a sleek, black motorcycle. Mounting up, she looked over her shoulder and waited for Vergil to climb on. "Come on, move it!"

Once he was on, Triste gunned the engine and they sped away, the sounds of sirens and shouting fading. Weaving her way through the traffic, she could see the top of the top of the Ivitz building they were heading for. ***I've retrieved the target. Bringing him in now. He was investigating the Cataract.***

Excellent.

20 minutes later, Triste pulled the bike up outside the headquarters and cut the engine. The stone-white, severe looking building reared up over them. Grass grew around the walkways leading to the entrance, closely cropped trees planted along the paths. Nothing about the building was inviting - even the greenery seemed sterile. ***We're here.***

Bring him in. I'll have someone meet you in the lobby.

Triste climbed off the bike and turned to look at Vergil as she started to make her way up the walkway. "Come on. Everything you need to know is inside."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 05, 2014, 06:15:06 PM**

Lily smiled. "Thought you'd like it."

Though crime dramas weren't really her thing, she sat with Rio and watched the end of the movie silently. She was just glad that everyone seemed to have cooled down somewhat.

A while later, she roused from a groggy half-sleep to see the channels flipping quickly. A western, a Shakespeare play, an antiques auction, a documentary on the 2008 Pelvanida invasion, a tear-stricken lawyer sniveling about a missing kid, a car insurance commercial...

She sat up suddenly. "Wait. Go back. Go back to that!"

Impatiently she wrestled the remote away from Rio before he'd even had adequate time to process her request. Flipping back rapidly, she tuned back to the lawyer.

"It's just...so hard to handle..." the puffy-eyed man, who appeared to be on a late night talk show, sniffed and wiped his eyes. "First my wife disappears, and now my oldest son...I don't know if my heart can handle this again."

"This is a hard time for you," agreed the talk show host. "What can you tell viewers about Ejlert, so that they might be able to help locate him?"

The lawyer shook his head. "There was no reason for him to leave, we all loved him and he had many friends. He was the lead quarterback at Carriage Hills High, and top of his class in mathematics, his passion. I can only assume the worst...the best thing viewers could do is send money to help fund the search parties. We had a very successful fundraising when we tried to find Lily, and if anyone could find the heart to...donate again...I'd be so grateful."

"I'm sure there are viewers who will help you out." the talk show host ruffled some paper as a number appeared on the screen. "Call Denny North and the 'Search for Ejlert' campaign if you know anything or wish to provide support, and show some compassion for a tragedy-stricken family. Up next, warships have appeared on the horizon, and what that means for your weekend--"

Lily turned the television off. She tried to speak several times but couldn't. "Axel.....I...Axel, did you see that?" she stuttered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 05, 2014, 09:37:29 PM**

Tony felt his heart sink at the mention of Anne having almost jumped off a roof and needing rehab. "Damn..." he said softly. "Shit... is... is she gonna be OK? What clinic are you sending her to?" he asked, drumming his claws on the steering wheel as he pushed the pedal down a bit more heavily here. He suddenly had the inclination to go and see how she was doing; it *was* his day off, after all. "Oh yeah and I was just calling to see how things were... I think Vergil gets back in town today, and I wanted to discuss well... Kalis, and what he means for the future of Ivitz." Tony outlined.

Vergil had to admit, the ride on the motorcycle was kind of thrilling. He'd never been on one before... or perhaps he had, but he certainly couldn't remember it. Looking up at the rather foreboding building, he kind of doubted Triste at first, but figured it had to be true. Entering the lobby, a stoat with wiry spectacles greeted the pair. "Agent Acyle... Agent Speicher... welcome to Section G. I'm Preston Fugate, special liaison for the special forces. Agent Speicher... it's good to see you back with us." he said seriously but sincerely too, despite his somewhat wooden posture. "This way, please." He motioned with a paw, and led them to an elevator in the rear of the lobby.

Swiping a card he had, the doors opened and Vergil regarded them with a smirk. "Thought I'd had enough of these for one day." he cracked to Triste. The elevator took them down several levels, deep into the heart of the underground beneath the building. Exiting into hallways that appeared as sterile as the greenery had been, the stoat led them down several passageways until they reached a door with heavy security out front. The guards however stood aside and didn't give the newcomers a second glance however as Fugate led them into a large conference room.

A round table dominated the chamber, and a giant screen with the Ivitz Federation's logo on it hung above them. Seated around the table were various species, some dressed in military attire, and some not. They regarded Vergil as if he were a curiosity, but then, curiosity melted away to smiles, though some seemed force while others were genuine.

"Sit down." Fugate instructed the two of them before taking a seat himself. "These gathered here are the upper echelon of Section G, Ivitz's special forces. They were, and hopefully still are your direct superiors, Agent Speicher. First though... I assume you have some questions."

"Do I ever..." Vergil began, looking around the room at the new faces. "So uh... first things first I guess... since uh... Agent Acyle seemed to know... who exactly am I... and what's my connection to Rex Sardolemuel?"

A pause here, and a dignified looking pangolin in a military uniform spoke up after a moment. "I can answer that. You're Vergil Speicher, Agent 127072. You were recruited by us five years ago in the aftermath of the Scorched Earth War. Before that, you had been a soldier in the Federation's service. Rather than me bore you with the details, we could permit you access to your personnel files..."

"Do I have any surviving family?" Vergil quickly broke in.

"No, I'm afraid not. You were orphaned at a young age, and under Federation welfare for some time. But getting back to what I was saying, we recruited you specifically to Agent Acyle's squad to act as a double agent when Rex Sardolemuel began acting... against Federation orders. You had served under him previously, and he trusted you quite a lot. You were reporting to Agent Acyle frequently on any developments that occurred with Sardolemuel. As he began turning more and more rogue and his power grew, your assignment became increasingly dangerous, until we decided to pull you out. No sense in having a corpse on our hands, after all. What you had discovered before that though... was of vital importance." The pangolin tapped a keypad in front of him, and the screen burst into life like the rising sun, bringing new light into the room.

"Sardolemuel and Kalis were starting to hunt for a place where the sea flows into a gaping hole... a place known as Torment's Cataract. We believe a city once stood there, but suffered some great calamity, and sank into the sea, leaving the Cataract behind in its place. The location is notoriously difficult to find, not only because it's one giant waterfall and sinkhole, but also because it sits in a region of massive electromagnetic interference, making locating it remotely impossible, as well as sending any aerial reconnaissance in to be a risky proposition at best. According to our research, the civilization that built their city at the Cataract also constructed a massive battleship, ten times greater than anything we've ever been able to develop."

Concept art appeared now on the screen, and Vergil whistled at the sheer size of the projections. The ship was estimated to be almost 4,000 square miles*, which would rival some small countries in size. "We know this vessel exists from ancient records we uncovered, but so too did Sardolemuel. However, it's believed to sit at the Cataract, and the location of the former city was carefully hidden by this civilization in a series of waypoints they set up across the globe. Sardolemuel had located about half of them before we pulled you out, but before he could finish his quest, we took him down." the pangolin continued. "He grew overconfident, and we were able to bring his fleet to battle before he could find the last waypoints. You and Agent Acyle were part of a team sent to infiltrate his ship and kill him personally. The mission was... mostly a success, as Kalis turned on Sardolemuel and fired on his ship with his own, getting a bit too greedy as it were. But in the destruction of Sardolemuel's flagship... we assumed you were lost. Agent Acyle reported she wasn't able to save you... and much to our relief, here you are."

Vergil glanced at Triste now, then back at the pangolin. "Why relief?" he asked.

"Hm... well you see, Vergil, you're an incredibly valuable asset to us. Outside of Kalis and his forces, you're the *only* one who witnessed the location of the waypoins, and even though you might not be able to remember them, we *know* they're there... buried within your memory. You're the only link we have to those waypoints, and your memory is coming back. Just now you were researching the location of one of them, after all. We think if you could unlock those memories... remember how to find these things, then you could help lead us to Torment's Cataract before Kalis."

Vergil chewed his bottom lip. "But I don't know..."

"But you have to try." the pangonlin reiterated. "It *is* there, Vergil... and if Kalis beats us to the Cataract... it'll spell devastation for not only Ivitz, but the entire world. If he gets his hands on that ship... we will fall... and if we fall... nothing stands between him and total domination of this planet, do you understand? You've seen Kalis at work... you know he doesn't care for life. His only goal is chaos and destruction. There is no alternative to this... we need your help in stopping him. He's had zero defectors since assuming control of Sardolemuel's forces, and has killed every agent we've sent to infiltrate his organization. You're the only one who has prior knowledge of the waypoints. Please... this is really our only hope." he pleaded.

Vergil looked up at the ship's projections again, and then down at the table, thinking carefully. "I have a few more questions but... first..." He looked over at Triste. "Agent Acyle... if we're going to be working together, I'm going to need people I can trust. I'm sorry but working with complete strangers isn't going to fly with me... at least... not right away. Since time is of the essence, I really can't sit on this one, and I know that. Would you have any objections if I brought in a talented group of individuals I've come to trust over the past six months? None of them represent a threat to Ivitz, and as they say, desperate times, right?" he asked, looking around the table. "I can vouch for these guys, and I want to work with them again... provided they say yes, of course. If not... I'll settle for your guys instead. Deal?" he asked, looking back at her now, as he needed to be able to trust her first and foremost on this.

*4,000 square miles or roughly the size of the country of Lebanon.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 06, 2014, 04:37:43 AM**

Sitting beside her on the couch, Axel saw. All that time ago, when they'd seen the man on the television claiming to be Lily's husband, pleading for her to come home, he'd believed it was a lie, a trick to lure her in. Or maybe it was more accurate to say, he'd *willed* himself into believing it. But now, with the news report they'd just seen, the truth hit him in the chest like a tonne of bricks. Lily *did* have a husband. She had kids. She had another life, and he'd dragged her away from it.

And now, to learn that one of her children was missing...

Rio, initially disgruntled by Lily snatching the remote away, soon understood that something was very, very wrong. "Uh... I'm gonna... go to the bathroom, I guess..." he said hesitantly, excusing himself from the situation. Axel kept staring at the blank TV set as the boy quietly left the room. When the sound of the bathroom door clicking shut carried over, he blinked as if being woken from a trance and looked at Lily.

"Lily, I'm... I'm so sorry, I..." He started to reach out to touch her, then stopped, suddenly unsure of what to do. Axel swallowed. "Do... do you want to call that number?"

Triste sat calmly as the pangolin explained the situation to Vergil, her hands folded on the table in front of her. As he listened intently, she kept her gaze on him, studying his reactions, his expressions. She was satisfied by what she saw. The voices echoing lightly around the room, bouncing back off the marble walls, lent the situation a vague dreamlike quality.

At Vergil's request after the pangolin had finished speaking, Triste's eyes narrowed ever so slightly. *He'd met others, others that he was willing to trust with something as serious as* this? Triste hadn't been expecting this... Her eyes flicked briefly over to where the pangolin stood on the other side of the room, and she picked up on his quick, curt nod.

The spider gecko turned her attention back to Vergil, and gave him a small smile. "Of course, Agent Speicher. If you deem them to be trustworthy, then I'm sure it won't be a problem." Her hands, still clasped on the table before her, tightened slightly. "But I *would* need to keep an eye on them. Given the severity of the situation, I'm sure you understand."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2014, 05:08:33 AM**

Lily took a deep breath. "No..." she said. "I need more information first..."

She started to get up, to head to the computer room, but before she could she found herself hugging Axel instead. "I knew about my old life..." she whispered, tears streaming from her eyes. "Of course I did, we saw it on the tele in the clothing store all that time ago...sometimes I wondered if I'd abandoned them...but I thought they must have lived and died in Lanthae...and it was so much easier to just live with you. I love you...I didn't want risk losing you by learning if..." she suddenly drew away from him, burying her face in her hands. "Oh god, I'm a horrible person!"

For several minutes all she could do was cry, as months of repressed guilt finally realized itself all at once.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 06, 2014, 09:17:54 AM**

Vergil nodded and gave her a reassuring look. "Of course. I understand you'd need to monitor them. Perfectly clear." he replied. "No problem with that at all."

"Good! So... any further questions?" Fugate asked.

"Just one... why did Sardolemuel turn traitor? What drove him to do such a thing? I mean... he was one of your best and brightest, yes?" Vergil asked.

"He was... he was a genius... the best we'd had. But he was also ambitious, and didn't like being tethered, so to speak. He desired full autonomy in his operations, and was frustrated with what he saw as government interference. As the war dragged on, he became determined to end it any way necessary, including extreme measures. He did just that, ignoring our orders and doing as he pleased to bring the war to its conclusion." Fugate explained. "Afterward, he was facing legal charges for insubordination, and against our advice, he and Kalis retired before any trial could be forthcoming, and vanished."

"For how long?" Vergil asked.

"A year. When he resurfaced, he declared himself an enemy of the Federation and managed to convince 90% of his old unit to rebel and join him. That's when we recruited you. He was extremely charismatic and very popular. It didn't take him long to start gathering support not just from the Federation's old enemies, but even amongst our own as well. It was a dark time. He promised change, but brought nothing but destruction and misery to thousands. He still maintained his support however, as he had this strange way of looking out for his own and ensuring his followers rarely suffered. By the time we'd finally killed him though, the devastation was rather extensive." Fugate said with a somber tone to his voice, bringing up pictures on the screen now of the aftermath of Sardolemuel's rebellion. Twisted heaps of metal where buildings had once stood greeted them, as did injured people with blood running down their bodies like rivers.

"Any clues as to why he did this, or what he discovered after he vanished?" Vergil inquired, averting his eyes for a moment from the screen.

"None... you weren't present with him for that, and the only other person who knows the answer to that is Kalis, who decided to join his mad rebellion without question. Remember, Vergil. These waypoints are vital... and the fate of millions is quite literally in your team's hands. It's best to remember Rex's story as a cautionary tale... you MUST keep your head about you during this. If Kalis finds Torment's Cataract first, it'll spell the end for millions. Don't ever lose sight of what that means." Fugate said, giving him a look that could've burned holes through him. "Rex Sardolemuel was a traitor... and it's vital that his legacy ends here... with you."

The gecko nodded, and glanced sideways furtively as he frowned. "While his story interests me, I just wish I knew more about it. Kalis is a monster who needs to be stopped... but I just thought that perhaps... maybe I could reach out to him somehow if I knew more about the past..."

"We'd prefer him dead." the pangolin cut in. "But with that said, we expect you to clearly assess the situation and use your best judgment. Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, will be to find the waypoints that lead to Torment's Cataract before Kalis does. It'll be a race against time, or perhaps I should say, you'll be racing the storm, but it's a race you must win. We'll give you full access to your personnel files so you can find out more about yourself. Unlock those memories and help us bring Kalis to justice! End Sardolemuel's legacy once and for all! Agent Acyle will be your main liaison with us as well as be in charge of handling logistics on this operation. Trust me when I say she has special talents uniquely suited to this assignment." He smiled in Triste's direction here.

"You'll have full access to our resources as well to help you accomplish your objective." Fugate offered. "Do you accept?"

Vergil nodded solemnly, looking up now without hesitation. "Of course. This has to be done... and I accept." Standing up, he looked around the room. "Thank you for the information. I believe I've got the location of the first waypoint, and that's something to start with."

"Indeed, it is. Good luck Agent Speicher on unlocking your memories and finding the Cataract. Remember... keep things in perspective." Fugate told him, and both he and Triste were shown out now.

"So... I guess I'll assemble the team... or at least see if they're willing to help. Now that that's behind us though..." Vergil looked up at her as they headed for the elevator. "First of all, thanks for backing me in there. I know you might not trust them but... they helped me out in Lanthae before Kalis's attack... and I trust them with my life. Second... uh... how... involved were we, with each other? I want to remember as much as I can... including... any past relationships." he gave her a sincere look. "If I hurt you with my assumed death... I can only apologize." he said regretfully.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 06, 2014, 04:07:16 PM**

Silently, Axel held Lily as she cried, an arm around her quaking shoulders. After several minutes, he leaned forwards and gently turned her face towards his, looking her in the eyes. "I love you too. And I know that the woman I love *isn't* a horrible person. She's the furthest thing in the world from that."

Giving her a small smile, he stroked her cheek with his thumb. "And right now, it sounds like your..." Axel swallowed. "Your son needs your help. So that means you have to be strong. For him. Okay?" He hugged her. "I'm here for you, Lily. *You know that.* Anything you need, anything I can do to help, I'll do it."

Triste didn't say anything as they walked to the elevator. As soon as the doors closed behind them and the lift started on its way back down, she turned to Vergil, shoved him up against the side and pressed her mouth against his, firmly, urgently. Her hands started on his shoulders, and then began to move along his chest, her long fingers exploring his body. Moments passed, and eventually she broke away from him, panting slightly. "Does that answer your question?" Smoothing down the front of her shirt, she stepped away and turned to face the elevator doors. "And you've got nothing to feel sorry for. I wasn't *that* hurt." She gave him a sideways glance and smiled. "But... I'm glad you're back, Vergil." *Men are so easy...*

Clearing her throat, Triste crossed her arms, her eyes narrowing inquisitively. "So... who *are* these people that you have so much faith in?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2014, 05:04:04 PM**

Lily was silent for a time, just wrapping herself up in Axel's arms. "I've got to do something about it..." she murmured. "Maybe if he'd still had a mother, he wouldn't have disappeared..."

She got up. "Can you put Rio to sleep or occupy him or something? I was going to, but I now need to do some research on the computer. We're going to have to find a way to put him somewhere while we go on a little trip." She headed for Axel's computer room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 06, 2014, 08:31:38 PM**

Vergil was practically smothered as Triste was all over him like butter on bread. She was clearly proving her part, and he struggled to reciprocate, kissing her just as deeply as he could, if making it a bit of a delayed reaction in the end. She was exploring his chest as well, rubbing her hand down his shirt and causing him to shiver a bit before in tingles she pulled back, the gecko gasping for breath as he hadn't been prepared for the kiss.

"Whew! Well... that uh... that answers that question!" Vergil responded energetically. "As for these people I have faith in... better to show than tell..." Digging out his phone, he first dialed Tony...

Tony noticed the incoming call from Vergil, and quickly broke off the conversation. "Oh, sorry! Getting Vergil's call now! I'll talk to you shortly!" Putting the call on hold, the ferret answered the gecko. "Hey Vergil! How'd your trip go! Find out anything new?" Tony asked.

"Tony... you driving from the sounds of it? Pull over... we need to talk..."

A few hours later, Vergil was sitting with Triste at a cafe in Corona's heart, but he'd managed to secure a private table usually reserved for VIPs that was well removed from the other patrons of the cafe. A TV was replaying the afternoon's events with some degree of urgency. It turned out that a firefight had developed between police and the terrorists, which both Vergil and Triste knew were part of Kalis's force. But they had been good... almost too good. They'd been on the verge of escaping when the authorities had blocked off the exits. It was then bombs were detonated under the floors of the archives, showing the level of planning and training these guys had. No trace of them was found after that, and 65 people were left dead or seriously injured. It was the first major terrorist attack in Corona's recent history, and was the biggest news event of the day. Already measures were being taken to prevent something like this from recurring...

Vergil had called everyone, and had told them the bare minimum of details, but had impressed upon them that it was extremely urgent, and that he needed their help to curb the coming disaster, explaining the security of the world was at stake. They were all familiar with Kalis by now, and this latest news item was a refresher, if anything. He'd asked them to meet him in the Cafe Verona, and so here he was, ready to introduce those who showed up to Triste and let her get a read on them for herself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 06, 2014, 08:43:31 PM**

Marita, Rose and Marie entered the cafe as Broadstreet appeared on TV, making clear that the police were examining the video of the incident and were hunting down leads.. Rose noticed Vergil and led the girs over to him ' Hi Vergil, you sounded pretty urgent on the phone ' Marita said as she took a seat at the table. " so what is this all about?' she asked, as Rose and Marie took seats as well.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2014, 08:52:18 PM**

By this time, Lily had made the trip out to Carriage Hills, to the typical two-floor suburban house whose address was given on the 'Search for Ejlert' website. Gulping softly, she glanced at the warm-colored brass door-knocker and tried to work up the courage to knock it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 07, 2014, 02:48:34 AM**

When Lily had emerged from the computer room, Axel was in the kitchen, using the phone to try and find someone who could look after Rio while they were gone, despite Rio's protests that he could stay and watch the house. Unfortunately, the only neighbors who answered were a family across the street who were recovering from an incident involving someone using their dinner table as a springboard. Vergil's phonecall had come just after Axel had hung up. It sounded serious, to put it lightly. With no other options, they'd decided that Axel would go to meet Vergil, while Rio accompanied Lily to the address she'd found, on the condition that he stayed quiet and didn't get in her way. He'd agreed.

"Come on, what are you waiting for?" Rio demanded now, as he stood beside Lily and waited for her to knock. He still didn't quite understand what was going on between her, the rat and the person who's house they were standing outside, but he knew nothing was going to get solved by standing around. "You haven't seen this guy for a long time, right? So he's probably gonna be really happy to see you!" Rio tried.

Axel stepped out of the taxi and made his way across the street to Cafe Verona. Spotting the gecko seated on the far side in the VIP section he crossed the cafe, suddenly feeling a little self conscious in his slightly rumpled T-Shirt and jeans amongst the more well-dressed clients. Raising a hand in a wave, he approached the table and gave the group a nervous smile. "Hey guys! It's, ah... it's been a while..." He nudged Marita's shoulder and nodded at the other two girls. "Good to see you three are still sticking together."

Axel took a seat next to Marita and turned to face the two geckos on the other side of the table. The one he didn't recognise, a light green spider gecko, stared at him unblinkingly, her yellow eyes seeming to evaluate him. The red stripe across her face gave the gecko the appearance of someone who didn't have a lot of fun in life. Axel blinked uncomfortably. "Ah... hello," he said eventually.

Triste nodded at him but didn't say anything for the moment.

"Alright then." Axel looked at Vergil and smiled. "Hey, I came as soon as I could. Lily couldn't be here right now, she's, ah... she has something to take care of for the moment. Hopefully she'll meet up with us later." He swallowed, his fingers tapping on the table nervously. "So, ah... this didn't exactly sound like good news..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 07, 2014, 01:51:47 PM**

Tony pulled up a bit later, still in the Delahaye. Vergil had sounded serious... much more serious than he'd been in the months following Lanthae. Parking on the street outside the cafe, the ferret jogged across the street, making sure to check traffic in both directions before he threaded his way into the cafe, trying his best to move swiftly but not bowl anyone over either.

"Hey Vergil!" he waved, noting the trio was here, as was Axel. Soren was the only one missing so far. He hadn't had a chance to check in on Anne yet, but depending on what this news was, he might get to see her later tonight.

"Hi everyone... it's good to see you again." Vergil cracked a small smile, and looked around at the gathered group. "It's not good news I'm afraid. First off, this is Agent Triste Acyle, with the Ivitz Federation. She found me after my return here earlier today... and that attack you saw at the archives... that was us... more specifically... Kalis's men hunting us. She knows who I am... and about my past. I got answers today, and it turns out, we used to work together as part of an elite squad several years ago. But rather than go into my past... we instead need to talk about Kalis..." the white gecko said gravely here.

"You know the basic history about Rex Sardolemuel's rebellion, but it turns out, while Rex was launching his attacks against the Federation, he was looking for something else. I'll fill Soren in when he gets here, but time is kind of of the essence. I was a spy in Rex's fleet, reporting back to Ivitz on his search for a location called Torment's Cataract. This place has been lost to history... except the civilization that once had a city there created a series of waypoints to find it. They hid themselves well... perhaps rightly so, for they had constructed a warship so massive, just picture the entire sky being blotted out by this thing, OK? 4,000 square miles... making it a virtual small country in size. Its power would be beyond imagination, and needless to say, it could lead whoever possessed it to dominate this planet and everyone on it."

Tony stared wide-eyed at the description of the ship, and nervously ordered a scotch from a passing waiter that he managed to just barely flag down. Vergil waited for it to sink in, then continued. "So anyway, the civilization was wiped out before they could use it, and Rex died before he could find its location, but Kalis is still seeking it. In my mind is the location of about half of these waypoints, since I witnessed them being found. I can't remember everything, but I know where the first one is. I've decided to help the Federation stop Kalis before he finds Torment's Cataract first, but I can't do it alone. I need a team... and since I don't fully trust the Federation at present... who else could I turn to but you guys? You guys were pretty phenomenal in getting Lily her body back, and also helping to attack the Purifier base... twice. I'm gonna need backup... not just because I trust you guys, but because I need people who I know will have my back. This mission isn't about my past or who I am... it's about stopping Kalis from finding this ship. If he gets it... it won't matter what we're doing with our lives. It'll all end. Not just our lives and livelihood, but everyone else on this planet too. I'm sorry to have to ask... you all have lives now... families even... and I'd be taking you away from that. But I wouldn't ask if this wasn't serious, guys."

Vergil looked at each of them now. "Our lives mean nothing if Kalis beats us. None if it will matter. He'll wipe out the Federation, and with it, every person on this planet who doesn't openly submit to him. I understand if you want to say no... I won't blame you, nor hold it against you." Vergil stated sincerely, looking from one to the other. "You have lives... I get it, I understand. If you want out... I'll go with a team from the Federation instead... but I'd rather have people I know and trust with me as opposed to total strangers. You might say it's not your problem, and you're right... it's not. But once Kalis finds Torment's Cataract, it'll be everyone's problem. For the sake of all life... we gotta try, right?" he pleaded.

By now, Tony's drink had come, and he gulped, taking a silent sip as he waited for someone else to speak first to break the tension, which was so thick the ferret felt like a chainsaw would be needed to cut it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 07, 2014, 02:13:45 PM**

i'll help you' Marita said, breaking the silence as a waiter brought the table some drinks.' i will as well Rose said a few seconds later "i've come too far now to let some warlord take over the world! this is my home, and i'm not going to let it be destroyed." well count me in too' marie said' just out of curiosity.. how long do we have to find all these relics? Are we talking days? weeks?"
- we have to find the locations first' Marita replied "given that this ship is 4000 miles in area, and given its power, it will have to be hidden somewhere big enough to contain it and remote enough to make it hard to find. there aren't that many locations on earth big enough to hide something that big. one of the 5 major oceans or the Sahara desert, come to mind." she turned to Triste' Hello, i'm Marita Jones, these are my girlfriends Rose and Marie. we';ll be happy to assist you in finding the locations you are after.this kalis guy well he sounds like a real nasty piece of work. we'll help in anyway we can."
-

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 07, 2014, 02:17:28 PM**

Lily swallowed. "You're right...." Slowly, she grasped the brass knocker and rapped the door.

After a few tense minutes, she made to knock again when the sallow man from the television opened. "Yes? How can...?" He trailed off. "*Lily???*"

Lily fidgeted nervously. "Hi Denny..."

Denny was gaping like a fish. He stumbled backwards and almost slammed the door shut on her "How are you...how could you be...?"

"It's a long story..." Lily said shyly. "I lost my memory, so I didn't--and don't-- remember anything about you, our kids, or this house. I came because I heard about Ejlert."

Denny was still dumbfounded. "You're alive! Did you tell anyone? We could make headlines!"

"*Don't* tell anyone!" Lily interjected. "Please Denny. Its more complicated than you think. I came to help find Ejlert. May I come in?"

Denny blinked. "Of course, of course." He held the door open all the way, and Lily walked into her old house.

She marveled at the otherwise unremarkable simplicity of everything. How long had she lived here? How often must she have cleaned every item in this house, items that sparked no sense of familiarity whatsoever?

"Who's the, uh, the boy?" Asked Denny, who had not extended the open door to Rio.

"Rio is a friend of mine," Lily called from the kitchen.

Since Lily was gone, Denny coldly grabbed Rio by the collar and pulled him off his feet with a strength unintuitive from his thin frame. "You touch anything in this house and I will *make you regret it*..." he snarled, his face twisting into a ferocious grimace void of warmth or restraint. Dismissively he tossed the urchin back to the ground and followed his wife.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 07, 2014, 06:41:33 PM**

Axel swallowed as he leaned forwards, staring at his fingers as they flexed nervously against the table. Lost civilizations... a gigantic warship.... being intrusted with a mission like this... It was a lot to take in. He'd barely managed to get out of the last situation alive, and all he'd wanted to do was settle down with Lily and live a quiet life. But Axel had seen first hand what Kalis was capable of... and if Vergil was right, if Kalis was trying to find this warship, then there wouldn't *be* any life to settle down to.

He nodded slowly at what Marita and her girlfriends said, then looked across at Vergil. "So... no pressure then." He sighed. Given what was at stake... it wasn't like it was something he could refuse. "Alright then," Axel said eventually. "I, ah... I guess I'm in. I've got your back, Vergil." He paused. "But, ah, you know. Maybe try to keep it out of danger as much as you can?"

Her hands folded on the table in front of her, Triste looked between the lanky rat, the three women and the well-dressed ferret. Her expression remained blank for the time being. Turning her gaze to Tony, she waited to hear what he would say.

Rio landed with a thump as Denny dropped him to the floor, his knee crying out in pain as he landed awkwardly. A shocked expression was plastered on his face as the adult walked away. He'd met his fair share of violent adults, of course... but the change in Denny's personality had been so sudden that for the moment, Rio was speechless. And the expression on his face...

After a moment of lying on the floor where he'd been dropped, the boy got to his feet and started to make his way along the corridor down which Lily had disappeared, and where Denny had followed. The man's voice kept replaying in Rio's mind. Of course he'd be wary about a stranger inside his house. Even Rio could understand that. But there was something else... something in Denny's voice... Rio's stomach tightened. Something was *wrong* in this house. He just didn't know what. Following behind Denny, Rio kept his arms close to his body, frightened of touching anything, of turning Denny's attention back on him. His eyes darted around, taking in the corridors they were walking down, the furniture, the doors that branched off from their path. They approached a large bookcase set into the left side of the corridor, and he looked it up and down as they passed. The bookcase was thick and heavy, the shelved filled with rows upon rows of old books. Rio's eyes flicked down, and he felt a small jolt run up his body. He slowed his pace, his already quiet footsteps fading to silence as he eventually stopped dead. Ahead of him, Denny continued on in Lily's direction, oblivious to the fact that he was no longer leading Rio.

By the bookcase, scratches had been gouged into the wooden floor, lining up with the legs of the heavy furniture. From the marks, Rio could tell that the bookcase had been pulled forwards, multiple times, the legs of the bookshelf betraying their constant use. *Is... is something behind?*

Biting his lip, Rio held back as Denny continued onwards, rounding the corner and moving out of sight. He waited a few seconds, then retraced his steps, shifting back silently to the bookcase. Rio turned, standing directly in front of it, and looked it up and down. From here, there was nothing immediately wrong with it. It just looked like a normal piece of furniture set back against the wall. So why did he have a sick feeling in his stomach? Glancing back to make sure he was still alone, Rio edged to the side of the bookcase and ran his hands along the back of it. It wasn't set flush against the wall. There was a gap. He pressed his face against the gap between the rear of the shelf and the wall. It was too dark, he couldn't see... *Yes! Something... something was there...* He squinted, but couldn't quite make out what was behind.

Gritting his teeth, Rio hesitantly pressed his fingers against the back shelf of the case and pulled it outwards, slowly, trying to make sure that it didn't make any noise. There was a small, tiny screech and Rio flinched... but luckily, it seemed Denny hadn't heard anything. Breathing a silent sigh of relief, the boy kept pulling, and eventually the bookcase had slid out far enough for Rio to get a good look at what lay behind. A metal, heavy-looking sliding door. Rio paused, trying to understand what was going on. What possible use could there be for this door? Why was it hidden? Hesitantly, Rio slowly pressed himself into the small gap he'd created and pushed the sliding door open, inch by inch, trying not to make a sound. The door was well oiled, and it slid open silently, revealing an inky blackness behind it. Rio could just about make out a set of wooden steps leading down, and a musty, damp smell wafted up. He wrinkled his nose. His mind was screaming at him to just leave this alone, to just close the door, push the case back and leave it alone. Biting his lip, Rio slowly stepped down into the darkness, feeling his way down, the steps creaking below him ever so slightly.

After about 15 steps, his trainers crunched on a stone floor. The air was cold, frigid. In the darkness, Rio strained his ears, but there was nothing. Even the sounds of Lily and Denny talking upstairs had faded to absolutely nothing. Taking another nervous step forwards, something tapped his face, and Rio almost cried out in shock, stopping himself just in time. After a second, he realised it was a light switch, attached to a string. Swallowing, his throat dry as sand, he reached up and pulled it. The light flicked on, bathing the room in a sickly yellow glow.

Rio felt his blood freeze at what he saw.

He was standing at the entrance to a decent sized basement, rectangular shaped. From the ceiling dangled a bare light bulb. Along the left side of the basement was placed a row of cramped wire cages, the doors firmly shut with padlocks holding them closed. At first, desperate thoughts that perhaps Denny North kept animals in these tiny cages flitted through his mind. Then he looked across the rest of the room. At the far end of the room was some sort of wooden table, metal manacles connected to the four corners by chains. A thick-looking bag had been left on the table's surface, and coiled on the floor next to it was a dirty garden hose, hooked up to a tap in the wall. Water was pooled on the table's surface, and the bag looked damp, as if it had recently been soaked.

Closer to Rio was a wooden chair, bolted to the floor. Leather straps were set into the arms of the chair. Placed neatly on the floor next to the chair was a set of industrial looking clamps, and draped across the back of the chair was a plastic bag, softly rustling from the breeze drifting down from the staircase, worn as if someone had been struggling inside it. Rio felt his stomach churn as he looked closer at the ends of the chair's armrests and noticed faint scratches in the wood.

Other objects in the basement lay hidden in the gloom, but Rio didn't stop to look at them. Feeling his heart starting to rise into his throat, his stomach roiling, he wheeled around and stumbled back up the wooden steps.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 07, 2014, 08:47:20 PM**

Tony realized Triste was looking right at him, and he gulped again. "Uh... yeah! Of course! I mean I'm not about to let Kalis fuck up my life, after all! Not after things finally seem to be getting back on track! I'm in!" he nodded here.

"Great! Thanks, guys! I knew I could count on you... and well yes... we'll watch each others' backs to keep each other out of trouble. But uh... given that it's a cataract, I'd say it's in the ocean somewhere, or a large body of water. It's surrounded by electromagnetic interference though, making any scans on it impossible, so its location is pretty much unknown. But we'll find it... we have to find it. So I know the location of the first waypoint at least... it's the ruins of an ancient civilization... which existed at the same time as the civilization that built the ship. It'll take a bit of trekking so to speak... but we'll find it. Oh and uh... what about Lily, Axel?" Vergil asked the rat here, turning his gaze to him.

Tony downed the scotch, not caring if it would hit him pretty fast. Wow... the final showdown to save the world, huh? Wouldn't be the first time he'd done something like this... still, better order another scotch, just to be safe.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 07, 2014, 11:53:19 PM**

Soren sighed as he rubbed his cheek. His body ached all over. He was very thankful he was still wearing his protective gear from when he worked with the augments or he'd probably be nursing several busted ribs.

"CafÈ Verona." The driver parked in front of the very upscale Italian resturaunt.

Soren paid his fare and stepped out. He looked at the suits and fancy gowns everyone wore. A Lexus LF-A passed him.

He sighed. "Let's get this over with."

The man walked through the front entrance without so much as a peep from the waiter. Instead, he was escorted to the table where Marita and the others were. "Sorry I'm late. I just got back from dropping Anne off at the rehab center."

He winced as he sat down.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 08, 2014, 07:00:14 AM**

"Hello, Soren." Vergil gave the human a smile, and nodded at him. "Glad you could make it." Vergil began relaying the info that'd been discussed to Soren. Tony was rather eager to hear about Anne, but that would have to wait for the moment. Instead, he struck up a conversation with the others, beginning to talk about life in Corona and some things he previously had on the agenda in the days ahead before his plans were put on hold. However, as he talked, conversation swung round to the Zaloga Corporation, one of the four main weapons' manufacturers in the city. Tony had an appointment with them tomorrow, as his father was trying to secure shipping rights to their goods. So far talks hadn't gone anywhere, but that's why his father was sending him in to try and get a better response.

As Zaloga came up however, Vergil couldn't help but overhear it as he wound down his briefing with Soren. "Zaloga... Zaloga..." he said softly, staring off into the distance. "Why does that...?" Suddenly, the gecko was hit by another memory, this one becoming as fresh in his mind as pine needles on a winter day.

Rex and Kalis were seated in a waiting room somewhere... but as the memory became clearer, Vergil could see the Zaloga Corporation's red and black logo emblazoned on some tapestries. Kalis, who was in his natural gargoyle gecko form, fidgeted uneasily in the chair.

"Rex..." he started to say. "Are you sure about this? Do we really need such power? Something just feels... off about this... it's not right. We could face court martial and death if they find out we're pursuing this..." he stated nervously.

"You sense it too, huh?" Rex responded with a smile. "Don't worry... it'll be fine. And we're already risking it all to end this war anyway, my friend. Chances are pretty good we're gonna face a court martial regardless. May as well take that first step, right? Would you rather another ten years of war?" the red gecko asked with some concern.

"No... I-I guess not." Kalis stammered, shaking his head. "But still... this is... I dunno..." he trailed off as an impeccably dressed blue gecko entered the room now.

"Brother! It's good to see you again!" The blue gecko Vergil recognized as Mace, Rex's brother, and CEO of Zaloga Corporation. "You said you needed my help with something?"

"Yes, brother, and it's a matter of some urgency." Rex rose to standing now and shook his brother's hand. "You told me once about the strange ruins under this building... and what you

had found down there. The map... I need access to it..."

Mace's pleasant demeanor melted into one of uncertainty now, his confident look gone. "Brother it's dangerous down there... I already told you..."

"I know... but it's a risk I'm willing to take. Please, Mace... I need to see what's down there for myself..."

The vision faded and Vergil gasped. "Wait!" he exclaimed to the group now, holding his head. "Wait, wait, wait! I just... I remembered something!" His hand shot out. "Zaloga! I know how Rex found out about the waypoints in the first place! Guys... there's a waypoint right here... in Corona!" he breathed, looking intensely at them. "Rex's brother Mace is CEO of Zaloga... and I just saw him talking to Mace about a map that's hidden under Zaloga's headquarters... Mace must've found it and told his brother about it! *That's* how Rex found out about Torment's Cataract... and the warship! Guys we can start our search right here... in this city!"

Tony bit his lower lip. "Zaloga? Damn... I was supposed to meet with them tomorrow on business..."

"Perfect cover!" Vergil cut in, not giving Tony a chance to finish. "We could go as your you know... attaches, bodyguards, whatever, and while you're meeting with them... or something, we could find a way down there and locate the waypoint!"

"That's... well... I'm sure security..." Tony stumbled.

"But it's our only chance, and a damn good excuse to gain access to that building, if you ask me! What do you guys say?" Vergil asked, looking eagerly around at the group as a smile began playing about his lips.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 08, 2014, 02:18:53 PM**

Denny walked into the kitchen to see Lily examining silverware. "Could I get you something to drink?" he asked politely.

"Um, sure," Lily answered, putting the silverware back quickly. "How about...my favorite?" She was curious to see if her favorite drink, whatever it was, affected her memory.

Denny took some blueberry-pomegranate juice out of the refrigerator, and surreptitiously grabbed a small vial from a hidden drawer under the counter. "So...you don't remember anything of living here?" he asked, keeping his tone neutral.

"Oh no, nothing at all," Lily admitted. "I'm hoping that my visit could jog my memory."

"Your visit?" Denny brought her the glass of juice. "You don't plan on staying? What about your children?"

"The children!" Lily was about to take a drink, but stopped when they were mentioned. "Can I see them? Where are they?"

"They're up in their rooms. Aside from Ejlert of course..." Denny pushed her juice towards her. "Drink up, and then we can go see them..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 08, 2014, 02:54:05 PM**

Soren shuddered. He then took a gulp of ice water. "Let me guess, you want me to come along?"

He then looked at Tony. "Don't get me wrong but I just want to have a normal life."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 08, 2014, 04:24:02 PM**

Axel glanced over at the human. "But Soren, if Kalis manages to get to this... *Cataract*... then none of us are going to be able to have a normal life." He shook his head. "Now that we know about all this, there's... I wouldn't be able to sit out and hope someone else fixes it. Not when the lives of the people I care about... Lily, you guys... Not when they could all be at stake."

He looked back at Vergil and nodded, though his expression wasn't quite as eager as the one plastered over the gecko's face. "Yeah, that... that sounds like it's a lead, at least. But Tony's right. Even if we pretend we're meant to be there with him, it's not like they'll just let us look around. I mean, ah... there's bound to be some sort of security systems in place. How are we gonna get around those?"

Rio reached the top of the basement stairs and quickly wriggled out from behind the bookcase, his chest heaving as he took deep breaths. Down there, the air had seemed dead, lifeless. After a moment, he went to head down the direction Lily had taken, but then considered and pushed the bookcase back first, gritting his teeth as he heaved against its weight. If Denny came back and discovered he'd been down there...

When it was close to its original position, Rio took a step back and pushed his hair out of his eyes. He swallowed, trying to calm himself and adopt a neutral expression, then set off down the corridor. He eventually arrived at the kitchen, where Denny and Lily were stood talking. He could feel his heart thumping at the sight of the man, but he fought to think straight. *She said she lost her memory... I have to tell her about it...* With Denny around though, there was no way he could say anything. He bit his lip as he stood in the kitchen doorway, trying to think what to do.

"Lily..." Rio started to whine as Lily was about to take a drink from the juice. His voice shook slightly but he tried to play off against it, putting on a show of fidgeting uncomfortably. "I... I really need the toilet. I didn't go before we left... could... could you come with me? I'm scared of going alone," he said plaintively. Rio locked eyes with Lily, trying to get his message across. "Please?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 08, 2014, 07:43:37 PM**

Soren swirled his glass of water around. Axel had a point. Not to mention, he recalled what happened to Lanthae just a few months ago.

He templed his hands and let out a sigh. "How bad is this gonna be? Can we just escape from this impending clusterfuck? I'm kinda not interesting in playing action hero again."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 08, 2014, 08:11:44 PM**

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i can n handle security if it becomes a problem' Marita chimed in ' the trick is to get enough info so know where to start looking. As it turns out Zaloga is one of the groups my employer is very interested in. so hopefully i can get us some info from them.. we're in this for the long haul Soren so i suggest we get packed up for a lengthy trip we're going to be going places..'look i rather not be doing this either i'd rather be living a quiet life with my two girlfriends, have a place to live, raise a family down the line, all that normal stuff. ' but this kalis guy threatens literally everything, we cant ignore that, just because we want to stay out of it,. that die is cast i'm afraid,

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 08, 2014, 08:39:01 PM**

Soren sighed. "Well, when you put it that way..."

He took another sip of his water. *Great*, he thought. *My life's gonna go to shit, again!*

"Anyways, how long is this gonna take? I don't want Anne coming out of rehab and into an empty apartment or worse, coming after me because she thinks I tried to get rid of her."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 08, 2014, 09:37:53 PM**

"We'll have to figure that out of course but actually... before that..." Vergil turned to Soren here. "No one's gonna make you come along of course, but we can't run from this. Ivitz is the only nation powerful enough to stop Kalis, and if he gets his hands on that warship, it's over." he explained. "Won't matter where you run to... he'll take that thing to every continent until he has achieved total domination." the gecko said acidly.

"Hey... as for Anne... I don't want her thinking that either... in fact... I was gonna go visit her if it was OK with you... let her know there are people who care about her and want to see her stop destroying her life." Tony put in sincerely. "I want to visit frequently too... no matter how long this takes."

"Could take awhile, depending on how much traveling we'll need to do." Vergil mused aloud. "Anyway, the first waypoint is right here, which leads me to you..." he turned to look at Triste. "Surely the Federation has schematics for Zaloga's HQ... as well as ways of bypassing its no doubt extensive security?" he inquired hopefully, raising his brows here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 08, 2014, 10:48:32 PM**

Lily was about to take a sip of the juice, but stopped because Rio entered, clearly needing assistance. "Oh! Of course." She turned to Denny. "Where is the restroom?"

"Head into the dining room, it's the door on the right," Denny replied. His eyes narrowed as he watched Lily put the cup down and cross to the dining room.

"Right over there--" Lily started to say to Rio, when Denny grabbed her hand. "--Come on," he said pleasantly. "Let's go see your children. They're upstairs in their room..."

Lily was a bit startled, but acquiesced. "It's been far too long since they've seen their mother..." she admitted, starting up the stairs with Denny.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 09, 2014, 06:06:20 AM**

Triste nodded. "Of course. By tomorrow we'll be able to provide a plan for the building, as well as some form of clearance for each of you. Including the North woman if she decides to accompany us."

Axel blinked. "Just like that?"

"Just like that, Mr. Whent." She leaned forwards and raised her voice. "You're all here because

Vergil's vouched for each of you. Personally, I would have preferred to bring qualified Ivitz agents on this assignment, but we have enough faith in his judgement that if trusts in your abilities, it's worth a shot." Triste looked at each member of the group sitting across the table from her. "But, since I'm sure by now you understand the gravity of the situation, I'll be watching each of you. If I feel that any of you will be a liability to the mission, you'll be out."

Crap... Rio chewed the inside of his cheek. "But... I..." His palms sweating, he followed them to the foot of the stairs. To the left of the bottom step, set against the wall, was a small cabinet on which was placed a vase containing a bunch of flowers. Rio paused by it it, then looked up as Lily and Denny headed upstairs. Both of their backs were to him. So far, Denny had seemed calmer around Lily...

Rio pushed the vase off the cabinet then quickly took a few steps up the stairs, pressing a hand to his mouth as if in shock as it smashed on the floor. The flowers scattered, water pooling around them. "Oh! I'm... I'm so sorry! It was an accident!" he stuttered, turning big eyes to the two adults. *Come on... come clean it up...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 09, 2014, 10:11:21 AM**

Soren rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Well, if you put it that way, then I guess I'm in."

He then turned to Tony. "She's doing inpatient treatment at the Corollis Clinic. She's not allowed to have visitors for the first 72 hours." The Human winced as his body's aches began to act up from Anne's beating when he told her that she needed to go to rehab. Luckily, the rebound effect from the drugs in her system quickly wore off and he was able to get her to voluntarily check herself into the clinic.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 09, 2014, 11:33:13 AM**

"Good... thanks guys... I'll make this up to you somehow... I don't know how yet but... I'll think of something. I promise." Vergil told them sincerely. "Sorry again, Soren. But it means a lot that you're going to have my back." the gecko stated, nodding solemnly.

Tony sighed at Soren's announcement. "Dammit... you know what? I don't care. I'm gonna go see her before tomorrow. She has to know that she has people who care about her before we just up and leave. It's like Soren said... she'll think we abandoned her, and that's not right. Regulations be damned... I'm a Stracci, they'll let me in." he said, pushing his chair back and standing with some determination.

"Ahem... before you uh... do that..." Vergil broke in. "What time are we meeting at Zaloga tomorrow?"

"Oh... right. Uh... my appointment's at 1:00, so be there a half hour early I'd say so we can go over plans." Tony stated.

Vergil nodded. "I'll probably call you guys tonight with ideas. Speaking of tonight..." he looked at Triste now. "You wouldn't mind getting those schematics and clearance to me tonight... would you?" he asked her, once again hopefully. "It's just... I'm gonna need to time to prepare, and look over everything. I'm good at coming up with things on the fly... for some reason..." Vergil explained. "So if you could do that, that would be great. This is my address..." He dug around in his pocket, and finally produced a small chit with his address on it as he held it out for her.

"I think we're all agreed, then. Zaloga at 1:00 tomorrow. I will see everyone then!" Tony replied, giving them a nod. "Heh... seems we're always coming together to save the world, eh?" he asked with a grin, and gave the group a wave before paying for his scotch and starting to head back out to his car.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 09, 2014, 12:30:53 PM**

(CafÈ Verona)

Soren turned to Vergil. "Okay. Let's finish this off once and for all."

He then turned to everyone else. "So do we need to get any other supplies and stuff?"

(Corollis Clinic)

Anne sat in a dull room. All around her were various patients at the clinic. A steady electronic ticking was heard as the clock counted the time.

She reached up and touched her horn. It was spongy but otherwise unchanged. Upon arrival, they had sprayed it with a special metallized bioplastic-based foam. The foam's purpose was twofold: to prevent the horn's use as a stabbing weapon and to silence her electronic telepathy so she couldn't order drugs or other contraband.

She shuffled her hooves nervously. There was no clatter of steel horseshoes on tile. She had been given rubber horseshoes that were glued on.

Her ears lay back. "So what do you want?"

The counselor, a young Axis Deer buck looked at the mare. "How about you introduce yourself?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 09, 2014, 01:00:13 PM**

Vergil shook his head. "Maybe some supplies but nothing serious right now... let's wait to find out where we go next, since from what I recall, the waypoints reveal parts of the map, and it becomes clearer the more you find. So once we get the first one, we'll have an idea where to go next." At least they should, he didn't add. Vergil knew this was the first waypoint Rex had found so in theory, it had led him to the one after that. Even if it didn't, Vergil knew where they could go next, as he'd found another waypoint at the archives yesterday.

"Once we know our next destination, we can plan accordingly with supplies. And definitely jump back here from time to time too... you know, just to check on things and recharge." Vergil suggested.

Tony had arrived at the clinic shortly after leaving Cafe Verona, and had managed to browbeat the staff into letting him through. What were they gonna do? Refuse the son of a powerful crime boss entry? After finding her location, the ferret went straight to the section of the clinic where the mare was being treated.

Stopping just outside the door, the ferret's face fell upon seeing the state she was in. "Dammit..." he breathed, and pulled his cap off his head, wringing it in his paws. Yeah, he was nervous, and wasn't really ready for this, but he'd driven all the way out here, and no time like the present, right? Steeling himself, he stepped forward and cleared his throat.

"Uh... sorry, doc, but I needed to see her before I leave town... hope you understand." Tony said, and without waiting for a response, he moved forward, eyes traveling to Anne. "Hey..." He gave her a small wave. "So... I wanted to see how you were doing... jesus... I heard the news and was worried. You almost killed yourself!" the ferret started, his face melting into anguish without him really realizing it. "What were you thinking? I didn't want to see you splattered all over a road! I know you might not think so but..." it was a long pause... much longer than the ferret wanted. "But people care about you, you know? I care about you." he said softly before he could stop himself. He closed his eyes in frustration, but figured he may as well finish. "This isn't what I want to constantly think about every day... whether or not you're going to live to see tomorrow. You've gotta stop, Anne. Not just for your sake... but you know... the people who care..." Tony trailed off here, not wanting to present too much at once. He finally reopened his eyes, trying to will his face to un-contort itself from the knot he was sure it must've twisted into while saying that.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 09, 2014, 01:30:46 PM**

On the second floor around a hallway, three white doors sat nestled between an off-white carpet and adobe wall. Lily quietly pushed open the first door to see a young boy, maybe 12, with light skin and dark hair in a cereal bowl cut.

"Hello!" she beamed. The child just looked at her.

"This is Christian. You don't remember Christian?" asked Denny.

"I...of course I do," Lily lied. She knelt down in front of her son. "How have you been? I haven't seen you in so long, I missed you so much!"

The child just continued staring blankly at her.

"Say hello, Christian," Denny demanded firmly.

"Hello," Christian said to Denny.

Lily's eyes clouded, and she put a hand on Christian's shoulder. "Oh god..." she whispered, eyes growing wide. "He's in...such pain..." She sensed... actually something even worse than pain. It was absence. The lack of having ever felt anything at all. Just feeling it brought tears to her eyes.

"He's mentally retarded," Denny explained. "I should have warned you."

Lily turned suspiciously, ready to tell him that she'd met mentally ill and this felt different, but gasped in surprise when he noticed two young girls peeking at her from the doorway. One was a young teenager, dark-skinned with Denny's hair, and the younger one must have been 7 or 8, with Lily's eyes and complexion.

"Oh, hello! Forgive me, you both...startled me..." Lily rubbed her forehead and reflexively winced. Both of them were giving her the same emotionless stare as Christian. Lily's senses ached, numbed by the congealing sense of repression weighing heavy on the room.

"Aylin and Hannah. Also retarded," Denny said simply. "Ejlert was the smart one. I always figured when he was born he stole all the intellect you had to give, leaving none to go around for these three."

Lily stood up suddenly, looking aghast at her husband. "How could you say such a thing?" Her next line was interrupted by the sound of shattering glass downstairs. "Oh no, Rio..." Lily took one last look at her children, ashamed to admit to herself she was almost grateful for a chance to get away and prepare herself mentally for a more extended conversation. "I'll be right back, I just need to check on a friend..."

She darted from the room. Denny stayed behind, giving Lily's backside a calculating look as it disappeared. With hardly a glance at his children, he crossed to a broom closet and withdrew a heavyset black rifle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 09, 2014, 03:48:29 PM**

Triste took the card that Vergil gave her, looked it over, then nodded. "Shouldn't be a problem." Slipping it into her pocket, she pushed her chair away from the table and stood up. "I'll see you later tonight then. It was... good meeting the rest of you. Hopefully, this'll all go smoothly." With a final glance around the table, Triste turned and left the cafe.

Axel watched her leave, then turned a bemused expression to Vergil. "I just love the positive outlook she's got. It's, ah... it's just great." He stood up too and rubbed a hand through his hair. "I should get going as well. I'll let Lily know what we talked about." He gave the group a sickly smile. "Can't wait for tomorrow. *Yay*... See you all then, I guess." Raising a hand in farewell, Axel made his way through the cafe and emerged onto the street.

He thought about heading back home... but the idea of leaving Lily to deal with her problem alone didn't sit well with him. He knew her husband would be helping her, but surely it would be okay if he just hung around in the area to make sure she was okay... *Or is that just jealousy speaking?* Axel shook his head, then hailed a taxi that was passing. "Carriage Hills," he said as he climbed in.

Rio looked up anxiously as Lily started to come down the stairs, then grabbed her wrist and started desperately trying to pull her back along the corridor. "We have to get out of here now!" he urged, his voice a low whisper. "This guy is a *fucking psycho*! He's got this death basement with cages and tables and... and chairs!" Rio babbled as he kept trying to pull her. "Holy shit, you actually *married* this fuck?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 09, 2014, 04:32:29 PM**

Rose was the first of the girls to get yup from the table ' its time to go pack up for tomorrow I guess she said to marita and Marie, who got up from their seats as the group began to break up and head their separate ways in preparation for the next day. ' once we get some stuff together, We'll go visit Anne at the rehab center Rose offered ' just to show that we care about her and that we haven't forgot about her.'
_ marita nodded as they headed out of the casfe and headed back towards their apartment to freshen up and get packed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 09, 2014, 07:25:38 PM**

Lily's eyes widened. "...show me," was her only reply.

"I'll be up in a minute!" she called up the stairs. "Rio cut himself, I just need to help him clean this out!"

When Rio had reopened the bookshelf, Lily wasn't even particularly shocked to see the horrific torture equipment behind it. Shackled chairs with asphyxiation bags, cages that didn't leave room to sit down, waterboards... "Every form of torture that doesn't leave a mark..." she murmured.

She realized there was a shadow blocking the doorway. "*What have you done to my children?*" she snapped furiously, whipping around with her fists balled.

With a light *whiff* a tranquilizer dart embedded itself in her chest. Calmly, Denny made to reload but before he got the chance Lily dove forward and grabbed his foot. Concentrating, she channeled the semiconsciousness from the dart into her husband.

Denny gasped as he felt himself getting sleepy. Kicking Lily in the face reflexively, he reached into his pocket when she didn't let go and grabbed a bright red powder.

Snarling, Lily tried to drag him down with her and received a face full of chile dust. She screamed, but stayed focused and transferred the burning blindness to Denny. "*I'm not the same woman you kept locked up in this room for God knows how long*" she snarled, channeling animal fury. Raising her arm, she slashed deep red strips of flesh across his face and elbowed his rifle out of his hands.

Stumbling backwards onto the wooden steps, Denny tried vainly to fight back. Lily could *taste* his fear, his helplessness, as she pumped his own psychological weapons back into his system.

Then she was distracted by crying. Her children were at the top of the stairs, watching with wide eyes. Each of them emanated genuine fear, but not at Denny. At her.

"Children!" she exclaimed, hesitating. "Don't look! Please, it's okay--"

One of Denny's elbows smashed into her temple. With the break in her concentration came his second wind. leaning over, he sent both of them thumping down the stairs, with him on top. With a grunt, he wrapped his arms around her neck, putting in the extra effort to shield his mind from any further psionic attacks.

Gagging, Lily felt her already-inflamed vision going black.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 09, 2014, 08:59:50 PM**

Later that night, Vergil was alone in his flat, rubbing the back of his neck as he peered at the computer screen in front of him. His laptop was sitting on a coffee table while he leaned forward on a couch. He was looking at Zaloga's main website, but the pictures of the building just weren't what he needed. He required more if he was going to lead an operation inside this place. Mace really looked... familiar to him, but he figured that's because he had met him before in the past. He had to have been in that waiting room, after all, but he couldn't remember if he'd made it down into the sub-levels with Rex or not.

Leaning back, he tapped the arrow key a few times, scrolling through what pictures he could find of Mace and the Zaloga headquarters. It was a nice building... that was for sure. Very landscaped outside, it was almost like a castle sitting atop waterfalls and cliffs. He'd certainly give props to the landscaper and architect, no doubt.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 09, 2014, 09:07:05 PM**

Anne smiled. She got up and embraced Tony in a hug. "I know," she said. "I knew that the twenty some odd years of drug use will eventually catch up to me. But I just kept ignoring it. Mainly because, I really didn't have anyone who cared or to care about."

She sniffled as he ears splayed in embarassment. "But now, I've got you, Soren, Axel and the others..."

(OOC - Anne will eventually break her habit of drug use...and then continue to use marijuana. Though she'll only use what she grows. Personally, I'm of the belief that marijuana is the least harmful of drugs, but this is not the place to talk about it.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 09, 2014, 09:18:36 PM**

Tony was a bit surprised at the sudden forwardness of it all... but he had to admit, he rather liked it. He hugged her back after a moment's hesitation, and smiled. "Hey... I'm glad you know that then. I wouldn't have come here if I didn't care, after all." He patted her on the back. "And I wanted to see you before..." he trailed off here, pulling back, but not releasing her just yet.

"I have to go on a trip... with the others. That bastard Kalis is after something dangerous... something that has the potential to shatter the world with its power, and Vergil's been asked by the government to help stop it, since he kind of remembers how to get to what Kalis is seeking. Because this threatens everyone... I gotta go to help try and stop him... for all of us. We aren't leaving just yet though... we got something to do here first that's kind of dangerous but... I wanted to see you before that... so you knew that I did care... and that we weren't just leaving. I can visit you every day if you want, up till I leave... and when I get back... I'll visit again." He smiled once more, giving her a sincere look.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 09, 2014, 10:29:47 PM**

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marita and girls reached home about 15 minutes later' marie went into her room and packed together some fruit, candy bars and pretzels. marita typed away at her computer for a couple minutes and printed off something off her computer ' normally rehabv centers are strict about visitors, but these passes will let me pose as her physician and you two will be my nurse assistant ' i'm Wilma Goldgut, Marie you're Marse Panini, and Rose you are Rinna McGury, both you and marse are interning under me ' Marita said. she brought out three laminated ids which showed the 3 girls faces.'rose came up to them, and three of them got dressed in the traditional white coats of physicians(marita had bought a large number of clothes which doubled as disguises, everything from a doctors uniform to a cop getup, to even a military vest) ' just act normal girls and let me do all the talking' marita said as they headed out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 10, 2014, 02:59:49 AM**

Rio gaped as Lily and Denny tumbled down the stairs towards him, lurching to the side and almost coming down with them. Shooting a glance upwards, he could see some kids, around his age, just standing at the top of the stairs, crying. "Help her! What the fuck are you doing?!"

They made no attempt to move, or even acknowledge that he'd said anything.

Swearing, he turned and jumped down the stairs after them, landing next to the dazed man as he choked Lily. Punching and kicking at Denny seemed to have no effect as he tightened his grip, intent on cutting off her air supply. Desperate, Rio swung his gaze around the room and his eyes stopped on the tranquilizer rifle, lying on the penultimate step from where Lily had knocked it out of her husband's hands. Snatching it up, he spun and aimed the gun at the side of his head, pulling the trigger. It clicked, empty. Gasping, Rio could see Lily was on the verge of blacking out. Switching his grip on the rifle to the barrel, he raised the butt and swung it as hard as he could. It connected against Denny's temple with a solid *clunk*, knocking the man off balance and loosening his grip on Lily. Darting forwards, Rio grabbed her and tried to pull her away.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 10, 2014, 12:21:23 PM**

Denny cried out and took a swing at Rio. Lily blocked the fist with her arm, then used her legs to push Denny over her, sending him tumbling into the torture dungeon.

"Shut the door!" she commanded Rio, staggering to her feet. Her words were slurred and the tranquilizer was taking its course. using her hands for assistance she crawled up the the first floor. "Hannah, Christian, Aylin, come with me!" she begged. But the three children darted up the stairs. "Please!" she begged.

Downstairs, Denny was ramming the bookshelf. Rio had set the propped the tranq gun to block the bookshelf, but it wouldn't hold for long.

"Rio...we've got to...got to..." Lily could barely keep standing. Her vision and thoughts swam, and her head thudded painfully. She almost dropped to her knees when she attempted to move for the stairs.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 10, 2014, 04:10:24 PM**

"Fuck them! We've gotta get out of here, he's gonna kill us!" Rio shouted, catching up with Lily and trying to support her as best as he could with his smaller frame. The sound of slamming reverberated throughout the house, loud as cannon fire to the boy's ears as Denny tried to force his way out. The floors vibrated and pictures on the wall shook rhythmically with each impact.

Rio awkwardly pulled Lily along, back down the corridor that led to the front door. They had to pass the barricaded door to the basement, and he could see with a sinking in his stomach that the gun had almost been jolted free. "Come on! Hurry!" he urged as the entrance grew slowly closer.

Axel looked out the window as the taxi made its way slowly down Carriage Hills, keeping an eye out for the house matching the one Lily had shown him on the website. "Hey... hey, stop here for a second," he muttered when the car passed the two-story house. Axel chewed his lip as the driver pulled up opposite, trying to decide what he was going to do now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 10, 2014, 04:17:47 PM**

With Rio's help, Lily stumbled over to the front door and opened it by flopping her full body weight onto it. Sprawling onto the front porch, she couldn't seem to concentrate long enough to get back up.

Behind them, a final THUD sent the rifle skittering to the side, and a partially-drugged Denny grabbed it and marched up the stairs, reloading as he did so.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 10, 2014, 07:12:54 PM**

Rio almost sprawled over along with Lily as she fell down onto the porch. Stooping, he tried to pull her up, but she was too heavy. He heard the crash as Denny finally managed to break free from the basement, and he desperately redoubled his efforts. "*Shit*! Get up!"

Across the street, Axel's mouth popped open when he saw Lily and Rio come tumbling from the front door. "The hell?" He hurriedly climbed from the taxi and called across. "What the hell's going on?!"

Rio's head jerked up, and his eyes grew wide in recognition. "Help us! He's coming!"

"I'm on the clock, buddy," the cab driver mumbled as he flicked through his newspaper.

"Jesus!" Axel sprinted across the road, onto the property and up to the porch. He took Lily's arm from Rio and started dragging her up to her feet. "What's going on?!" he spluttered again. Instead of answering, Rio turned and slammed the front door closed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 10, 2014, 09:05:52 PM**

Lily shook her head dizzily. "Hannah...Christian...Aylin..." she couldn't concentrate enough to say more than a few names.

Denny peered through the keyhole and saw an unknown rat dragging his wife away. The presence of a taxi stopped him from trying to retaliate. Instead, he chose to cut his losses and lock his door.

For now, he'd reseal everything, ensure his children never spoke of this incident, and report an overzealous Lily-impersonator to the police. That would get him some protection for the time being, and give him time to plan for her return.

Because if there's one thing his twisted activities taught him about *properly* tortured people, it's that they always came back.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 11, 2014, 11:04:46 AM**

Vergil was getting a bit restless, and finally stopped trying to burn a hole in his computer screen with his eyes. No matter how much he looked at pictures of Zaloga, he needed those schematics. He cursed his failure to obtain Triste's contact info before leaving Cafe Verona earlier today. Standing up and stretching his arms over his head, the gecko headed for the kitchen to make himself a sandwich. Without those schematics, this whole operation was in jeopardy.

Pulling the fridge door open with a clink of glasses and cardboard cartons on the door's shelf, Vergil proceeded to make a simple peanut-butter and jelly sandwich, which he found he liked for some reason. Perhaps he was fond of them before he'd become amnesiac.

Deciding to make good use of time, he headed back to his computer after finishing construction on the sandwich, and opened up his personnel files, which had arrived via email and a secure log-in about an hour ago. Smiling to himself, he began poring over the information while he munched, looking at his early life and some of his career with the Federation's military, noting he had been decorated for various operations under Rex Sardolemuel's command. Such an idealistic life, serving under such a famous commander... but Vergil admitted, it made him want to learn about Rex all the more, and why he'd strayed from his path to turn traitor. There was an answer there... he just knew it, and he wanted to find it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 11, 2014, 03:21:27 PM**

Carrying Lily back across the road, Axel piled into the cab with her, then pulled Rio in after them. "Go!"

The cab driver rustled his newspaper, then slowly put it down on the seat beside him. "Anywhere you want to go, in particular?"

Rio thumped the back of the driver's seat in frustration. "Just go, fuckwad!"

Later that night, Axel set a cup of coffee on the table in front of Lily as she sat in the kitchen, and lightly pressed a small bag of ice to the swollen lump on her temple as he took a seat next to her. "Well... swelling's going down at least..." he muttered as he inspected the marks on her face. "Jesus, I... I still can't believe..." The fingers of his free hand ground into the wooden table, and the muscles of his jaw clenched. "I'm so sorry I wasn't there..."

There was a small scuffing sound, and Axel looked around to see Rio standing awkwardly in the doorway. The rat's expression softened slightly. "Hey... thanks for helping out."

Rio gave a small shrug and looked down at his shoes. "I wasn't the one he was trying to beat the shit out of."

Triste reached Vergil's floor, and walked down the corridor until she came to a door with the same number as on the card he'd given her. Shrugging the backpack she wore further onto her shoulder, Triste reached out and thumped on the door briskly. ***About to make contact with him now.***

Good. Be sure to relay his plans to us.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 11, 2014, 05:57:03 PM**

Vergil jumped alert at the sound of the knock, his heart racing. OK... he was overreacting. Trying to collect himself, the gecko moved to the door whilst smoothing his feathers back subconsciously. He wasn't even aware he had done it (and of course, his feathers didn't really get smoothed back, as they popped back to their swept back and slightly upright position), and hustled to get the door open. Stopping himself just before he did so, Vergil finally pulled it back and smiled as he saw Triste on the other side, then tried to get somewhat serious.

"Ahem... I was waiting, but I'm glad you're here now." he said, the smile returning to his face. "So... whatcha got?" he asked, stepping aside and motioning for her to come in.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 12, 2014, 06:49:26 PM**

Lily had been spending a lot of time since they got back sitting at the kitchen table and staring out the window.

"Axel..." she said. "We need to find Ejlert. If he's anything like the other children, he's not suited to surviving on his own. Denny implied that he was 'smarter' than the others, and in that case he may help us rescue the others. Denny will have called the police by now, and Rio's right, there's not much we could do to fight Denny head on, especially since I'm supposed to be dead."

She took a deep breath. "That house had a lot of Ejlert in it. I could sense what he had to go through...and if I got the chance I think I could sense him again. I've got these psionic powers, might as well put them to good use."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 13, 2014, 12:25:46 AM**

(Corollis Clinic)

Anne's group session had been finished. Thanks to the effect of the drug withdrawl, her hands began to tremor.

Her door clicked as a nurse entered and gave the mare her the detox drugs and some water. He watched over her to make sure she swallowed the pills, even inspecting inside her mouth. When that was done, the door clicked shut as the man exited.

Anne sighed and peered through the armored window. The lights of the huge skyscrapers could be seen against the dark sky.

(Mott Place)

Soren arrived back home to his empty apartment. He had left CafÈ Verona to go shopping for a bit. In his bag were some fresh catfish filets, some algae crackers and some fruits and vegetables.

The apartment was deserted. He then noticed a note taped on the fridge:

Quote

> Soren:
>
> Me and the rest of the girls are gonna visit Anne.
>
> -Rose

Soren looked out the window. Two frameflyers flitted by, a police hoverbiker in hot pursuit.

Sighing, he headed to his bedroom to do some work on some guy's badly damaged augment leg.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 13, 2014, 09:28:51 AM**

Axel nodded. "We'll find him, Lily. And we'll find some way to help the others. There's no way they can stay with that psycho." He looked down at his hands for a moment. "Did you... find anything at the house? Any clues or... or pointers where Ejlert could have gone?"

"I've got what you asked for. Why else would I be here?" Triste gave Vergil a small smile and stepped past him, looking around his apartment as she made her way further in. "Nice place. A little more... cozy that I would have expected." Walking over to the couch, she sat down and pulled off her backpack, unzipping it.

She pulled out some large, rolled up papers and dropped them onto the coffee table next to the laptop. "Plans for the building. Every floor. Should be useful for your *master infiltration plan*." Triste smirked, then reached in and pulled out a small stack of plastic cards, held together with an elastic band. "And security inspector identification. Identical to the real thing, and they should give us access to *most* areas." Pulling the band off, she spread them out on the table next to the floor plans. Each member of the team had their own card, with a small profile picture on the right, and their fake title on the left. Triste looked up at Vergil. "Remember anything else while you were waiting?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 13, 2014, 10:43:10 AM**

"Oh! Well thanks! I do try and manage on my own, after all. It's all I could afford really but... now that I'm back with you guys... guess my pay's gonna increase." Vergil smiled here as he followed her over to the couch.

Paying close attention to what she was laying out on the table, the gecko's orange eyes scrutinized it all with a new light. "Well I don't think I used that specific terminology but yes... it is a master infiltration plan." He chuckled here, unrolling some of the schematics to give them a look over. "Hmm... no schematics of the sub-levels... but not surprising, since I'm guessing Mace didn't exactly make that knowledge public." he murmured.

But what he was really pleased with were the security inspector badges. "Oh Triste! I have to say... this is above and beyond what I was expecting!" he exclaimed happily. "This'll get us anywhere we need to go, without having to worry about security too much, AND it provides us with the perfect cover!" Looking over at her now with appreciation, he let a wide smile crease his features. "Great work! I'm really gonna have to repay you for the extra thought..." he trailed off here. He knew technically this part of the job, but still, he felt she had put in an extra touch here that most others wouldn't have thought about.

"Well I haven't remembered too much more about myself, except some things here and there about Rex's meeting with his brother... his brother seems... familiar to me for some reason, but I'm guessing it's just because I was present there. I can't think of any other specific times I saw him, after all. I think we'll have to gain access to the elevators to reach the sub-levels, and I might remember how exactly to do that as well." he nodded.

Seeing everything was in order, he took a seat next to her on the couch. "Well I have to say... this is fantastic! I now know exactly how I'm going to approach tomorrow! Ahem... oh yes, can I offer you anything while you're here? Food? A drink?" he inquired, holding back for the moment until he could gauge what she wanted.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 13, 2014, 06:06:44 PM**

Lily shook her head. "No idea. I don't know if we have the proper skillset to sleuth a missing child out on our own."

She took a deep breath. "But if you remember, there was a mutual acquaintance of ours who, if you recall, used to be employed to find people. She told us so herself..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 14, 2014, 04:26:20 PM**

Axel's breath caught. "You... you don't mean..." He swallowed and leaned forwards. "Are you sure that's a good idea? I mean, she didn't exactly attract the best kind of attention... and besides, how would we find *her*? The last we saw of Emilena, she was running off who-knows-where..."

Rio made a small noise.

Axel turned to look at him. "What?"

"Uh..." The boy stepped further into the kitchen. "Well, you just said you were looking for someone called Emilena. Do you mean *Cock Eater*?"

Axel smirked slightly. "No... it sounds like you're thinking of someone else..."

"Well, how many Emilenas could there be? It's not exactly a popular name," Rio tried, approaching the table and sitting opposite them. "She started up her own gang a few months ago near where I used to live, running drugs around, that kind of stuff. Come on! It's what everyone calls her, you've never heard of *Cock Eater*?" Rio's face grew deadly serious, and he leaned in. "Word is, when she was starting up, some guy tried to fuck her over on a deal. So she cut his dick off with some scissors and made him *eat* it."

The smirk on Axel's face vanished quickly. He looked at Lily. "That, ah... that actually sounds like it might be her," he said numbly as he subconsciously crossed his legs .

Triste smiled and leaned back. "I guess a drink would be nice." ***He doesn't remember anything about Mace.*** Looking down, her eyes passed over the faces of the individuals Vergil had picked to help them on the mission. "So... you actually think they're going to be useful?" she asked doubtfully. "It's just... odd. Before, you never would have wanted to work with civilians."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 14, 2014, 06:16:31 PM**

"Sure!" Vergil hopped off the couch and began making his way to the small kitchen. "Well... to be fair... I had my full memory before. This group of individuals... I trust them with my life. They helped me out in Lanthae, and they're more than capable of holding their own. Sure... one or two had some rogue tendencies but... I think that's beyond us now." Vergil pulled open the door to a small wine fridge he had, and brought two glasses down to the counter top. Pulling the cork out of a red wine bottle, he smiled to himself, and poured the contents into the two glasses, the wine swirling a bit with the pouring.

"They all agreed to help, and they all realize the gravity of the situation, as well as what's riding on this mission." Taking the glasses, he walked back over to her and offered her one. "Here... to a better tomorrow... and to us." he ventured here, clinking his glass against hers and taking a hearty sip from it.

Settling in beside her, he let out a contented exhale and looked down at the notes. "Don't worry... we can rely on these guys to get the job done. They single-handedly infiltrated the Purifier base and extracted a civilian from the facility. They're good to go the distance. But..." he moved one picture of Axel to the side, revealing Tony underneath. "Ahem... I feel like maybe we should reconnect a bit before this assignment. I'd like to know more about you... and us, before we start this whole thing. You seem serious and heavily focused on your work... and that's good... but was it a mutual attraction from the start between us? Did it develop over time? Sorry... if this is too personal right now. I'm just trying to reconstruct my memories from scratch after all." he admitted. "Remembering bits and pieces here and there. Any little bit helps."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 14, 2014, 07:48:02 PM**

Lily clicked her tongue disapprovingly. "She would pick a street name like that." She leaned in towards Rio. "I need to meet...Emilena. Would you be able to organize a meeting for me? We're old acquaintances, she might even remember me."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 15, 2014, 10:11:18 AM**

(Corollis Clinic)

The door on Anne's room clicked open. The mare's ears pricked up as she turned towards the noise. There, she saw three familiar faces in hospital scrubs.

"Rose? Maria? Marita? The fuck are you doing here?" she whispered.

(*Bak Long* Headquarters)

Rory sighed as he looked over the paperwork. The scent of burning joss sticks hung in the air. The three 49ers had recovered his lost creds. But he just had recieved reports from his superiors that Corona was really starting to crack down on street vendors.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 15, 2014, 10:54:57 AM**

paying you a visit of course' marita said stepping into the room. ' you came within a few seconds of splattering on the ground behind our apartment. they let us in because i showed my id badge, and gave me the list of drugs they have you on to detoxify your system.because you took some bad stuff. Real bad stuff..'
-
 we'll been called in to help save the world .. again.. seems some nut job named kalis is trying to take over the world, and we have to beat him to a ship thats the size of Puerto Rico that has the firepower to conquer the planet' marie said she took a seat by Annes Bed.' and just when we were settling in to our life here, stuff happens. i swear its like we're cursed or something..
-
so how are you holding up/ rose said as she took a look at Annes chart.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 15, 2014, 05:44:03 PM**

(Corollis Clinic)

Anne's ears splayed as she heard what the trio were telling her. "Yeah, I knew I fucked up big time."

She turned to Rose and put her feet on the bolted down metal desk. "Not bad. Found out that a lot of the patients are Lanthaeni."

The mare then sighed as Marie relayed the news. "Again?" She gave a bitter laugh. "Well, I'm out of the running. Good luck to you though."

(Mott Place)

Soren had just finished repairing the leg. He looked at the clock: 9:00 PM. He sighed as he put his tools away and picked up his cell phone.

He dialed his latest client's number. "Mister Batty, your leg's finished. Would you like to pick it up now or later?"

"*Now!*" Soren held the phone away from his ear. "Fucking hell, you don't have to shout!" he muttered.

The Human hung up and carefully strapped the augment to a trolley.

The doorbell rang as he wheeled the augment to the front door. He peered through the peephole, revealing a middle aged Green Anole.

He opened the door slightly. And the Anole began to speak. "I'm here to pick up my leg." He handed over his ID card.

"Ah yes, Roy Batty. Your leg is right here."

"Thanks for being open this late." He pulled out two credit chits and was about to pass them over when something at the far end of the stairwell grabbed his attention.

His demeanor suddenly changed. The Anole suddenly tossed the two credit chits to the Human and bolted.

"Mister Batty! Youró" Soren picked up the two credit chits that had been tossed at him. As he did so, he saw four figures clad in black armor and equipped with firearms.

He shuddered as he closed the door and bolted it. He muttered some profanities under his breath.

(OOC - Lanthaeni = inhabitant of Lanthae)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 15, 2014, 06:11:12 PM**

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rose patted annes face.' we'll we're not going to forget you girl.. how long before you can get out of here and get back to the apartment?
- Rose, honey she needs ti detox, like you did. the stuff shes addicted to isnt as bad as the biproxytol you were hooked on, but if its bad enough to think shes a blooming angel with wings, she needed to be sobered up..' marita said ' she turned to Anne " you'll get a cut of whatever money we get from stopping Kalis, and you'll always have a home with us' ' you're one of us anne don't get too hard on yourself' marie said giving her a phone. fortunately there were no video cameras in patients rooms due tioo privacy concerns..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 16, 2014, 07:24:11 AM**

Rio blinked. "You... you actually want to *meet* her?" He gulped. "Well... yeah. Yeah, I know a guy who could set up a meeting. I could find him tomorrow if you want, he used to hang out where I live."

Looking at Lily, Axel squeezed her hand slightly. "Are you sure there's no other way? This doesn't sound... well, it doesn't exactly sound safe..."

He's still hooked up on this? Triste took a sip from the wine glass and leaned back. "Well," she started, looking down at the glass and swirling it, "If I remember right, it was more of a mutual thing. We noticed each other in combat training, and since we were at the top of the class they always used to pair us together. Always used to be a draw though. You had more reach, I had more flexibility."

She took another sip, cocking her head as she stared into the distance. "So we started meeting up after training to... try and come to a clear winner." Triste smiled slightly. "But we still had the same problem."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 16, 2014, 10:09:44 AM**

A thin smile spread across Vergil's lips here as Triste described the start of their relationship. "Heh... must've been quite the... 'rivalry.'" he stated here. He couldn't remember specific instances, but he certainly could picture it very easily enough in his mind.

As she described their meet-ups afterwards to try and settle on a clear winner, it was obvious to him what had transpired afterward. Most certainly there was a desire within him to re-experience it, but he was also debating if now was the right time for it. He couldn't remember if he was the aggressor or the one being seduced back then. Taking another drink from his glass, he swallowed and gazed out into the distance as well. "Well... that definitely sounds like something we need to settle at some point, wouldn't you say?" he asked here, his orange eyes moving over to her now, testing the waters. "I mean such an indecisive engagement... has to have a resolution at some point. A... 'climax' if you will." he smirked, and took another drink. "Still... thanks for the refresher... every little bit helps."

Tony was still hanging around Anne's room, having kept her company for a few hours. He was reading a book, and had just flipped the page when the trio came in. "Oh... hey again!" he said them, nodding as he closed the book after bending the corner of a page.

He listened to the exchange between the girls, and finally spoke up. "Yeah... and also, if you need anything, I wouldn't mind helping you out, Anne. No strings attached either, not for you." Drumming his claws on the book's cover, he looked over at her here. "I want to see you better, after all, and I won't spare anything in helping you get there. I'll be visiting as often as I can, whenever I'm in town." he reiterated, hoping he didn't sound too repetitive, but felt he wanted to make sure she knew he wasn't just going to leave and forget.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 16, 2014, 07:00:27 PM**

"I'm positive," stated Lily firmly. "Rio, the sooner you can get me in touch with Emilena the better."

She crossed to her room and withdrew a can of hairspray from her bathroom cabinet. Unscrewing the bottom, she pulled out about 9000 credits*. They were the collective tips she received from a part-time job at a Chinese restaurant where she occasionally worked as a waitress. Hopefully it would be enough to sway Emilena...

(*equivalent to $900)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 16, 2014, 07:14:58 PM**

you're a good guy tony' Marita said giving him a nod.' i can tell you really care about you, and given your family, you're not a guy to mess with. and she has us, as well. i'll cover the cost of her detox, so she wont have to worry about paying for anything.' Marita added giving Anne a firm look, before turning back to Tony " What's the name of the book you are reading? i ask only out of curiosity.."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 17, 2014, 05:37:04 AM**

As they waited for Lily to return, Rio looked across at Axel, wide eyed. "So you actually *knew* her? Do you think it's true? About the dick thing?"

Axel grimaced. "No. Probably not. I hope not."

At the sound of Lily's footsteps, Rio glanced up. "I could try and set something up tomorrow. Hal... the guy I know... he always hangs out on the same corner." He saw the bundle of credits Lily was holding, and a small part of his mind noted that these two probably kept more little stashes like that somewhere around the house.

Axel's fingers drummed nervously on the table. "You know I can't go with you, I have to help Vergil. And... and I know this is something you have to do, but... promise me you won't take any risks you don't need to, Lily. Please."

"Don't worry about it," Triste said. "And you might be right. We never *did* find out who was on top." She grinned. "Or at least, top of the class." Triste ran her eyes over him, then looked away and straightened, finishing her glass. "But not now. We've got a long day tomorrow, and I don't want you getting... tired."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 17, 2014, 10:21:09 AM**

Vergil tensed up a bit as he caught her eyes wandering over him, roving up and down his form, but it came to nothing ultimately, and he knew she was right. As fun as a fling would be right now, it wasn't the appropriate time for such things. Exhaling slightly, he finished his wine and got up, stretching his arms out behind him as he headed for the door. "No... you're right of course. I need to be on top form for this. This issue can be settled later, after all." Despite the rejection, he maintained his optimistic outlook on it, and opened the door for her.

"Thanks for the schematics and passes. It was absolutely invaluable and it'll help us for sure, tomorrow... and... thanks for dropping by in general." he told her here now, offering her a small smile. "Well... have a good night, Triste. I'll see you tomorrow at Zaloga and we'll find out what's what with the path to Torment's Cataract."

Tony waved his paw at the others now. "Oh it's nothing. Least I can do for you guys, after all. And hey! I could cover the detox without even batting an eye! Why bother spending your hard-earned cash? Let me cover it... I don't mind." Tony informed them, smiling and tapping the cover of his book with a claw.

"Ah yes... I'm reading a book entitled 'Bremen and Europa: German Speed Queens of the Atlantic.' It's about two liners made by North German Lloyd during the 30s that I would've loved to travel on. Art deco at its finest and all that." he chuckled. "Anyway, I'd be happy to cover the cost for Anne so you girls can save your funds." He got up out of his chair now and looked at the pony. "I think I'm gonna head out for the night, as we got some work to do tomorrow with Vergil, but I'll stop by as frequently as I can." Tony told her. "Not going to forget about you, after all." He shook his head here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 17, 2014, 04:06:14 PM**

(Corollis Clinic)

Anne sniffled and embraced the three women in a massive hug. Despite her being slightly shorter than Soren, her incredible strength was revealed.

"Thanks for being here for me!" She wiped away some tears. The mare then embraced Tony and lifted the Ferret clean off the ground.

Her ears then pricked up and then pinned back and her tail began to swish back and forth as she heard footsteps. She glanced around. "Oh no, the night shift nurse is coming! You four need to hide or we're gonna be in deep shit!"

(Mott Place)

The door shook as someone knocked on it. "Open up or we're breaching the door!"

Soren peered through the peephole. It was that squad of black clad infantry. Two Primates and two Felines. Or at least he could tell from the rough shapes of their helmets and their reflective visors.

"What's your business?" he asked through the door.

"You have something that belongs to Serami Heavy Industries. Turn it over or we will recover it by force."

Soren gulped as he put the pieces together. That's why Mr. Batty was so skittish and willing to leave behind a rather expensive augment. He had stolen it, damaged during the theft and wanted a cyberneticist who wouldn't ask too many questions about it.

The locks clicked as the Human undid them and opened the door. The four armored troopers filed in.
Three of them carried H&K MP-7 subguns at the ready while one of them carried a Kel-Tec KS-CQB shotgun.

Soren undid the leg from the hand truck it was strapped to and backed away. One of the soldiers picked up the augment and placed it in a duffel bag.

"*We've recovered the augment. Returning to HQ now. Recuva Leader out*." The infantryman with the shotgun radioed. Soren couldn't hear the words as it was transmitted via a throat mike.

Recuva Leader then turned to Soren. "Thank you for your cooperation." The four men then marched out of his apartment, even having the courtesy to close the door after themselves.

Soren locked the door and sighed. "Remind me never to agree to repair augments from shifty looking dudes."

(OOC - Kel-Tec KS-CQB is a fictional [and much improved] version of the Kel-Tec KSG shotgun.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 17, 2014, 07:20:39 PM**

"Hey, don't worry," Lily smiled and ran her hand down Axel's cheek. "This is Emilena we're talking about. She wouldn't hurt an old friend."

Her eyes clouded. "Be careful yourself. I don't fully understand what you're doing tomorrow with Vergil, but its your choice to make. Those people just have no sense of self-preservation. Just leave the dangerous stuff to them, if you can..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 17, 2014, 08:34:42 PM**

That sounds really cool.I'd like to read it sometime' Marita said before being hugged by Anne in a crushing grip. when alerted that the night nurse was approaching, she leaned in and locked lips with anne. ' night anne" she said after a few seconds in which she had rubbed tongues with the mare.' we're headed out , once the nurse leaves. ' rose gave anne a good night kiss as well, and marie was the last to lock lips with her. the girls then opened the closet in the room and snuck behind a large crate of supplies.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 17, 2014, 08:42:00 PM**

(Corollis Clinic)

Anne quickly slid under the covers and pretended to be asleep.

The nurse came in and looked around the darkened room. Seeing as everything was in order, she exited and shut the door.

The mare opened one eye as she listened to the footsteps fade away.

She got out of bed and rapped on the door. "You and Tony better leave before the nurse comes back," she whispered.

(Mott Place)

Soren got out of the shower and put on his pajamas. As he got into bed, he wondered exactly what tomorrow was going to bring. All he hoped was that it didn't bring him to meet Emilena.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 17, 2014, 08:48:56 PM**

rose nodded to anne. ' thanks for letting us visit Anne, we'll be in touch ' she said ' as the girls waved goodbye to anne, and headed out the door, sneaking out past the front desk without being stopped. ' we'll see you soon tony ' marita said once they were safely outside.' Have a good night ' she said.' and thanks for picking up the tab for Anne, its a very generous gesture on your part.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 17, 2014, 10:07:36 PM**

"Right! We're outta here, then! It was good seeing you again, Anne!" Tony told her, noting her strength in lifting him off the ground. "Heh... take care of yourself, and I'll see you again soon!" Grabbing his book, he paused as he noted the rather intimate kisses passing back and forth between the trio and Anne. He stared wide-eyed, a big "what the hell" look on his face.

He was about to say "Oh yeah, sure, no problem. I'm paying for her because you know, I care a lot. Sure, I tried to bed her whilst hyped up on pain meds but... the feelings lingered." Now he was just crashing and burning inside worse than a loaded 747 crashing to Earth. So much for his shot at this... damn... struck out again. But when did this happen? He wasn't even aware the trio had feelings for Anne! Luckless in love... that was him all right.

Swallowing hard, he darted out of the room now and gave a quick "Yeah I'll be sure to loan it to you sometime!", he acted as casually as he could, whistling to himself as he sauntered down the hall and towards the building exit. He acted like he belonged there, and it worked. No one stopped him on his way out to the Delahaye, and it was over and done with before anyone could think twice about the strangely well-dressed ferret in the clinic. What he didn't show anyone was the fact he was fighting back tears, which only rolled after he'd gotten into the car and drove off.

The Next Day

Vergil stood outside the corporate headquarters of Zaloga and glanced at his watch. The others should be arriving soon. He'd caught the metro here, not yet owning a car in Corona due to lack of real income. Behind him, the towering headquarters of Zaloga rose up like a black castle perched high atop a cliff.

Like the points on a compass, Corona's Cronin Plaza (which was a cross shape) contained a massive corporate headquarters building at each of its four ends. Zaloga stood at the southern end, and was the second tallest building in the plaza. It was like a layered mountain, built in a stepped back design; waterfalls tumbled from its various pinnacles and splashed into pools on lower levels from which trees and grass sprouted like makeshift botanical gardens. Part of its architecture was literally designed to make it look like it was a building molding with a giant crag. It was certainly one of the more architecturally stunning buildings in Corona.

The west end of the plaza was taken up by the smallest of the buildings (though that wasn't saying much given the height on each): Serami Heavy Industries' headquarters. Heinz Dupette Serami may have been modest in his choice of headquarters, but he was miles ahead of his next closest competitor, Derami Enterprises, whose headquarters stood at the east end of the plaza. Serami's building was mostly glassy in appearance, a pale blue exterior reflecting all around it on a sunny day. Derami's building across from Serami was a plain black affair, all militaristic and spartan. It was practical, and as it stood taller than Serami's building, rumor had it that Derami stood at the top of his tower looking down with envy at his much more successful rival.

Finally, the most ostentatious and overly showy building on the plaza was Judaken Industries' headquarters. Standing at the north point, it was like a giant sword rising out of the ground. Constructed of a crystalline substance, it reflected pinks and greens rather well in the sunlight. It was over a mile high, and surrounded by four smaller "turrets" as it were. Small was a relative term though when it came to Judaken. Nothing about his presence was small. The building resembled a space shuttle in its shape in a vague sense, but looked mostly like a sword because it wasn't bulky like a shuttle.

Hearing the sound of an approaching old "burner" now, Vergil smiled as he saw a beautiful maroon and silver classic car approaching the Zaloga parking lot. The car was one of Tony's finest, a 1951 Daimler DE-36 that he had decided to drive today as it made him look like he was on official business. The car (http://www.barthworks.com/cars/cussler/photos/1951daimlerde36c.jpg) was a convertible, and as it was a pleasant, warm afternoon, Tony was driving with the top down. Honking as he pulled the big British boat into one of the spots marked as "Guest, Tony killed the engine and got out to pull the top up.

"Sweet ride." Vergil smirked.

"Yeah... the Daimler's always been one of my personal favorites. I almost always use it on business trips. Serves to show I'm a serious kind of guy." the ferret replied, looking at the gecko. "And we're very serious today, after all." he added, with less mirth in his tone now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 17, 2014, 10:42:32 PM**

Soren was busy making some peanut butter and applesauce sandwiches for everyone. The sun shone brightly through the windows.

"So how was the visit with Anne?" he asked as he poured himself some hot tea. "Is she doing okay?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 17, 2014, 10:47:20 PM**

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soon after a modern hovercar powered into one of the guest spots, a couple of spaces away from tonys car, which was beautiful to look at. Marita got out of the drivers seat, rose got out of the pssenger seat and marie from the back. They were dressed in clothes that suggested business manager or similar professional attire. ' morning Tony, morning Vergil' Rose said in a kind voice ' hope everything is going well with you. ' she added as they gathered around the ferret and gecko. 'so I take it everything is ready/ Marito asked Vergil.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 18, 2014, 12:57:22 AM**

Soren drove his antique (and stolen) Fisker Karma into the parking lot. He emerged from the car and locked the door. Unlike the usual uniform he wore, he was wearing a set of khaki pants and a white, button-down shirt.

He looked around and noticed that Vergil, Marita, Marie, Tony and Rose were already present. "Good morning to you all."

The Human looked around in case someone was listening in or otherwise spying.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 18, 2014, 07:37:37 AM**

The sun's heat beat down on Rio and Lily as he lead her through the grimy streets that networked their way through the sums, promising yet another boiling day. From somewhere in the distance loud rap music was being blasted from a radio, the sound echoing off the worn down buildings and alleyways coated with graffiti.

"...And the food they do there is really good! Once you pick the bug bits out I mean," Rio was telling Lily as they turned off from the street they'd been following and made their way down a twisting, uneven stairway. He knew he was babbling, but being able to walk through this area and talk to someone who wasn't constantly thinking about the next store to rob, or where they'd get their next fix from was... different. Nice. At the bottom of the stairway was a rusty metal gate, which lead through into a large market square. Several stalls had been set up where people were selling all sorts of things, from dubious looking food to knock-off clothing. At this time in the morning, the market was virtually empty. Rio waved at a vendor he recognised, then looked across to the far end of the square. Sure enough, a thin, dark coloured duck was leaning against the wall, his attention focussed on something he was doing on his phone. Rio pointed him out to Lily. "There he is. Same place as always." Leading her across, Rio nudged the duck on the arm. "Hey, Hal. How've you been, man?"

Hal gasped and looked quickly down to see who'd nudged him, and the alarm on his face lessened when he saw it was Rio, though it didn't vanish completely. Rio wasn't sure Hal *was* capable of looking relaxed. "Oh! Hi, er, hi Rio." His eyes glanced nervously over Lily before returning to the boy. His voice was strained, anxious, and his adam's apple kept bobbing visibly as the duck swallowed almost compulsively. He was small for his age, and unlike most other adults, the jittery duck didn't loom over Rio. "Hey, I, I heard what happened. With the money. What, er, what happened to you? What are you doing here?! They could, could still be looking for you!"

Rio shook his head. "It's kind of a long story. I'll tell you some other time. Look, you know *Cock Eater*, right? Emilena?"

Hal started. "Emilena. *Emilena*. She hates, hates being called that... other thing." He paused. "Yeah, I, er, I know her. Why?"

"We need to see her. It's... it's important." Rio glanced at Lily. "Just tell her Lily needs to speak with her. They used to know each other."

Hal wrung his hands nervously. "I don't know... she doesn't like being, being disturbed..." Twitching, he looked back at Lily, and something he saw in her eyes softened his expression. "Oh... okay, fine. I'll, I'll see what I can do. Just wait here. *Oh jeez*..." Swallowing again for good measure, the duck turned and disappeared up a narrow alleyway that led off from the market square.

Rio turned back to Lily and scratched his head. "That went well. At least we found him on one of his confident days."

Fifteen minutes later, Hal re-emerged from the alleyway, his eyes blinking rapidly as he beckoned them over. "Come on, she, she says she'll see you."

Rio looked up at Lily and gave her an encouraging smile, then started to make his way across.

Axel payed the cab driver then stepped out. Across the street, he could see Soren, Tony and the others hanging around. He bit his lip, his tail flicking uncomfortably as he tried to stop worrying about Lily. He knew the chances of Emilena doing anything to hurt her were low, especially after all they'd done to save her but... he still wasn't comfortable with the idea of her seeking out a gang of drug runners. *She'll be fine... she can take care of herself...* the rat told himself firmly. Taking a deep breath, he let it out then jogged across the parking lot to where the group stood.

"Hey guys, sorry I'm late!" He waved at them as he drew close. "Lily's still, ah, busy so she can't make it." Axel looked around. "Where's the other one? Er... Tistery?"

"Triste," said a voice behind him, "And I'm right here." Axel jumped, then looked behind him to see the spider gecko making her way over. She made her way around the group and stopped next to Vergil. "So you all turned up. Good." Triste looked at Vergil. "I assume you've got a plan?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 18, 2014, 09:57:36 PM**

Tony nodded at the girls but didn't say anything, and he greeted Soren with a smile. "Hey, Soren. Good to see you."

Vergil was pleased to see everyone show up. Good... he knew they had his back, and smirked as Triste suddenly put in an appearance. He nodded solemnly. "Of course I have a plan. Tony's going to have to meet with Mace to avoid arousing suspicion, but once his meeting's finished up, instead of taking the elevator down to the ground floor... he'll keep going, and meet us in the sub-level. He can also tell us if any alerts have been raised. Soren..." Vergil looked at the human here. "Since you seemed reluctant earlier, you may accompany Tony if you wish to the meeting, posing as his aide. Otherwise, the rest of us will act as if we're a security inspection detail... these..." He began handing out badges to everyone. "Will get us in as such. We're conducting a surprise inspection of Zaloga's security systems, and will be acting the part. Once we're inside, we make for the elevators, and I'll..." he paused here. "I know it'll come to me... but I'll recall how to access the lower levels once we're inside. I saw how to do it once... and I know it's there... I know I'll be able to recall it."

"Why not just ask about it?" Tony suggested, shrugging.

"Well I'm not sure anyone outside Mace knows about the lower levels. But if you want to risk bringing it up in conversation as perhaps a potential business deal... maybe a smuggling route or something..." Vergil trailed off.

"Hmmm... nah, better not." Tony shook his head.

"Now then... I don't know what we're gonna encounter down there... it may be dangerous. I think this civilization took great care to hide this waypoint... and possibly even protect it. I asked Tony to bring us some weapons, just in case. With these badges, we'll be able to bypass security carrying weapons, but all the same... I think it's best to conceal them, at least until we're down below the building. Don't want to alarm the employees unnecessarily after all."

Vergil instructed.

"Right... so... without further ado..." Tony went over to the Daimler's trunk and popped it open. Help yourselves!" he declared, standing aside to reveal a weapons crate. "I obviously can't carry anything inside, so I'll probably try and hold down the exit for you guys, or join you depending on what's up down there."

"Might want to take an extra weapon for Tony then when he gets down there, and Soren if he's joining Tony." Vergil suggested. "Everyone following so far?" the gecko asked, looking the group over.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 19, 2014, 11:41:12 PM**

"Nice to see you, too." He shook Tony's hand. When Triste arrived and began to speak.", he listened intently.

Soren pondered. He had enough crazy shit happen to him when he was in Lanthae. Figuring that posing as an aide would be a relatively sedate task, he agreed.

"Okay, I've got everything down. So all I do is just essentially take notes or do things like carry Tony's portfolios and other things?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 21, 2014, 06:02:46 AM**

Hal led Rio and Lily into an increasingly seedy part of town. Windows were boarded up, shadowy figures loitered in alleyways, and the only sign of friendliness came from the urchins playing Kick the Can in the street.

Hal reached a boarded-up warehouse and knocked five times in a distinct pattern on a rusty door labeled 'KEEP OUT'. After a few minutes, the door audibly unclicked and someone knocked twice in response.

"Don't," Hal warned as Lily stepped forward. "This door shoots you. We use the one around the corner."

After a brief climb up a fire escape, Hal led the two of them into a dingy, cavernous room. Crates, posters and other lived-in makeshift furniture dotted the darkened expanse. It was deathly quiet.

"Hello--?" Lily said tentatively, and was immediately greeted with someone in the blackness hissing "Shhh!" All of a sudden a stagelight snapped on, revealing a thin light-haired fox with his head bowed solemnly and his hand on a microphone stand.

"Nairda!" gasped Lily, pleased to see a familiar face.

Suddenly a beat struck up from the nearby speakers, quick and base-heavy. Snapping up as if in a trance, Nairda busted some passionate raps.

What do you do when you've got a newcomer but no brains to figure them out
You're all wrapped up in the main game, you don't got time for new clout
changing the rules and rewriting the plan
throwing you on your ass harder than a Lazy Susan...

Lily couldn't stop a wry smile from playing across her face at his inane but heartfelt lyrics. A few minutes later, the rap ended and the lights rose up on the warehouse to reveal the other gang members clapping their hands. Lily quickly joined in, to which Nairda bowed and threw a rose at her feet.

Feeling encouraged, Lily stepped forward. "I need to speak to--" she paused. The only audience members were a bright fuchsia teenage canid and a human running the speaker from his laptop. Where was...

"*Who dares to enter the headquarters of the Black Bullets?*" Emilena hissed in her ear from the darkness to her left, making her jump.

"You know who I am," Lily responded reflexively, stepping away, "and can I say I'm incredibly disappointed in how you turned out?"

Gone was the military-style crewcut and stiffly pressed wardrobe of the Emilena Lily had known in Lanthae. This Emilena wore a tank-top and baggy sweatpants, her hair was scraggy and uncut. About the only familiar thing was her commanding and condescending attitude.

Emilena glowered back at her through bloodshot eyes indicative of casual drug use. "I thought we agreed not to see each other after last time."

"I need your help. And frankly, you need mine." Lily glanced disapprovingly at the stains on Emilena's clothes. "I recently learned that I had children before the events where we met. The oldest, Ejlert, has gone missing. I want you to help me find him."

"I don't owe you anything!" Emilena stalked around her, back hunched and muscles tensed like an animal. "The past is behind me, and I'm not interested in dredging all this shit up again!"

Lily sighed. "I thought you better than this, but fine." She withdrew the 9,000 credits from her dress pocket. "Half once you've accepted, half once you've done everything you can to find him. You don't even have to succeed."

Emilena's eyes lit up, but she maintained her poker face and sniffed derisively. "We get at least twice that much from the most basic of drug runs."

"I'm not bartering with you," Lily countered firmly, eyes narrowed.

Emilena locked eyes with her. Obviously she was used to debating with drug addicts, who were a bit easier to push around. Finally, she smiled, revealing stained yellow fangs. "You know what? Let's put it to a vote. The Black Bullets always use democracy to choose their hits. No way around it."

The human on the computer sighed audibly, and Hal bristled next to Lily. "Votes are always the same..." he whispered when Lily glanced at him. "She's got her girlfriend and boytoy who always side with her, so doesn't matter what we vote."

Lily took his wings in her hands. "Regardless, please. Vote with me here."

Beads of sweat formed on his forehead. "I, uh, vote we do it."

"Well I don't!" Emilena replied defiantly. Sliding a knife out of the seat of her panties, she began picking dirt out of her nails.

The fuchsia canid sidled up to Emilena's side. Lily couldn't quite place her species. "Neither do I," the canid fawned, wrapping her arms around her leader. Emilena ignored her and instead looked expectedly at Nairda.

Nairda stepped down from the stage, giving Lily a polite curtsy. "I vote that we assist the lovely Lily in her time of need."

"What?" gasped Emilena, flinging the purple apostle off of her. She looked ready to throttle Nairda. The final gang member, sensing an opportunity for Emilena to lose a vote, quickly chimed in "I vote yes too!"

Emilena snarled, suddenly brandishing her knife more threateningly. Lily didn't even flinch. After a few strained seconds, Emilena sheathed her knife. "Goddammit, fine." Stepping forward, she held her hand out expectedly, and Lily handed her half of the credits. Frustratedly looking for someone to display dominance over, Emilena's eyes rested on Rio. "Hey, what do you think you're doing here, tyke?" she hissed unpleasently, eyes glowing. "I never gave you permission to enter our hideout. What do you think I should do about that? I think you should should pay an...entrance fee. How about one ear?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 21, 2014, 09:02:00 AM**

marita took a handgun in a holster, marie and rose did as well, and latched them to the inner loops in their pants. all 3 wore the ids that identified them as security inspection. the guns were part of the security outfit. ' basically i'll run a scan of their security system, which will double as a chance to check how strong their cybersecurity is' marita said ' that shouldn't take more than a few minutes

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 21, 2014, 10:38:59 AM**

Axel nodded along with Soren, holstering one handgun and taking a spare. "Alright, that sounds simple enough... I guess," he said as he took his badge from Vergil. "So the rest of us get down to the lower levels, and then what? Do you know what we'd be looking for? How these, ah, coordinates are being kept? Computer?"

As he spoke Axel reached into his jeans for his wallet to store the ID, and frowned when he felt that his pocket was empty. He felt the other side of his jeans. Nothing. Hoping he'd forgotten it at home, Axel slipped the badge into his shirt pocket instead.

Rio had been hanging back as Lily and Emilena had their tense conversation, catching sly glances at Emilena's chest when he thought nobody was looking. When she addressed him he started, paling slightly. "I'm sorry, don't cut off my ear! Or anything else!"

Grimacing, he pulled a wallet out of his pocket and threw it reluctantly over to Emilena. As it arced through the air, it opened and Axel's driver's license was made visible. "See, there's probably money in there!" Rio looked shiftily at Lily. "I... found it."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 21, 2014, 12:50:06 PM**

"I know what we're looking for, but I'm not sure where it is." Vergil confessed. "It's going to be a challenge, I'm sure though. It's in an old... projector is the only way I can think to describe it. But not like from the 60s or anything. I mean like... a holographic projector. That I *do* remember."

"OK... good. We're all set, then." Tony shoved the trunk of the Daimler shut, and nodded over at Soren. "Yeah basically just act like you're a member of my family here on business. Take notes, and I might 'consult' you from time to time as well. All right everyone... let's do this!" the ferret exclaimed, and he set off first with Soren while Vergil indicated the others should wait a few minutes so as not to give the impression they were together.

As the ferret and human departed, Vergil looked over at Marita. "All right, but don't get caught! Zaloga is a multi-billion dollar corporation that has the best security systems money can buy. If they even sense an incursion, they might go into high alert. I don't want to give them a reason to do that. They're well protected against hackers, after all. A look should be all you get." he cautioned.

Checking his watch to ensure enough time had passed, Vergil finally nodded at the others. "OK... let's go!" he ordered, nodding for them to follow him inside. The interior lobby of Zaloga was beautiful, to say the least. It was like an homage to the great rococo palaces of the past. Colorful black and green marble columns rose up like trees, and a waterfall cascaded down from a hole in the ceiling into a pool in the center of the lobby.

Heavy security checkpoints were at every door however, and the receptionist behind the desk greeted them with a nod, but grew alarmed at the pistols strapped around the trio's legs. She went for the alarm but Vergil held up his pass. "Sorry for the overtness of this, but we're conducting a security check on your systems. Unannounced, so carry on as you were." Much to his chagrin, the gecko's head just barely came over the top of the desk.

"Let me have the card, please." Vergil handed it over, and the receptionist scanned it on a machine. Tense minutes ticked by as the machine read the minute details on the card, and finally, it was over. "Your credentials check out. Sorry about the suspicion sir, but I saw guns and immediately thought the worst."

Vergil smiled as his pass was handed back to him. "Not a problem. Zaloga hasn't been around as long as it has by taking foolish chances, after all." he answered her reassuringly.

"One thing... if you're gonna carry your guns around on the outside, you need your badges visible at all times." the receptionist reminded him.

Marita and the trio had blatantly ignored his advice about keeping the guns concealed, so Vergil nodded. "Of course. We'll mostly be out of sight though, so you'll hardly notice we're here. No worries on that end, as we're only checking a specific section of building security."

She nodded, and temporarily deactivated the scanners as she waved them on through. Fortunately, the elevators weren't too far away, and they would soon be out of sight of building security. Pushing the down button, Vergil waited along the banks of elevators patiently before one dinged and they were able to board.

Vergil stared intently at the set of buttons now as the door closed. OK... time to remember the sequence... what was it? His mind was hazy, but as he glanced at the familiar rows of buttons and numbers, the fog began to lift. "Yes... that's it..." he uttered softly, and he reached out and hit floor 67, B2, 45, 72, and emergency stop in that order. The elevator did nothing at first, then a grinding noise sounded, and suddenly, the elevator began descending. Basement levels 1, 2, and 3 all ticked by, but the elevator didn't stop, and continued descending, going deeper than the B3 level, which was the last one on the indicators. "It worked!" Vergil exclaimed happily.

Barely containing his excitement, he was all grins as he looked at the others. "Oh! So I guess I should ask... Triste and Axel... and hell even Rose and Marie too, since I barely know you, what would you say your skill sets are? When we get down there... we might be tested by defenses or some other thing the civilization left behind. We need to be on our toes down there, and knowing what you're good at will help me out as we proceed forward." he stated. He was particularly interested in Triste's answer, for being one of the government's top agents meant you were no slouch, and he figured she could probably not only kick ass and take names but perhaps bring some other things to the table as well.

The elevator carrying Tony and Soren up passed the floors rather rapidly as they drew higher and higher. Zaloga's headquarters was the second tallest building in the plaza, and Mace's office was on the top floor, along with his penthouse suite. "Hey Soren... you've been living with Anne, right? She ever mention me?" he asked here, tapping his claws on the handle of the briefcase he carried. "Oh! I should probably give this to you, since I don't typically carry my own baggage... it'll make you look official too, like one of my legal aides or something." the ferret suggested, holding it out for Soren to take now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 21, 2014, 03:41:43 PM**

'i wont really risk it then' marita said before they entered. she showed her id to the receptionist and waited for the all clear. after thatt was given she followed Vergil down the passageway '
well i'm pretty good with getting through small spaces. and i'm pretty good with a firearm. had to show you were competent with a taser to get the job. sometimes players try to pocket and run and then you had to tase them before they leave. ' she said
_ well i'm pretty good with a club, i guess' marie said. i havent had much opportunity to use it though.. so this will be a new experience,, see what i'm made of, so to speak.
marita watched them descend well past the B3 listed on the dial ' so how far down does this elevator go? she asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 21, 2014, 08:43:19 PM**

Soren nodded. "Yeah. Usually when she was sleeping off a high or something."

He then picked up the suitcase. It was surprisingly heavy for something that was ostenibly filled with papers. He didn't put it above Tony to make the suitcase bulletproof, weighted so he could bludgeon someone with it or even tuck a gun or two in there.

"Anyways, how's Corona treating you?" He shot a glance at the elevator's indicators. They had already climbed past the 70th floor.

Muyee "Marion" Wu was in the company cafeteria of Zaloga Cybernetics. Her powerful metallic arms deftly handled a set of metal chopsticks as she used them to scoop some fried rice with dried fish into her mouth. Of course, she was far from the only Augment in the cafeteria.

While she was clad in the visible ballistic vest of the other security officers, she did not have a holster. Instead, her standard Beretta 92 pistol was tucked inside her prosthetic right leg.

"Hey, Mary," a Vulpine said as he sat down at her table.

Marion gently put down her chopsticks and shot him a withering gaze. "My name is Muyee, or if you can't pronounce it, call me 'Marion'. Get it right." Her voice had the faint Chinese accent that hinted at her birthplace of Shanghai, China."

The Vulpine raised his hands in a defensive posture. "It's cool. I forgot!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 22, 2014, 01:59:31 AM**

"What are my skills? You mean, apart from my winning smile and kicking ass at Sudoku?" Axel grinned awkwardly at the others. There was a pause.

Triste crossed her arms and stared up at him. "You're an idiot."

"Yeah..." Axel sighed. "Ah, I'm good with computers, so I guess that makes two of us," he said, indicating Marita. "I'm also pretty good with anything electrical." Axel's eyes changed from blue to bright red. "I used to use this when I worked with augments. It lets me see in, ah... energy, I guess you'd call it. So if you want me to find, fix or disable anything electronic, I'm your guy."

"At least it's a little more useful than your smile, rat."

Axel looked down at Triste, and saw a light orange pulse emanating from her form. He flipped his vision back to normal. "Well, what's *your* deal?"

Triste rolled her eyes, and the next second she was gone. Axel blinked and looked around. "Did she..." The spider gecko reappeared on the other side of the elevator, leaning against the wall. She waggled her spindly fingers. "Peekaboo."

Axel grinned as he realised what caused the orange glow he'd seen. "Cloaking aug..."

"Right. Implanted into my skin." Triste nodded. "Bends light around me. It needs time to recharge, so I can't use it for long stretches of time but... I'm sure it'll come in useful." She neglected to mention it already had, when she'd scouted out each member of the team that Vergil had recommended the night before the meeting.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 22, 2014, 05:26:18 AM**

"Rio!" gasped Lily indignantly. She folded her arms. "I don't know which of you is worse!"

Emilena caught the wallet, withdrew the money out of it, and tossed it back to Lily. "Eh. Guess that'll do. But you better have more next time," she sneered at Rio.

Lily didn't feel like defending him. "Now, what's your plan on--?"

"Have you visited?" interjected Emilena.

"...I beg your pardon?"

"His house. Where his room is. Or met him. Or anything."

"I did visit the house. After he'd gone missing."

Emilena sighed and snapped her fingers. "Flora, I'm gonna need help focusing..." The fuchsia canid came rushing, holding a needle. Without flinching, Emilena grasped it and stabbed it into her arm. "Alright, ready to hear the whole story," she sighed, relaxing her muscles and giving Lily a languid look.

Lily bristled. "Maybe I should come back--"

"The story, sweet cheeks. Now," snapped Emilena. "Or you can take your money and get the fuck out."

Lily wrinkled her nose, but sat down and told the entire story of hers and Rio's visit to her children's house. Nairda, Hal and Flora proved to be an excellent audience, wincing and gasping at all the right moments. The still-seated human, the last gang member whom Lily had not caught the name of, seemed to have better things to do on his laptop than listen.

"Luckily, after that Axel arrived with a taxi after we'd locked Denny in his own dungeon..." she concluded. "It killed me to have to leave my children, and by now he's almost certainly obtained police protection--"

Emilena cut her off dismissively. "Christian's room. What furniture was there?"

Lily thought. "A bed, chest of drawers, um, and lamp."

"What size was the bed?"

"Just twin."

"Describe it."

"Uh, white blanket. Two white pillows. Wooden headrest. Four legs, I don't know."

"Decorations?"

"A few. Some model planes on the ceiling. *Top Gun 3* movie poster. Why does Christian's room matter?"

"Did Christian strike you as the sort to care about movies or planes?" Emilena asked pointedly. "You mentioned three doors on the second floor. Logically, we can assume a bedroom for the master, a bedroom for the girls, and a bedroom for the boys. Beds with legs can store an extra mattress under them, and he had two pillows, Denny must have gotten rid of Illard's bed when he scampered off. Illard liked planes, and he abandoned a high school education. You know who doesn't require a high school education?"

Lily folded her arms, not going to grace Emilena with guesses.

"The Air Force," Emilena supplied her own. "Our first step is to check the local recruiting office and see if Illard approached them. Hell, if they accepted him he could have gotten himself overseas in a week, they're desperate for coast guard and border patrol after all the weird shit happening on the news with warships."

Emilena got to her feet. "Let's move out in five. Foley, by then I want a map printed of all the recruiting offices in town. Hal, you hold down the fort while we're gone. Anyone asks, we're signing tyke up for the Army."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 22, 2014, 01:56:18 PM**

"Beats me." Vergil responded, shrugging. "I don't think even back then I knew, as I can't really measure distances from inside an enclosed space." he commented. They were descending for a good few minutes, and Vergil was able to hear everyone speak, and was particularly impressed with Triste's ability to vanish. "Heh... bet that comes in handy for more than one function." the gecko chuckled here, smirking. "Augments are useful... surprised I wasn't augmented to be honest with you... unless of course my mental abilities are an augment in my brain." He tapped his skull now.

After what seemed like maybe three or four minutes, the elevator finally stopped, and then did nothing as the power was cut, plunging the group into darkness. "Uh..." was all Vergil said before the customary "ding" sounded and the doors ominously slid open, revealing a dimly lit corridor stretching on ahead of them. The walls were stone, and sported carvings of ancient buildings and spires that rose to the sky, many pyramidal in design. The carvings were primitive, but still had a certain artistic quality to them that Vergil couldn't help but admire. "Well... let's go." Vergil nodded, starting off at the head of the group and unsure what else to say.

The floor was cold to Vergil's bare feet, and it definitely felt as if no one had been down here in awhile. A brighter light could be seen ahead of them, shining at the end of the tunnel. It drew the gecko forward, like a moth to a flame. Perhaps it was because he didn't like the confined space down here, or perhaps he wanted to get into a more well-lit area, but the gecko quickened his pace down the corridor.

At the end, the tunnel widened, and opened up to reveal a sizable room, much better lit than the tunnel. The source of light however was a mystery, as surely it couldn't be natural light filtering this far down. But nonetheless, beams of what looked like natural light poured in from holes in the ceiling, illuminating several murals on the walls. "Get a load of this!" Vergil gasped, eyes wide as he looked around the room. The murals depicted various things, including what looked like cities and paintings of everyday life from this old civilization. But the dominating feature was the mural in the center. The paint still looked as if had been applied yesterday as a great representation of a massive aerial battleship dominated the entire wall. It ran Vergil's blood cold to see its gray sides, angular and sharp, like knife blades conjoined together by a massive pyramidal structure in the middle of it all. Well it was more like two pyramids joined at the base, one right side up, the other upside down. But it was definitely the central structure of the ship. Painful flashes suddenly entered the gecko's mind, and he clutched his head, closing his eyes and bending over a bit. "Agh! Dammit!" he uttered, trying to shake his head to clear it.

"That's it..." he pointed. "That's what we're looking for." The sheer size of the mural was awe-inspiring, but Vergil noted too that the smaller murals in general were extolling the civilization's accomplishments... including their military conquests, which appeared quite brutal, and very prominently displayed.

Beneath the central painting, Vergil could see a computer console, and beyond that, two heavy steel double-doors led deeper into the facility. To their left and right were doors as well, but much smaller than the ones in their front. "OK... let's see..." Vergil said softly, approaching the console now. Before he could even touch it, it sprang to life, clicking and beeping at him in what Vergil could only assume was some sort of computer language. A garbled voice sounded out, but Vergil couldn't recognize the language. As he glanced down at the command prompts on the screen, he sighed in an exasperated fashion. "Uh... I don't suppose any of you computer whizzes can reprogram this thing to speak English?" he asked hopefully.

Looking behind him at Axel, Vergil nodded at the rat. "Axel... can you get any energy readings behind these doors?" the white gecko inquired, an uneasy feeling washing over him now.

"Sleeping off a high?" Tony asked here. "Yeah... I guess I could settle for that. Huh... well Corona's been pretty fantastic so far. A lot of opportunity here, and it's a lot safer than Lanthae was too. Lanthae you only had designated areas for the rich, and sure, to an extent Corona's got that too, but it has a lot more areas you can walk around in without fear of being mugged or jumped by some drug dealer." he commented, smiling dryly.

As the elevator reached the 200th floor, it opened to reveal a suite just as pleasant as the lobby, almost 3,500 feet below them. Plants grew out of the floor, kept healthy through some sort of biological process contained within the very heart of the building. All the nutrients were fed into the greenery from conduits that ran upward, and sunlight was provided through a glass ceiling directly above their heads.

Another reception desk (this one marble) greeted them at the exit of the elevator, with a female human secretary busily tapping away at a computer. She didn't even look up at first to acknowledge them, nor did she need to, as standing before them was a dignified looking blue skinned gecko. He wore a confident smile on his face, but it was warm as well.

"Tony Stracci! In the flesh! It's so nice to finally meet you!" Mace Sardolemuel extended his hand warmly in greeting, his natty business attire looking sharp on him, but he was always wearing a slightly dress-down style too, as if he saw this meeting as a more casual affair.

Tony heartily shook Mace's hand, and responded. "Yes! It's great to meet you as well, Mr. Sardolemuel!"

"Oh please, call me Mace!" Mace replied humbly, as if he were no big deal. "And this is?" he asked, looking at Soren.

"Ah yes, one of my most trusted legal attaches..." Tony didn't name Soren though, in case the human wanted to present his own false name to Mace as Mace held out his hand for Soren.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 22, 2014, 04:51:46 PM**

I'll get working on it ' Marita said crackling her fingers and headed up to the console. ' 'shouldn't take me more than a couple minutes to get a rough translation' she said and began typing away at the console, her claws flying over the keys. Gradually the console and voice changed to English ' those who would enter , speak the code' said the voice in a soft, garbled and distant voice ' speak the code? great, Vergil do you remember any sort of password that was used to get past those doors?' Marita said motioning to those doors 'think, Vergil, we need to move quickly and locate the other waypoints..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 22, 2014, 05:26:35 PM**

Rio frowned. "Hey, I've got a name, you know!" he protested, feeling a little more confident now that he could see Emilena really was going to help Lily. "It's Rio, not tyke. Tyke, tyke, tyke!" Spying an open crate at the top of a large stack, he wandered over and scuttled up, spider-like, to the top, perching on the edge and sifting through its exposed contents.

"I think there's some kind of army recruiting place about fifteen minutes from here," Rio called down to the rest of them over his shoulder, as he dragged out a handgun that seemed practically as big as he was. "I'd be *awesome* in the army," he muttered to himself as he hooked the trigger around his finger and started spinning the gun, just like the actors in the old westerns he'd seen. As the barrel rotated towards the people stood in the room, the gun clicked several times - luckily, it wasn't loaded.

As Marita worked on the translation, Axel walked around the console to the large set of double doors. He blinked and his eyes clicked, swapping to red. He didn't see anything - no pulse, no signs of anything beyond. "Hmn... I'm not picking anything up..."

Standing beside Vergil, Triste crossed her arms. "So there's nothing waiting for us on the other side? No traps?"

Still looking the large, steel doors up and down, Axel eventually shook his head. "Not that I can tell, but..." He reached out a hand and gingerly knocked on the door's surface. There was a heavy, dull clunk. "Yeah, these doors are, ah, pretty thick. Could be blocking out any signal behind them. We should probably be careful, just in case." He shrugged, starting to turn. "Whoa!"

"What?" Triste demanded, her hand edging cautiously towards her knife.

Axel was looking at the smaller set of doors to the right. "There's definitely something behind *here* though..." Something on the other side of the door was emitting a bright orange glow, almost taking up the whole doorway. "Whatever it is, it's got a *lot* of energy." He turned to look at the doors to the left. "Crap... same here, too." The rat looked at the rest of the group. "Should we, ah... open them?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 22, 2014, 07:58:16 PM**

Soren looked around the elevator for any traces of bugs or other potential . Ever since the incident in Lanthae, he had become much more paranoid. While the augment worker's gear he wore underneath his loaned business suit wasn't bulletproof, it was capable of dispersing any impact short of getting hit by a car.

The elevator emitted a gentle *ding* as it reached the 200th floor.

He stood back as Tony introduced himself to Mace. This was for two reasons: 1.) to further reinforce his role as Tony's subordinate; 2.) to react if something wrong.

When the Human was introduced to Mace, Soren took the Gecko's hand in his own and offered a firm shake. "James Miardan."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 24, 2014, 10:06:09 AM**

The gecko shook his head at this. "No... I don't remember anything like that!" he insisted. "There was no code last time! It was... it was something else... more like a trial or test..." he murmured, trying to remember.

He looked over as Axel reported high energy readings on both side doors. "Mmm... I don't see how they can be opened without interfacing with the computer." he responded. He nodded for Marita to stand aside, and he looked down at the screen. "Hell if I know about any code... nothing like that sounds familiar to me at all." He noticed now that one of the command prompts was a bypass, and he reached out and selected that option. "Screw it... just bypass the code."

"Only the worthy may proceed." the computer stated, this time in a stronger, more resonant voice that echoed throughout the room. A light blue beam shot out from the terminal and danced over Vergil's white form, lines playing about him as it was no doubt scanning him. "Welcome, traveler. Those who seek the awesome power of the Retarans must prove themselves worthy. Three challenges await for those wishing to prove their worth. The worthy shall proceed... the unworthy... shall *die*." the machine stated coldly, and the doors on the left and right began to slide up and into the wall now with a hiss.

Vergil turned to glance inside the right-hand door, and could see another computer console within, but also something else... something moving within the darker room. Spindly legs unwound from a circular body as the sickly pale blue light of the console revealed a multitude of robots. They each sported a single red eye that glowed like a burning fire as their heads rotated to fix the party with deadly glares. Deadly indeed, for a red beam shot out right for Vergil's head, and the gecko just barely managed to flip backwards and upwards over the beam before it caused a small explosion in the floor behind him.

Landing with a pant, Vergil could see the machines advancing on them from either side of the room from the two doors, marching out in formation and into the light, fully revealing their bodies to the party. They stood on six legs, and had a circular body of some material that looked like polished chrome. A long, serpent-like neck extended from the top of the body atop of which rested the head, which was flat and resembled an arrow-head and was a duller tan in color. The tip of the arrow-head contained the eye, which whirred as it moved.

It was like a grotesque combination of an insect and snake and like nothing found in nature. At the "knees" of each leg rested what looked like a laser cannon of some sort, and they began leveling themselves at the party.

There were three on each side, for a total of six surrounding the group. Pulling out his energy blade and igniting it, Vergil adopted a combat stance. "Whatever it is they're selling, I don't want!" he exclaimed. "Let's take these things out!" he shouted, and leaped towards the nearest one as the machines began to open fire...

Tony commenced the proceedings with Mace as Mace had his guests sit across from him around a coffee table in his suite. It was in stark contrast to what was going on thousands of feet below the ferret, human, and gecko as they talked. It was the absolute lap of luxury up here, and Mace was negotiating with Tony for his company's shipping rights whilst offering them tea and select finger foods.

Tony was attempting to negotiate a reasonable rate for his services, and for the most part, Mace seemed interested. During a lull in the conversation, Tony asked if he and his "aide" could take a restroom break, and the request was granted. Tony was shown towards the bathrooms for visitors, but before they entered, he motioned for Soren to stop. "So I'm not sure if he bugs his own suite, and while I doubt it, I don't want to take any chances. I want to know how things are going below us, so maybe once we return, you could pretend to get a call and excuse yourself, then see if you can reach the others just to check in. Text me what you've found out before returning back, OK?" the ferret asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 24, 2014, 12:41:52 PM**

So i;m guesing these.. things' are the test" marita said as the robots entered the roof. after one of them fired at tony, marita pulled out her gun. Rose and Marie drew their weapons as well, and began opening fire on the Machines bullets impacted against the chrome covering the central parts of the bodies, and casings began falling to the ground. the girls were forced to shoot on the run as they dodged the machines return fire. with 36 cannons and all, they were being forced to constantly move..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 24, 2014, 08:17:06 PM**

Soren took notes throughout the meeting. He maintained a detached but yet confident expression as he watched Tony and Mace. Most of the conversation, he barely understood but all he needed to do was record and "consult" with Tony.

Of note was that he politely nibbled the finger foods and drank the tea. But fearing it might have been laced with drugs, he took very small bites and sips, taking care not to swallow but to keep the food under his tongue.

When the request for the bathroom break was granted, the Human went inside to relieve himself ó and spit out the food and drink he had secreted under his tongue. After washing his mouth out, he exited and listened to Tony's command.

"Gotcha," he said to Tony, programming his smartphone's alarm to go off, hoping everyone would assume it was a call. He then looked around the opulent hallway to make sure no one was coming. "You didn't touch any of the food or drink, right?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 25, 2014, 05:04:24 AM**

While waiting for Emilena to come back, Lily became aware that the fuchsia canid, whom Emilena had called Flora, was sneaking up behind her smiling.

"Er, hello...." smiled Lily weakly.

"So you and Emi promised not to see each other *again*..." murmured Flora, winking coyly. "Were you two...an item?"

"*No*, no we weren't," Lily clarified hastily. "That is not what we were. Also, I'm happily married.

"I figured," Flora giggled softly. "You're not really her *type*, no offense."

"None taken." Lily took a few steps back; Flora had rather obliquely invaded her comfort zone. "So, uh, what do you do around here? For the gang? If you don't mind me asking?"

Flora blushed shyly and covered her mouth. "I'm the team driver. I'm certified to drive over fifty different types of vehicles, including most construction equipment, trains, and school buses."

"Are you? Where exactly did you get certifications for all of those?"

Flora only giggled. Lily didn't quite like the looks she was getting.

"Um, nice talking to you Flora, but I'm...gonna go say hi to Nairda. It's been a while."

Flora sidled off acquiescently, leaving Lily to gratefully go greet the light-furred fox resetting the microphone back up. "Hey Nairda!" she smiled.

Nairda's eyes lit up. "I am blessed to have your beauty grace my sight again!" he bowed and chivalrously kissed her hand. "I wish only that our meeting could come under less strenuous times."

"Maybe after this Emilena will be more interested in keeping in touch." Lily glanced at the other gang members. "Quite a crowd you two have wound up with."

"Too true..." chuckled Nairda. "They're all supportive friends. How did you like my power ballad?"

"It was very...powerful."

"My goal in life is to be a rapper. I've been performing on the streets, waiting for the day a record label exec hears me and gives me the venue to show the world my passion!" A single tear trickled down Nairda's cheek at the thought.

"That's the spirit!" Lily patted him on the back. "You put your mind to it, there's nothing you can't accomplish!"

Nairda beamed appreciatively, but just then Emilena returned. Gone was her baggy sweatpants and tank top, now she was dressed in crisp officer's fatigues, smartly pressed with gleaming buttons and golden epaulettes. Even Lily had to admit she'd cleaned up quite nicely.

Nairda beamed appreciatively, but just then Emilena returned. Gone was her baggy sweatpants and tank top, now she was dressed in rugged black jeans and a crisp dark jacket over a white button-down shirt. Even Lily had to admit she'd cleaned up quite nicely.

"At attention!" barked Emilena, drawing a riding crop and smacking Nairda across the face to encourage everyone to actually follow her order. Even Lily jumped in line and straightened her back. "Now, the story is that we're from the Rockwell Community College, hoping to get community service hours at the dig site. Young Rio Grande is our trump card; to get another sap into the ranks they'll ignore everything to let us through the front door. Once we're in, Nairda and Flora, you are in charge of doing something stupid to give Foley a chance to get his hands on some tech. Lily, your job is to get Rio back when we leave, before he signs something and writes off the rest of his life. Ideally we do this clean, keep it simple, and get out with what we need to know. Now move!"

"Is she always like this?" Lily whispered to Nairda, as the gang members marched out the warehouse door.

"Only when there's money or an orgasm involved," Nairda muttered back, smirking, then got hit with the riding crop again.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 25, 2014, 07:19:03 AM**

As the doors slid up and the machines revealed themselves, Axel stared up at them blankly. Standing between the two groups, he was quickly surrounded, standing amongst their spindly legs. He blinked at the warning given by the console. "Ah, Vergil... I think you pressed the wrong button..." The cannons mounted on the legs started to swivel towards the group, and Axel's ears flattened. "Aw, fuck!" They opened fire and Axel, having nowhere else to go, jumped up and wrapped his arms and legs around the underside of the machine's body, hanging on for dear life as the cannon fire exploded beneath him.

Triste dived to the right as one of the beams flew towards her. Rolling on her landing, she started running around the perimeter of the room, keeping her eyes on both the machines and Vergil. "I feel like this is probably something you should've remembered!" she shouted across, keeping her speed up so she wouldn't be an easy target. One of the beams came too close for comfort, tearing a chunk out of the wall next to her. Triste leaped through the dust and stone chips. "How the hell do we kill these things?!"

Hearing her shout, Axel forced his eyes open. His back felt red hot from the cannon fire exploding just beneath him. He flipped his vision and looked up at the robot, searching its body. *There!* He could see what appeared to be a denser area of pulsating energy, on the top. Panting with exertion, Axel struggled to pull himself up along the side, and up onto the top of the machine's body. Seeming to sense that something was on top of it, the machine started to buck, trying to throw him off. Now a more exposed target, the others had started firing shots at him too but thanks to the machine's thrashing, none of them found their mark. Swearing under his breath, the rat wrapped an arm around the robot's neck and looked down for the source of energy. Protruding slightly from the smooth surface was a darker coloured compartment, what appeared to be a power source for the machine. Yanking his handgun from beneath his shirt, Axel pressed the barrel against the compartment and pulled the trigger, again and again, the impacts jolting his arm until the gun *clicked*. The machine he was riding on jerked then suddenly stopped moving. After a second, the legs collapsed beneath it and the main body dropped heavily to the floor, causing Axel to bite his tongue as he landed with it.

"Yougottashootthethingontheirback!" he cried as he rolled off it and scrambled under for cover.

"What?!" Triste yelled back over the explosions reverberating around the room.

"*You have to break the things on their backs!*" came Axel's panicked reply, slightly tinny beneath the metal he was hiding under.

Gritting her teeth, Triste dodged another round of fire then jumped onto the nearest machine, using her hooked knife to swing herself up on it. Catching sight of the compartment, she raised the knife and plunged it back down as hard as she could.

Rio watched from above as Emilena rounded everyone up and went through the plan. When she ordered them to move out, he dropped the gun back into the crate and jumped down, landing nimbly beside Lily and Nairda. He grinned up at the two adults. " This is fucking awesome, I've never been a trump card before."

Glancing at Lily's pocket where she'd stored the rest of the credits, he turned hopeful doe-eyes towards her. "So... am *I* gonna get paid? I *am* helping..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 25, 2014, 09:27:38 AM**

Vergil's blade sliced through one of the legs of his opponent, but much to the gecko's chagrin, he found the other five were more than sufficient to hold the mechanical creature upright. The sharp points at the ends of the legs were potent weapons, as Vergil soon found out. He shortly found himself on the business end of one of the sharp points, and ducked to avoid getting slashed or impaled.

He shot his blade upward, burying it into the underbelly of the drone, but found he couldn't maintain this position long as he was soon forced out from underneath the robot by its legs. Skidding to the side, he wondered about weak points. The carapaces seemed to be bulletproof, as evidenced by the sounds of ricocheting shots he could hear from around the room.

Damn! They must have a weak point somewhere! Their underbelly didn't seem to be as vulnerable as he thought, unlike most creatures who struggled to constantly protect their underbellies in a fight. Leaping up onto the backside of his opponent, he swung his sword violently and sliced off the head from the neck, the neck flailing like a loose garden hose as its head clattered to the floor. But apparently it didn't need its head to see, as the laser cannons swiveled over to him. Damn thing must have cameras or sensors all over its body.

But then the sound came of a machine thudding onto the floor, lifeless. Snapping his head in the direction of Axel, Vergil was surprised to see the rat had triumphed. He yelled something incoherent at first, and Vergil strained to hear. It sounded like something on the backside. Fortunately, Triste asked again what the rodent had said, and it was repeated. The things on their backs?

Tearing his gaze downward, the gecko could indeed see the small hump on the back. There! Crying out, he jammed his sword downward, and shoved it deep into the back of the mechanical death machine. Watching as sparks flied out like a torch to steel, the creature began twitching violently, and finally had its legs give out from under it as it collapsed. "That's it!" Vergil shouted. "Great find, Axel!" he called over.

Triste's opponent began seizing violently as well, and it too fell to the ground. "It's the weak spot on the back!" Vergil yelled, sliding down off the circular body before running towards the other three that were still up and standing, and still very much a threat.

Tony tensed up as Soren mentioned the food. "Well... Mace was eating and drinking too... I didn't see the harm. Why?" the ferret asked now, looking down the hallway to make sure they were still alone. "I mean... Mace Sardolemuel is I'd say one of the more honorable CEOs of the Big Four, or at least, that's the impression I got. You don't think..." Tony trailed off here, hoping their suspicions weren't true. He felt fine so far...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 26, 2014, 12:28:53 AM**

Soren narrowed his eyes. "I dunno. Anything's possible here. But either way, something just feels 'off' to me." He pulled out his smartphone and checked the time.

"Speaking of which, we should return before Mace gets suspicious."

The duo made their way back to the boardroom. "After you," the Human said, stepping aside to let his "superior" through first.

Marion was positioned inside one of the watchtowers that ringed one of many manufacturing plants owned by Zaloga Cybernetics. Next to her was Morris Ailee, a Baseline Shorthair Feline. Like her, he was clad in a helmet, ballistic vest and carried LR-24 magnetic accelerator rifle. Topping the gate and high, electrified walls were coils of electrified concertina wire.

"Slow day, today," Morris said, peering through his comp-noculars. For fun, he locked onto a hoverbike that screamed through the airways with a frameflyer in pursuit.

"Don't tempt fate," Marion replied. She kept her steely gaze on the road to the factory. The Human was sitting at a desk that allowed her to remotely control the .30 caliber machine gun turrets that flanked the gate.

"Oh come on, the last time we had a major issue was three days ago when we caught those Derami Enterprises saboteurs at one of railyards."

"Don't. Remind. Me." The words were spoken between gritted teeth. That particular incident earned her a commendation and a 35,000 credit bonus...and a busted right arm that had been locked in the "open" configuration, exposing the deadly blade.

(OOC - comp-noculars are binoculars that combine a rangefinder and zoom functions as well as video recording and still picture recording function. Expensive models have night vision, infrared, UV, HUD displays and even echolocation/sonar capabilities.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 27, 2014, 03:58:49 AM**

Triste grunted as she yanked the knife from the back of the machine, sparks flying upwards towards her face. Looking across the room, she could see there were still three more up and about. Leaping off, she sprinted behind Vergil towards them.

From under the body of the machine he'd 'killed', Axel could feel the ground vibrating slightly as one of the others approached. If he was spotted, he'd be as good as dead. Swearing, Axel started to crawl out from beneath his cover, and he was almost free... when an explosion from nearby rocked the circular body of the machine, rolling it over and down onto his leg, pinning him down. Axel yelled, leaning back to try and push it off but it was much too heavy. Around him, canon fire continued to explode as the others battled the machines. He struggled to pull himself free, his fingers scratching against the floor's smooth surface as they tried to find purchase. Suddenly, there was a mechanical whirring behind him. The rat turned over apprehensively. Standing over him, another machine stared down at him. The eye focused on Axel, and it raised one of its legs with the point angled downwards.

Axel gasped and pulled out his gun, aiming it up at the robot and desperately pulling the trigger repeatedly. The gun just clicked uselessly - he'd already spent all the bullets on the last one. "Oh, son of a bitch..." The machine darted the razor edge of the spike down at him and Axel cried out, throwing up his arms pointlessly.

Triste rocketed out of nowhere, slamming into the side of the machine's leg and throwing off its aim. The spike crashed into the ground next to Axel's head. Holding onto the leg, Triste wrapped her limbs around and shimmied up to the top of the body. Yelling, she sliced through the robot's neck-like structure, then stabbed the power source on its back repeatedly. It jerked, then started to fall too. She jumped off and landed next to Axel as the machine hit the floor with a crash.

Axel blinked up at her, his ears splayed. "Holy shit... thanks..." Triste rolled her eyes at him and darted off. The rat struggled around. "Hey, wait! I'm still stuck here!" he cried.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 27, 2014, 07:03:21 AM**

Marita had found the weak point on the machines and had felled one with a volley of well-placed shots. she was headed towards the other pair which were still standing.Rose heard Axel's cries and had cut back towards him, reaching him in about a minute. ' these things mean business dont they ?' she said, reaching under the machine and began straining to lift it off Axel enough so he could get out from under it. Marie was climbing up one of the two surviving machines. she had snuck up behind it and jumped onto it while it was distracted by the others. once she reached the weak point in its back, she opened fire, sending 4 bullets into the machine and causing it to stop with a shudder, wobble then fall forward with a loud crash and kick up a row of sparks as pieces of the machine snapped off on impact and rolled away ' just one left' she called out to the others as she landed safely in front of the defeated creature.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 27, 2014, 12:34:57 PM**

Vergil could see Rose struggling to lift the machine off of Axel (and good luck with the weight these things must be), so he helped her out by throwing out his hand and lifting the dead weight up slightly telekinetically as he ran, and then shoving it backwards a bit, giving Axel hopefully enough time to scramble out from underneath.

OK... just the one left... but Marie handled it, though in the chaos of the moment, she accidentally announced there was one left, but there wasn't. All six had gone down at this point. Panting, Vergil was finally able to skid to a halt, and refocused on moving the rest of the machine off Axel, picking it up again with his mind and moving it further off the rat. "Whew! Well... that's one challenge down! Two to go!" he announced. "You all right, Axel? Anything broken?" the gecko asked as he began walking over and extinguished his blade.

He noted now that the two side doors were open and available for inspection, and could also see another computer console apiece in each room. "Hmmm... wonder if these are the two remaining challenges." he stated thoughtfully aloud. "Maybe we should divide up and take 'em both at once." he suggested, glancing down at Axel now.

Up above, Tony nodded, and pulled out his phone as he thought of something last minute. He didn't know if Zaloga had cameras monitoring their parking lots, but he wasn't going to take any chances. He couldn't leave the Daimler loaded with weapons sitting outside for long, so it was time to change cars. Fortunately, he had a service back home for this, and promptly dialed it.

Upon getting an answer on the other end, Tony spoke quickly as they walked. "Hi. I'm gonna need the Daimler to be picked up and brought back to the garage. I'll need a replacement car ready for me at Zaloga though. Let's make it the... Delage." Tony settled on, going with one of his father's luxury French brands. "As soon as you can, OK? Thanks." Hanging up, Tony knew they'd drive the Delage out for him, leave it at Zaloga, and take the Daimler back with one of the spare sets of keys. Of course, Tony could unlock any of his cars by inputting a code on his phone, so he didn't have to worry about them locking the keys in the Delage when they dropped it off.

Reentering Mace's meeting area, Tony wrapped a smile back on his face and sat down. "All right... now that that's out of the way... let's get back to business." Tony recommenced the conversation with Mace, being a tad more aggressive here now that they were down to the nitty-gritty details, and waiting for Soren's phone to "ring."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 27, 2014, 01:09:04 PM**

Just give us a couple minutes to recuperate' rose said beathing heavily as she took a seat on the ground. Marita and Marie came up to them ' nice work guys' Marita said. vergil i'm going to need you to have me trabslate the two challenges into English and give us an idea of what we will be facing. I'll translate the one to the left first-v we can have a few folks tackle that- then i'll translate the right.' She Said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 28, 2014, 03:32:29 AM**

Triste moved up to stand with the group as Axel pulled himself upright and put weight on his leg gingerly. "No, I think everything's alright... Ah crap!" He bent down for a closer inspection.

"Are you hurt?" Triste demanded. If he was, it could be a serious liability to the group.

Axel straightened. "I broke a shoelace." Kicking the shell of one of the machines, he made his way across and peered into one of the side rooms cautiously. Given what the previous one had summoned, the consoles in these rooms now seemed positively ominous. "Call me crazy, but if that was the first challenge, I've got a bad feeling about the rest of them..." He swallowed. "But hey, what's a Monday if there aren't giant killer robots trying to murder you?" Axel turned. "Splitting up *would* save us time, I guess."

Sheathing her knife, Triste nodded. "Agreed. Seems like three for each room would be fair." She glanced at the three women. "I take it you don't want to split up? If that's the case, that makes the second team Vergil, Whent and me." Triste looked at the gecko. "Unless you had other ideas?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 28, 2014, 03:30:29 PM**

Soren took notes and listened as Mace and Tony negotiated the finer points of their potential business deal.

It was then his phone went off. "Excuse me," he said, rising from his seat and exiting the meeting room.

He entered the bathroom and looked around to ensure that no one was coming. Satisified that all was clear, he took out the phone and texted Axel and the others: "*Tony's in meeting with Mace. Status down there?*.

He then switched over to the Internet browser, checking the local news.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 28, 2014, 04:27:16 PM**

Vergil was only breathing slightly heavier than normal, his body still in good shape despite having been in that tank for who knows how long. He regarded Marita in profile as she suggested she translate the other two consoles. "You translated the master console, so I don't think any further translation is necessary. But I'll let you know if it is or not." he informed her.

Vergil chuckled at the joke Axel made after initially letting concern wash over him at the prospect of the rat being injured. "Heheh... oh no! Not the shoelaces!" he exclaimed, smiling here. "How are your shoes gonna stay on now?"

Triste interrupted him with a question about who should go where. "Uh... nope! That sounds good to me!" Vergil responded, nodding. "We'll take the one on the right, and you girls can take the left-hand one." the gecko suggested.

Leading the way, he stepped into the door on the right hand side. He was acutely aware of something above him, and shifted his gaze upward, noticing hundreds of gleaming bodies above him. Even in the dim light, they were unmistakable. He froze in his tracks, his eyes wide as he gazed up at the shiny ceiling. Hundreds of those robots they'd just fought were above them, but not moving... they almost appeared like they were sleeping. They didn't seem to react to his presence either, and Vergil immediately surmised that they only activated as part of the first challenge, and it certainly explained how this place had plenty to challenge potential seekers of the warship. Gulping, Vergil inched forward, but still got no reaction. "I guess... they only wake up on certain triggers." the gecko stated nervously. "Still... let's not make any sudden moves." he suggested.

He closed his eyes, trying to remember this and yes... it did ring very familiar with him. He felt certain he was right about this. He wasn't sure how... he just knew. Approaching the console cautiously, he touched it, and it sprang to life. A foreign language quickly dissolved into English as Vergil read the screen.

Greetings, traveler. Only the worthy my proceed. Answer the question and proceed on your quest: What three biomes most support life?

Oceanic
Desert
Volcanic
Arboreal
Grassland
Tundra

Vergil smiled here. "Heheh, a biology lesson it seems. I guess the Retarans valued uh... biomes?" he asked here. "Anyway, I'm guessing oceanic, arboreal, and grassland. What do you guys think?" he asked, looking behind him now, and then glancing warily upwards.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 28, 2014, 05:18:05 PM**

marita followed trieste suggestion and turned her attention to the left console and headed over there ' the question it asked was similar to the question asked on the right, but with one big difference... "which three biomes support death?" Marita said staring at Rose and Marie as they crowded around to look at the possible answers ' volcano' marie said holding up a finger ' because when one erupts it destroys anything in its path' ok that makes sense marita said punching it in. desert' Rose said ' especially if you get lost iin it. ' there are hot and cold deserts, but yeah thats another' marita saisd selecting it, and for her last selectuion she picked tundra ' it gets to 100 below in parts od the arctic. you get caught out there without protection you're dead within a few minutes.' marita said and presed the button for that, and waited for the console to reply. the three girls looked up at the hordes of quiet machines above them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 28, 2014, 06:30:00 PM**

Axel followed Vergil and Triste into the room, grimacing as he followed Vergil's gaze and took in the mass of robotic bodies above them. "Holy crap..."

Triste folded her arms as she thought over the question posed by the console. "Sounds about right," she nodded at Vergil's answer, keeping her voice low. "Tundra, volcanic and desert biomes would offer more extreme conditions, so..." She looked over at Axel. "What do you think?"

The rat tore his eyes from above and blinked at her. "Erm."

After a pause, she muttered, "You don't know what any of it means, do you?"

"Not enough to risk, like, a million machines dropping on us."

Triste sighed. "Would it kill you to open a textbook every now and then?"

"Hey! Biology was never my... you know, thing," Axel hissed. "You two sound like you know what you're talking about. Go for it." At that moment, Axel's phone chirped happily as a text message came through. The beep echoed around at the room, and Axel felt his fur stand on end as he snapped his neck upwards, expecting to be met with a deathly hail of cannon fire. But it seemed like the machines were still inactive. Letting his breath out slowly, he looked down at the two geckos and grinned sheepishly. "Guess I should put this thing on silent..."

Triste gritted her teeth and resisted the urge to slice his head off.

Pulling his phone out, Axel read the text from Soren and quickly tapped out a reply. *Big killer death machines down here, but we're all okay. Looks like we're getting close. Place is weird as* *hell. Keep safe, should be done soon.*

"Oceanic, arboreal, and grassland," Triste said, turning back to Vergil and shaking her head. "It has to be those." Even so, she kept a claw on the hilt of her knife, cautious of a trick to the question.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 28, 2014, 06:36:34 PM**

The phone buzzed as Soren recieved the text. He exited the web browser and read the text.

He then texted Tony. "*Others okay. Fought machines. Think they're getting close.*"

Flushing the toilet to divert suspicion, he pocketed the phone and washed his hands. A Fruit Bat businessman exited the other stall and washed his hands as well. Soren avoided eye contact as he deliberately took his time in washing his hands. It worked; the man left.

That finished, Soren exited the bathroom and returned to the meeting room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 28, 2014, 09:13:17 PM**

"All right... let's go with it." Vergil stated, and pushed down on the three choices. The options disappeared, and the words on the screen appearing now read "Congratulations. The worthy may proceed." The console shut off, and while there was a tense moment before when Axel's phone went off, it didn't seem to disturb the mechs above them, fortunately.

On the other side of the room, opposite Axel, Vergil and Triste, the trio's answer was also correct, and the console deactivated. The middle doors began to grind open now, a deep rumbling sounding as they parted and started to slide away from each other. "Hey! I think that did it!" Vergil exclaimed, moving out of the side room and towards the center now. "Good work!" he called over to the girls, and began walking towards the center doors. Inside, he could see what looked like a holographic projector which matched the one from his memory, and the white gecko couldn't help but to smile widely at it. "Excellent! I think this is it!" he declared, growing excited as he quickened his pace.

The projector suddenly sprang to life, and a decent sized projection of the planet Earth was suspended above then now, blinking to life slowly as various continents were mapped with thousands of dots to create images. As the map came into being, it started to rotate, much like the Earth. Vergil narrowed his eyes, and noted the emergence of four red dots, bright and prominent upon four separate locations of the globe.

One was in the deserts of Egypt, but not near the famed Great Pyramids. Instead, it was further south, in Upper Egypt, and might even possibly be in the Nubian Desert. The second appeared in the jungles of South America, and Vergil had to guess it was around Bolivia or Peru; he wasn't great on geography of that region of the planet. The third was located in a remote region of the Atlantic, about midway between Brazil and Africa. Finally, the fourth one was over in southern China, and if Vergil had to guess, he'd say Hong Kong.

"OK... yes... I remember this now... we got the first one... all five will reveal the location of Torment's Cataract... now... I remember we get to select one at each waypoint... but only one. The coordinates will be revealed, and then the map shuts off. So... the question is... where do you guys want to go next? We can select any one of these... but only one. We'll need to go to all four eventually, but we need to start somewhere. Now if I recall... I've been to the ones in Egypt, South America, and the Atlantic. I can't recall anything about the Chinese one, so I'm unsure if I've been out there or not. It's possible that's the one Rex didn't locate before he was killed. So yeah... what's it gonna be, guys? Any preferences?"

The globe continued to slowly spin in front of them, doing nothing until it was interacted with.

"By the way, who sent the text message?" Vergil asked Axel here, raising his brow.

Up above, Tony received Soren's text, and knew he'd have to start wrapping this up. Machines? Damn... it must be serious down there. "Ahem..." he nodded as Soren reentered. "Well, Mace. I think we're getting down to the final details. I'd be willing to go at a rate of 35% of the expected cargo value, plus you cover tolls and fees. In return, you get clean shipments, no questions asked, and of course, the added bonus of having the mob come down on anyone who screws with your shipments. Wouldn't be anyone alive out there who'd be willing to touch your stuff after that, what with your power and our power joined. What do you say?"

Mace frowned here thoughtfully, and tapped a finger on the glass table. "Well..." he said, trailing off.

"I'll throw in a 5% discount for the first three months as a sign-up bonus to give you an idea if you like it or not! How's that?" Tony quickly put in, seeing Mace was hedging.

The gecko continued to hesitate, and then finally nodded. "Deal!" He reached across the table, and Tony shook his hand firmly.

"Excellent! You won't regret it! My aide will present you with the necessary documents to sign. Thanks for the consideration! It'll be a real pleasure doing business with you!" Tony looked over at Soren here. "Let the others know the deal was a 'success.'" Tony stated, giving the human a look the ferret hoped he would catch. The others being everyone down below, as Tony would of course be breaking the news to his family himself.

Aboard the *Red Castle*, Kalis stood on the bridge of his mighty flagship with narrowed eyes, gazing out into the sky as he plotted his next moves. He needed to get his hands on two things: the warship at Torment's Cataract, and Agent Triste Acyle. These two things would ensure his total victory over the Federation's forces, but so far, both had eluded his grasp.

Suddenly, Admiral Carrack was beside him. "Lord Kalis." Carrack began. "The tracking device we installed on the waypoint under Zaloga has activated. Someone's accessing the waypoint as we speak."

Kalis's interest suddenly rose, and he looked over at his fleet admiral now. "Really? It's been years... any information on who is doing the accessing?" Kalis inquired, his eyes alight with fire now.

"Mostly unknown neural signatures, but one in particular has a 95% chance of being Agent Triste Acyle." Carrack responded, glancing down at his datapad.

Kalis's breath came out in a wheezing exhale of satisfaction, and he nodded. "Gooooood!" He clasped his hands together in front of his chest. "Find out where she's going next... I'll dispatch one of my newest and brightest to hunt her down."

"And the others?" Carrack asked.

"They'll be killed. They're of no use to me." Kalis said dismissively, waving his hand. "This is perfect... I can kill two birds with one stone. Summon Varanus. I want him here within a day." Kalis ordered.

"Yes, my lord." Carrack bowed his head respectfully, and headed off to complete the order. Kalis shifted his gaze back out the front viewports. If his mouth wasn't concealed by that metallic lower jaw, he'd be grinning right now. But as it was, he settled for an intense look forward, towards what he knew was his destiny.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 28, 2014, 09:41:40 PM**

Which one is the closest?' Marita asked " we'll go to that one.. ' she looked at the map ' the South American one is in Peru near the Bolivian border, which means its in very thick jungle.. i prpose we go there.. how long would it take for us to reach South America?" she asked vetrgil " south america sounds fine to me.. one step at a time i say" marie said.'vergil' why dont you press the location, and get the coordinates?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 28, 2014, 10:30:20 PM**

(Zaloga Cybernetics company HQ)

Soren opened the briefcase and presented the papers to Mace. He glanced at Tony.

As he watched Mace look over the papers. He hoped that things hadn't gone horribly wrong down there.

(Corona streets near Zaloga Cybernetics Manufacturing Plant #21)

A klaxon wailed as Marion and a Baseline Cheetah sprinted after a saboteur. While Mace was negotiating a deal with Tony, a few *Bak Long* 49'ers had managed to bypass the factory's defenses by having frame-flyers fly underneath the elevated platform the factory was on and using plasma cutters to cut through the concrete floor. Once they were in, they proceed to plant explosives.

Marion looked around. She raised her rifle and fired a few shots at the 49er who was flying above them, using the elevated walkways and highways for cover. The bullets sliced one of the flying frame's control lines, causing him to careen into the side of a building ó with messy and fatal results.

Marion slung her rifle across her back and sighed as she activated the throat mike in he uniform. "We killed one suspect."

Her prosthetic feet began to reconfigure themselves from a metallic "hoof" into something that resembled a a Human foot clad in a combat boot.

She sighed and began to lope back to the factory, the actuators on her robotic feet morphing them back into a hoof as she picked up speed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 29, 2014, 09:26:49 AM**

"It was Soren," Axel answered Vergil as he stared at the globe spinning in front of them. "Sounds like the meeting's going okay." He rubbed his chin then shook his head. "I have no idea where we should go first, but... maybe for now it'd be safer to go somewhere you remember. Save the one in China for when we're more... I dunno, prepared." He shrugged his shoulders. "South America sounds as good as any to me."

"Makes no difference to me. We'll need to visit each in any case." Triste dropped her gaze from the globe to Vergil. "I'll go with the majority." ***Mission is a success so far. We've found four more locations which are going to help us locate the Cataract.***

Excellent. And his memories?

Still fragmented. Don't worry - I'll keep it that way. Triste cocked her head at Vergil. "So, South America then?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 29, 2014, 08:12:25 PM**

"What the hell! South America it is!" Vergil declared, noting the decision seemed to be unanimous. He selected the dot, and immediately, coordinates appeared on the screen, blooming up like flowers as Vergil quickly snapped a photo with his phone. "That's it... all right..." he said softly, watching as the map faded and shrank back down into the projector. "One down... four to go!" he exclaimed. "Guess we can bounce our way around to the others, and find out where the final resting place of the ship lies."

"All right... let's get the hell out of here." Vergil suggested, and turned to begin making his way back to the elevator. "I don't know about you guys, but this is one creepy place. If I recall... I don't think the one in the jungle is like this. I think it was something different. We'll find out when we get there, though. I'll let Tony know we're good to go down here."

Mace looked the documents over, and began signing after showing them to an attorney that suddenly appeared out of seemingly nowhere. Tony affixed his own signature to the papers, and it was a done deal. "Great! Well then, on behalf of my father, it was a pleasure, Mr. Sardolemuel. We'll start shipments in one week's time! Thank you so much for your hospitality; it was overwhelming!" the ferret stated, heartily shaking Mace's hand.

"Well it was the least I could do for the Straccis." Mace responded, smiling warmly. Tony's phone began ringing, and he politely excused himself as he let Soren collect the papers. "Excuse me for a moment..." he said, holding up a claw. He saw it was Vergil. "Yeah?" he asked, being vague.

"We're done down here. Got the coordinates for the next waypoint. Meet you out front." The gecko's deeper voice sounded in his ear, and Tony smiled for effect.

"Great! See you see soon! Everything went smooth here! Looking forward to catching up!" The ferret hung up, and nodded at Soren. "Well Mr. Sardolemuel, I'm afraid I have a previous engagement, but we'll be in touch!"

Several minutes later, all concerned were once more out in the parking lot. Tony's Daimler had been replaced by a gorgeous silver 1937 Delage D8-120 (http://files.conceptcarz.com/img/Delage/37_Delage_D8-120SS_DV-07_AI-03.jpg). The weapons were now gone, just in case Zaloga monitored its lot. Vergil brought Tony and Soren up to speed on what had happened below the building, and Tony listened in almost disbelief at the story. "Jeez... glad I wasn't down there." the ferret commented. "Not of course to say you guys couldn't take care of yourselves... but still. So... South America?"

"Uh-huh. I'm gonna plug in the coordinates and find out exactly where we need to go." Vergil informed the ferret.

"Well I can arrange transportation, no problem on that end. Speaking of which..." Tony grinned here and motioned to the Delage. "Anyone need a ride home?"

"Heh, I'll think about it." Vergil replied, wanting to give some others priority if they really wanted to ride in the fancy car. "Hey Axel... what's Lily gonna do?" the gecko asked, turning to the rat now.

Up in his penthouse, Mace Sardolemuel received a security call from his chief coordinator. "Sir... it seems someone accessed the lower level."

"What?" Mace gasped, surprised at this revelation. "Who?"

"We're not sure, but looking at the records, we think it may have been a team masquerading as a security check on our systems... which we haven't authorized for today, by the way. Whoever they were... they were good. Their badges checked out and everything."

"Goddamn government pukes!" Mace replied acidly, gnashing his teeth. "They'd be the only ones capable of pulling something like that off! Get me their faces on the security feed!" he ordered, and in seconds, the team's faces sprang up before him on a ceiling mounted HUD. Three dogs, a spider gecko, an augmented rat, and a white gecko with... wait were those feathers? Squinting, Mace narrowed his eyes at that last picture. "What the hell?" Mace asked. This was only the second time in his life he'd seen feathers on a gecko. And eerily enough, this gecko seemed... familiar to him somehow, but Mace couldn't place him. He was positive he'd never seen this particular gecko before recently. But there was something else Mace found disconcerting about his face, and he wanted to rule his suspicions out. "OK..." Mace replied into his headset. "I think I've got a new project for you to work on..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2014, 08:41:42 PM**

We'll take you up on the offer tony' Rose said " we need to get packing for the trip. When are we leaving?" she asked ' cause Marie Has the card tournament tomorrow.' that usually goes for 3 days. although only the really well scored dealers stay past day 2' Marie said, ' so hopefully by friday, i'll be free and clear..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 29, 2014, 08:49:58 PM**

Tony tried hard to suppress a smile here. "And what about the car you came in?" he asked, motioning to the car Marita had driven the trio here today with. "Surely you don't intend to just leave that here. I know my wheels are nice but, hopefully not so nice you'd sacrifice your own ride." he joked. "I meant more for those who didn't have transportation coming here. However... if one of you would like to ride with me that's fine." he offered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2014, 09:12:58 PM**

Oops right" Rose said, slightly embarrassed. " thank you tony, some other time" She said with a smile. The Girls climbed into their car and drove off, heading back to their apartment to get ready for the trip to South America. marie practiced her card dealing in the back, while marita drove .

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 29, 2014, 09:37:03 PM**

(Zaloga Cybernetics HQ parking lot)

"You're fucking kidding me," Soren said, shaking his head in disbelief. "You fought battle droids a few thousand feet below where Tony and I were negotiating business deals?"

He then let out a whistle at the mention of a trip to South America. "Well, if that's what it takes." Inwardly, he knew that most of South America was *de facto* owned by a few large mining conglomerates. And these conglomerates were not above literal hostile takeovers ó and civilians were often caught in the middle.

(Zaloga Cybernetics Manufacturing Plant #21)

Marion fumed as she undid the latches of the suitcase containing her company issued flying frame.

Soon a blinking green light appeared on the suitcase and two footprints were projected on the hard tile floor of the armory.

The Human Augment stepped into the footprint and the frame began to unpack itself, matte grey struts and tubes emerged from the suitcase and began to encase her in a metallic shell.

After a minute, Marion was inside a skeletal framework of metallic struts. Folded against her back were two metallic wings with engines and manuevering thrusters at the tips. Two more engines were at foot level. Her flight helmet was already on.

She casually loped out of the entrance and onto the sidewalk. Her wings unfolded and with a roar and a whoosh, she shot into the sky, leaving behind a small section of scorched concrete. And in total defiance of a nearby sign that read: "No takeoff zone".

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 30, 2014, 03:41:55 AM**

Axel frowned, rubbing a hand through his hair as Tony mentioned Lily. "Ah... that's going to be complicated. I mean, I guess she's going to stay..." He knew now wasn't the time to go through the problem in detail, but he felt the group deserved at least some explanation. He looked at Soren. "Remember that time, back in Lanthae, when we saw someone claiming to be her husband on the TV? Well, it... turns out that was true, and now one of her kids is missing. And to top it off, her husband is a *complete freaking psycho*." He bit his lip. "And there's that other kid who was staying with us... Shit. I need to talk to her." Axel looked at the ferret and nodded. "A ride would be good."

Triste shrugged and turned away, apparently not too interested in the rat's problem. Starting to walk away, she pulled out a small, torn piece of paper with a number on it and placed it on the Delage's bonnet as she passed, tapping it with a claw. "Here's my details. I'll be preparing. See you all soon," she called over her shoulder as she made her way over to her motorbike and hopped on. Gunning the engine, she looked back at the group. "If any of you need anything, you can contact me. If it's important enough, I'll see what I can do." It was directed as if to the group as a whole, but her eyes flickered over to Vergil as she said it. Raising a hand in a lazy wave, she pulled away, shooting out of the parking lot and speeding away out of sight.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 30, 2014, 05:22:43 PM**

"Yeah, believe it or not. Battle droids came to life and attacked us. Pretty sophisticated security for an ancient civilization." Vergil chuckled here. He nodded as Triste caught his gaze for a moment, and gave her a small wave as well, watching her speed off. "Uh... hate to ask then, but I guess I could use a ride too." Vergil confessed. "I'll take backseat though... I'm smaller and Axel can stretch out in the front."

"Not a problem." Tony replied, shaking his head.

Walking over to the Delage, Vergil picked up Triste's contact information and stowed it away in his pocket. He opened the driver's side door and folded down the seat so he could slide into the back. "Right, well you're getting shotgun then, Axel." Tony stated, and slid behind the wheel of the luxury French car. Sliding the key into the ignition, the ferret listened with satisfaction as the straight-eight came to life. "All right... let's get outta here before they catch on. Soren, we'll see you soon I think for South America!" the ferret suggested, and threw the car into gear to exit the parking lot as quickly as possible.

Fortunately, they weren't stopped, and the Delage was able to exit the parking lot and head for the highway, though not completely unobserved. Mace Sardolemuel was interested to learn that his new shipping partner had some strange bedfellows, what with his offering to transport government agents away from his headquarters. It was information he'd have to file away for later, as he never figured the Straccis were government sellouts, and he'd have to dig further into this to get to the bottom of it and find out if any coercion had been used or not, or if Tony Stracci had been in on the whole infiltration. He hadn't given any indication of it during the meeting, but that didn't mean anything necessarily.

The sun was beginning to set by the time Tony pulled the Delage around to Axel's street and idled in front of his house. "Well... here we are. Stay in touch, and we'll let you know where in South America we'll be heading to. Let me know what's going to be happening with Lily." Tony told the rat. "And hey... it was good to have you along today. From what Vergil told me, sounds like you guys were in a real scrape, but it was you who figured out that weak spot after all." the ferret pointed out with a nod.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 30, 2014, 06:13:01 PM**

"Well, I, ah... I guess it was about time I did *something* useful," Axel grinned, fiddling with his ear awkwardly. "But hey... we all worked well together. None of us even lost a limb! Here's hoping it'll go this well every time, huh?" He smiled again, then turned to look out the window at the house. "Alright, well.. I'm going to go explain things to Lily." He glanced back at Tony and Vergil and nodded. "When I know what's happening, I'll get in touch. See you both soon and... you know, be careful until then."

With a final nod, he got out of the Delage and shut the door behind him. Waving goodbye, Axel turned and started making his way up towards the house. He ran a hand through his hair, wondering how he was going to explain the upcoming trips. He knew it was for an important cause, but leaving her to deal with her own, huge problem by herself really put him on edge. Taking a deep breath, Axel opened the front door and stepped through. "Hey, I'm back! Anyone home?" he called into the corridor.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 30, 2014, 09:03:55 PM**

Marita and the girls made it home to their apartment safely. marita began packing for thier trip,, with things Rose And Marie might like.Rose put in a pizza in the oven and set it to bake for 15 minutes.. ' you think they suspected anything? Marie asked Marita as she folded clothes ' well, they go over each guests with a fine tooth comb.. so its likely they noticed something when we didnt come back for awhile ' fortunately we wont be headed back there anytime soon' Marita said "but i would not be surprised if Mace sends people after us ' when you take security as serious as the Big Four do, any hackings or break-ins are dealt with , shall we say, in house ' they wont turn us over to the cops, they'll deal with us personally if they catch us. which in this case, means a bullet to the base of the skull.' 'Marie shuddered " you dont make billions in revenue each quarter by being nice, you do it by crushing the competition." marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 30, 2014, 09:33:32 PM**

(Zaloga Cybernetics HQ)

Marion landed on a platform several hundred feet off the ground. The transponder in her suit caused the bulletproof dome to retract and allow her to land.

Upon landing, the wings on her flying frame retracted and folded up against her back. she took off her helmet,letting it dangle from its strap and exposing her short cropped black hair and the face of a woman in her mid-fifties...despite being only in her late 30s. The Human casually strode through a door that opened in response to the transponder in her uniform. Despite the fact that the flying frame weighed over sixty pounds, it fit so well and supported its own weight that Marion moved as if it weren't present at all.

She passed by several office workers and guards on her way to Mace's office. When she arrived, she knocked on the ornately decorated wooden door.

(Mott Place)

Soren took off his suit and pants and hung them up. He was now clad in the STF inpregnated long-sleeved shirt and track pants that kept him from injuries when working with augments and now served as impromptu armor.

"I hope that Mace didn't find out that Tony and I had other motives that weren't related to a business deal."

At Marita's words, he glanced to the rifle, armor and combat helmet in the bookcase, ready in case things went to shit. He swallowed.

"Okay, I have something very important to say. While you were visting Anne, four corporate security troopers from Serami Heavy Industries came in here and took an augment I was working with. They claimed that it had been stolen from them."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 31, 2014, 12:22:48 AM**

"I'm in the kitchen," called Lily. She had just finished a large bowl of pasta with sauce and stuck it in the middle of the table; not her greatest dinner she'd ever prepared for the two of them, but she'd had a rather long day. "How has your day been?" she smiled.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 31, 2014, 03:08:50 AM**

Axel smiled and hugged her, kissing the top of her head. "Hey." He looked down at the table and saw the pasta she'd prepared. "Aw, you didn't have to. We could have ordered something in." He paused. "As long as it wasn't from that Italian place up the road. That didn't... go down so well last time." Shuddering, Axel sat down at the table and sighed. "Eh, today was... different..." Haltingly, he started to explain what had happened. About how they were trying to find the location of the Cataract, and how today they'd managed to determine the first clue of its location. He left out the part that included killer machines trying to rip him apart, deciding that probably wasn't something that would calm her down.

"So... I'm going to need to go away for a bit. The coordinates pointed us to somewhere in South America so, ah..." Axel reached across the table and touched her hand, then swallowed. "But how did it go for you? Did you find anything to go on? Where's Rio? Is Emilena still as, ah..." The rat tried to pick the right word. "...Intense?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 31, 2014, 05:16:29 AM**

"She is her same insane self..." Lily shook her head. "Drugged up and psychotic, and her gang is some of the most eclectic people I've ever met. Rio stayed with them, he wants to join, and somehow everyone seems warm to the idea."

She grabbed another serving of pasta. "I will give Emilena one thing; she's got this gang of hers wrapped around her finger. She had this stupidly convoluted plan to break into the army recruitment center to get information on Ejlert, and the whole thing somehow worked like a charm. We found out he was rejected by the Air Force for flat feet, but his cockpit evaluation demonstrated extensive prior flight training. Emilena only knows one other place where someone could get flight training for free. Kalis..."

She took a deep breath. "I think you and I might be searching for the same thing. Is there room for one more person on that flight to South America?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 31, 2014, 05:31:51 AM**

((Sorry for briefness, but not much time!))

Mace heard the knock on his door, and an augment in his brain allowed the door to open seamlessly. "Come in." he ordered warmly. "May I offer you a drink of something?" he asked Marion, motioning with his hand to a table of refreshments, including alcohol.

Vergil was doing research back at his flat. He'd plugged in the coordinates, the blue of the monitor bathing his white face in eerie light, and his expression was twisting into confusion as he saw where exactly the waypoint was located. "Ohhhhh man." he murmured, studying the exact position of the waypoint on the map. Well... this would make things... interesting.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 31, 2014, 05:58:23 AM**

"No thank you, sir," Marion replied. She sat down in a chair and looked at Mace. "I had recieved reports of an infiltrator in the headquarters. What are my orders with regards to them?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 31, 2014, 04:28:41 PM**

"You... you're going to come with us?" Axel asked, taken aback. He knew where they were going could, or more likely *would* be dangerous... but then again, since her son was linked to Kalis somehow, the chances were that her own mission wouldn't be without its own dangers. And if that was the case, he was glad he'd be there for her. Axel grinned. "Well, sure! Of course there's room for you! I mean, I'm not sure where exactly in South America we're heading yet... still need to wait for word from Vergil... but I'm happy you're coming. And you know I'll do whatever I can to help you."

"Oh!" Axel blinked. "I just need to let Tony know..." He pulled out his phone and dialed the ferret's number, leaving a message. "Hey Tony, it's Axel. Turns out that Lily... ah, she's actually going to be coming with us. It looks like Kalis messed with the wrong mother... anyway, let me know if Vergil finds anything more on where we'll be heading."

He hung up, then reached across for a second helping of the pasta, feeling a lot better. "So, Rio's staying with Emilena's gang?" he said, chewing. "Doesn't seem like the most, ah... child-friendly place to be..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 31, 2014, 05:13:18 PM**

Marita looked at Soren."its quite possible it was in fact stolen. laundering augments is big business. better to let then think you didnt know it was hot, and it got to you by mistake.. as for Mace, well i dont think it would be wise for any of us to go back there, any time soon. they have cameras all over the place, so its likely they have images of us now. this is why i prefer to do business - electronically, shall we say.. nothing to put a face to. if i were you Soren, we're going to need to bring your stuff with us . we had to fight 6 murderous machines, that was a small taste of whats to come..i have no idea what the next waypoint has in store, but i'd guess things are only going to get harder going fiorward.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 31, 2014, 08:39:26 PM**

Mace swirled a drink around in his hand, and studied it, as if it fascinated him. "I'm downloading profiles to your phone, but the one you need to focus on is the lead infiltrator: the white gecko with the feathers. I suspect he's a government agent so... no messy interrogations... or any interrogation really until you can ascertain who he is. You are to follow him, and try and learn as much as you can. If he's not government... bring him in... if he is... await further orders." Mace instructed her.

"I have personal reasons as well for not wanting him harmed... I'm sure I've seen him somewhere before... I just can't place him. Until I remember or you find out for me... just make sure no harm comes to him, understood? And DON'T make it obvious that you're with Zaloga, got it? Do you think you can handle this?" Mace asked her now, looking over at her as he took a sip. "This assignment requires a certain degree of... discretion after all. I'm not out to antagonize the Federation after all, but I need to know why they're suddenly interested in me... or if it was just to find..." he hesitated here, not finishing that sentence. "Anyway, are you up for this?"

Tony got off the phone with Vergil, an ashen look on his face. "Shit...!" he exclaimed slowly, now knowing where they were heading. Looking down at his phone for a moment, the ferret dialed Axel, who he'd gotten a message from a few minutes ago. As soon as the rat picked up, Tony began speaking. "Axel, it's Tony. I know where we're heading... but you're not gonna like it. The second waypoint is uh... in a really remote region that you can really only reach down the Camino de la Muerte or... the Death Road. The North Yungas Road in Bolivia. There's really no other way to get to it. And it's OFF the damn road, so we're gonna have to do some jungle trekking it seems." Tony explained, letting that sink in for Axel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 01, 2014, 02:58:59 AM**

"The North Yungas Road?" Axel wrinkled his face. "Sounds familiar... hang on." He put the call on hold for a second and flicked onto his phone's internet. "He says we have to get to it through Death Road," he reported to Lily across the table as he searched for it. Axel snorted. "What's so deadly about a road?" Then he found pictures, and his face dropped like a bag of rocks - or, potentially, like him over the edge of the road. "Well... that's actually pretty deadly..." he croaked after a pause.

He re-connected with Tony. "Oh no. This might not be the thing you want to hear but, ah... well, I'm not exactly the best with heights. Actually, that's being generous. I'm really, really bad with heights," Axel groaned, turning a sickly expression to Lily. "But hey, maybe this could help me overcome it. Maybe. And I'm sure the jungle trek's going to be *awesome* too. Ah, thanks for letting us know anyway, Tony. Any ideas when we'd be leaving?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 01, 2014, 09:25:22 AM**

Lily silently waited patiently for Axel to finish his phone call. In her mind she was trying to picture what could possibly be so scary about Death Road, and her imagination proved more than up to the task of filling in all sorts of terrors. "Ejlert, I hope you're okay..." she murmured.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 01, 2014, 11:53:58 AM**

I'd give it two days. I'll try and secure us flights to La Paz... unless of course the Federation's paying for it, which very well may be true." he chuckled here, trying to lighten the mood. "Uh... about the fear of heights... let's not worry too much about that. I'll be driving... and you know I'm a good driver. We'll try and keep you on the side away from the cliff. And Lily's coming? Really? Well... great!" Tony was happy for the morale boost this would be for Axel, and would help to keep both of them going in fact.

"Her son... is with Kalis? Really?" the ferret was stunned by this news. Of all the forces to join when you run away from home... he picked Kalis's empire? "Hey... we'll find him then. Something tells me our quest for the waypoints isn't going to remain secret for long so... I expect to see some appearances put in by Kalis's forces at some point along the way. Anyway... I think we'll leave in two days; give everyone a chance to pack and prepare and get the households in order. I'll let you know when our flight is. I'll take some cash so we can equip ourselves down there... it's pretty much dominated by mining conglomerates, including our friend Zaloga having a presence down there as well. So yeah... we're gonna need some hardware. I'll keep in touch, OK?" he asked. "We'll accomplish both our objectives and try and find Eljert. Talk to ya soon." The ferret hung up, looking at the phone after he did, unsure about this new information, but knowing that before long, they'd be face to face with Kalis. He had no doubts about that...

On the bridge of the *Red Castle*, Kalis saw a black-scaled monitor with yellow underbelly approaching now. He too was clad in robes similar to Kalis's, but these were pure black instead of the red Kalis wore. Bowing his head respectfully to Kalis, he stood before his lord serenely, though with an intensity in his eyes. He was a killer, plain and simple, and looked as if he had no respect for life. He was a Nile monitor, and a fierce looking one at that.

"Lord Kalis, you summoned me?" the monitor asked.

"Yes, Varanus." Kalis responded. "It seems Agent Acyle is accessing the waypoints to Torment's Cataract. This is perfect... we can use this to plot her movements and take her. Remember... she must be taken alive. She is traveling with companions however... companions you may terminate. I have no use for any of them except her. And... should you fail to seize her here... we can simply use this to locate the Cataract as well."

Varanus smiled here in a deathly fashion, grinning as he bowed again. "Yes, my lord. Such a task will be... simple, I think."

"Do NOT grow overconfident!" Kalis chided him. "She's a strong opponent, and we know at least one of her companions is worthy of respect as well. Don't blindly rush into this!"

"Of course not, Lord Kalis." Varanus apologized, bowing his head again and closing his eyes.

"Good... now... assemble your team... they're going to Bolivia... I want you there." Kalis ordered, narrowing his eyes.

"As you wish... my lord." Varanus nodded, and turned to depart. from the bridge. Kalis watched him go, his eyes still narrowed. Varanus had to learn to curb his enthusiasm in some regards, as impatience would be his death if he wasn't careful. Still... he was fiery and ruthless, and was most of what Kalis looked for in a subordinate. Time would tell if he would live up to the expectations Kalis had placed on him or not.

La Paz's El Alto International Airport was a bit crowded to start the week, but as summer was right around the corner, vacationers were coming down to Bolivia to get a taste of the Amazon and enjoy the start of their breaks, as well as escape the heat. Escape the heat? La Paz was up in the mountains, making it cooler than one might expect for June in Bolivia. Heading downhill on the North Yungas Road would be another story, as they'd be getting closer and closer to the sweltering jungle the further down that road they traveled, but for now, Tony wasn't going to knock on the pleasant weather here in the capital. Temperatures stood at an almost chilly 60 degrees, but Tony knew that would go up the further downhill they went.

Vergil found he rather liked the climate of La Paz, and thought that South America was nothing but a hellhole of a jungle before this, so he was pleasantly surprised to find he was wrong. "Well... this isn't half bad." Vergil commented with a smile as he picked up his bag from baggage claim.

"Not half bad at all!" Tony responded. "Hey Axel, want to go rent a vehicle with me? I think we'll be needing something all-terrain and big enough to hold everyone. Just a shame I couldn't import one of my cars down here." the ferret joked. "Still, we might even need to make it two vehicles since we have uh..." Tony did a mental count real quick, "Nine with us now. Probably WILL need two vehicles in fact."

Vergil unzipped his bag and retrieved the GPS out of it. He'd programmed it before they'd left with the coordinates of the waypoint, and he powered it on again to make sure the thing was working. "Hmm.... so it's about an hour's drive down the highway towards the North Yungas Road and from there... another hour and a half to two hours to the waypoint... depending on how fast we go... which I doubt will be very fast given that road's... layout." the gecko stated, tapping his chin with a big bulbous finger.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 01, 2014, 03:05:00 PM**

Soren shivered as the cold air bit through the short sleeves and shorts he wore. He knew Bolivia would be hot and humid. Except he had counted on being in the jungle, not high in the mountains.

He looked around the airport. Snatches of rapid-fire Spanish punctuated the air as artisans hawked locally made crafts and cuisine. Tourists mingled with people in business suits and obviously armed soldiers (probably from one of the many mining conglomerates that had a stake in the country). He was well aware that while the nations and governments existed, they were pretty much government in name only. The mining conglomerates were so powerful that they pretty much became the *de facto* government.

"Well," he said, leaning on his luggage. "Shall we get going?

A few meters away, a middle-aged Chinese woman dressed in a long sleeved shirt reading "Jungle Sky Tours" and shorts was apparently playing with her cell phone.

Thanks to the advanced directional microphone in it, she had recorded Vergil's every word. She had also taken his picture and matched it with the photo Mace had uploaded to her phone.

Marion smiled. She could easily beat the group to North Yungas Road. All she had to do was get her luggage with its flying frame and other gear. It had been an easy task to get them into

Bolivia. All she had to do was pose as an extreme sports junkie. The augments helped as it led people to assume she had lost her limbs in various extreme sports misadventures.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 01, 2014, 03:23:41 PM**

Axel looked around the airport and took a deep breath, enjoying the crowded atmosphere, the loud voices, the energy of the place. Shrugging his bag, which contained such life-saving essentials as plasters and bug spray, further onto his shoulder he turned to Lily. "This place seems nice! Maybe when this is all over, and your kids are safe and the world isn't going to be taken over by a crazy guy, we could vacation here?"

At Tony's suggestion, he turned and nodded. "Yeah, sure. Like a, a big Jeep or something?" He looked around at Soren, Marita and the others as he started to head off with Tony. "We'll be back soon, guys. Meet in the parking lot?" Axel glanced at Lily. "Want to come, hon-" He was cut off as a large, elderly man in a wheelchair rolled over his foot.

Triste looked over at Vergil and spoke up over Axel's wails of pain. "So when we get there... you have any memories of what we'll be up against? Anything at all?" Behind the dark sunglasses she wore, her eyes searched the gecko's face. Her hands were bunched into fists. Unlike Axel, the crowds made her extremely uncomfortable - it was perfect cover for anyone following them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 01, 2014, 03:31:32 PM**

Marita was wearing a summer shirt, jeans and a camera, mostly as a ruse so onlookers would think she was just a tourist. ' at least we have a wide open period now, Roses show doesn't open until November' Marita said. Both Rose and Marie were dressed for the jungle, but their fur provided insulation from the cold air. Rose had a brochure with facts about the country snd a map with roads.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 01, 2014, 08:50:52 PM**

"Dammit!" Tony exclaimed as he saw Axel's anguish. "Hey! Watch it!" he reprimanded the guy in the wheelchair, who profusely apologized to the rat. "Ugh... come on, let's try and arrange our transport." Tony said, helping the rodent for the first few feet until his foot started to feel better. "We'll try to get two Land Rovers, maybe." he suggested as they started making their way toward the rental row, as Tony liked to call it at every airport, as all rental agencies were lined up in a row typically. As it turned, Vergil's agency was paying for it, which was nice as Tony didn't have to worry about family funds... though his father wouldn't hesitate if it meant saving the world of course.

Vergil noticed Triste appeared... nervous, but whether that was just her cover or not he wasn't certain. He knew agents were trained to blend in... and she certainly was doing that. "Uh... well as far as I remember... not much." he stated. "I don't think there was much to it aside from uh... you know I can't remember, I'm sorry." he sighed, looking down, then back up at her. "You uh... all right?" he asked, noting her anxiety.

Nodding at Soren, the gecko agreed. "Yeah... let's head out to the parking lot, let the others pick us up." he suggested, pulling up the telescoping handle on his bag and beginning to roll it towards the airport exit now.

As Tony headed for one of the rental agency desks, a large monitor bumped into him. "Hey!" Tony said again, snarling a bit as the lizard brushed past him. The big fellow had a baseball cap pulled down low over his eyes, and gave an apologetic wave.

"Sorry!" he hissed, moving on without a glance backwards.

"Dammit... what is this, run into our group day?" Tony asked, shaking his head as he watched the monitor walk off, then turned to continue on his way with a sigh.

Behind him, Varanus smirked, and nodded to a group sitting around a newsstand about 50 feet away in the airport. One raised a magazine in front of him, as if he were reading, but that was the signal for acknowledgment.

Tony managed to secure rental of two Land Rovers, and as each could seat five, it was enough to carry the group. After filling out the necessary paperwork, Tony looked over at Axel and grinned. "Let's pull up and screech the brakes like we're some big important limo service in front of our group. What do you think?" he asked, teeth flashing.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2014, 06:29:30 AM**

Lily was waiting patiently for the cashier of the small funnel cake stand to return so she could buy a post-flight snack.

"Sorry for the wait, ma'am!" A perky fuchsia folf in a tight apron bounced back over, holding a round clear-plastic tin containing her food.

Lily double-taked. "Flora! What--?" Gingerly, Flora put a paw over her mouth, grinning.

"We took a lil' road trip," she whispered, "After you told us where you'd be going. Things got a bit hairy, at one point we were lucky Foley knew how to hotwire a tow truck with a pair of nail clippers--"

"I can't talk right now!" Lily interrupted, glancing surreptitiously at her teammates near the cars. "Whatever you're up to, great, let's find a way to communicate later! but I gotta go!"

Flora winked. "Stay safe. I miss you when you're gone..."

Lily walked back over to the group, slightly shaken but hiding it well. "So, I never found out why it's called the road of death, or whatever," she said through mouthfuls of dough. "What life-threatening hazards will we be facing?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 02, 2014, 07:27:19 AM**

Axel was leaning on the counter as Tony finished signing the forms. When he handed them back, Axel stood up straight and grinned back at the ferret, holding out his hand for one of the sets of keys. "You read my mind... I call dibs on the black one though. It looks cooler."

Triste glanced over at Lily as she returned from the vendor. "You haven't heard of La Carretera de los Yungas? It's a road that winds around the La Cumbre mountain pass, and... well, I'll put it this way. It's *really* narrow, and *really* high up. If whoever's driving isn't careful enough, we'll be sent plunging over the edge to our deaths. So you'd better hope that our drivers are up to it."

She looked back at Vergil as they emerged out into the parking lot. "I'm fine. Just... we're not exactly inconspicuous, and if anyone's following us, this crowd'll make it even easier for them. Keep your eyes open." Triste sighed. "As long as we don't do anything to draw attention to us, I'll feel better."

At that moment, a pair of Land Rovers roared up and screeched to a halt in front of the waiting group. The driver's window of the rear car rolled down, and Axel poked his head out, tooting the horn loudly. "Did anyone order a taxi?" he grinned, putting on a mock southern drawl. The crowd milling around all started to turn their heads towards them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2014, 09:45:06 AM**

"I'm not the best when it comes to world knowledge," Lily confessed. Losing her complete memory from before 2 months ago will do that to a person. But after what she went through to get her human body back, she couldn't see herself being particularly scared of anything.

"I don't believe we've really met," Lily held her hand out to Triste, smiling. "Axel said you were pretty awesome at Zaloga Corporations. Thanks for keeping my husband safe, he does tend to jump into things a bit over his head."

It'll be nice to get to have a girlfriend who isn't psychotic for once, she thought happily to herself. Speaking of which, she wondered where Emilena had gotten off to. She, Rio and her gang hadn't even contacted Lily after the recruitment center raid. It's quite possible they decided to make off with the money they'd already gotten.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 02, 2014, 09:49:27 AM**

Tony practically did the same, driving a light blue Land Rover right up to the group and blaring the horn at the same time Axel did. Vergil closed his eyes and dropped his head, shaking it in disbelief. There goes the not drawing attention to ourselves...

"All right, your rides are here!" Tony exclaimed, getting out to open up the trunk of the Rover so the others could load up their luggage. "And ah... we're gonna need a driver for the second Rover, since Axel's afraid of heights... and probably won't want to be doing the driving down the Yungas Road."

"Count me out." Vergil chimed in as he placed his bag into the trunk. "I can barely see over the steering wheel on most vehicles, and have a problem reaching the pedals on good days." he explained.

"Yeah well... I didn't mean you." Tony replied, looking down at the white gecko with a smile. "So yeah... any volunteers to drive one of the world's most dangerous roads?" he asked, half-joking but mostly serious. Vergil climbed into Tony's Rover and took one of the three backseats. Each Rover could sit five, so it would require five in one, four in the other.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 02, 2014, 10:14:47 AM**

I'll Drive Marita said " so who wants to ride with me she said to the others ' i'll go with the larger group " Marie said. " then that leaves besides me and Marita" rose said as she climbed in the passenger side and Marita climbed into the drivers seaty. Marie climbed in next to Vergil..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 02, 2014, 10:35:55 AM**

Vergil looked over at Marie and cleared his throat. "Ahem... don't mean to interrupt your plans, but would you mind if I sat next to Agent Acyle? I have some things I need to go over with her." he stated as politely as he could.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 02, 2014, 10:52:49 AM**

Certainly' Marie said and she moved over to the other side of the car to give Vergil and Triste some room to talk. the car had a slight smell to it, but nothing too obnoxious..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 02, 2014, 02:39:19 PM**

Triste looked at Lily's hand then shook it, returning the smile slowly. "Nice to meet you too. And you're welcome. Gets himself in over his head, you say?" She looked across to the second vehicle, where Axel was hopping out and sticking his tongue out playfully at Marita as she took over. "I'd... never have guessed.." Triste said hesitantly, turning back.

"Hey girls!" Axel said cheerily, making his way over to them. "Ready for our date with crazy thin roads and disgusting bugs?" Triste's expression darkened, and he shrank away slightly. "Ok, not a 'girls' type of person... good to know..."

Rolling her eyes, Triste looked at Lily. "I'm going to join the others. See you at our destination, and good luck with..." She pointed a claw at the rat, then turned and made her way over to the first vehicle, stepping aside as Marie made room for her. "Any strategies in mind?" she asked Vergil as she settled in next to him.

Axel watched her leave with a critical expression. "She's a real ray of sunshine, isn't she." Bending down to pick up their heavier bag, he grinned at Lily and started to walk back to the Land Rovers. "Want to take Marita's car? I'm almost 90 percent sure she won't send us over the edge to a painful death."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 03, 2014, 11:10:50 AM**

Tony started up the Land Rover, and pulled out onto the airport loop once he was sure the others were set and ready to follow. Vergil passed the GPS up front to Tony, who set it up along the dash. "OK..." Tony said as he read the route. It wasn't just a GPS, but a navigational assistant as well, as it could take one right to an off-road spot deep in the jungle if one wanted, and that's just what it was going to do now. First though, they had to exit La Paz, and get onto the highway leading to the North Yungas Road. It was fairly straight-forward, and wouldn't require much navigating once they left the city. They could get on Ruta Nacional 3 right from the airport, and from there, almost three hours later, they'd reach the Death Road.

Of course, Ruta Nacional 3 also bypassed the North Yungas Road, and if only such a thing could be done, Tony would gladly take that option, but as it was, the waypoint lay off the Death Road, so the Death Road was where they needed to go. As he passed the row of cars loading and unloading their passengers, two Jeeps in particular pulled into the lane behind them, but at a good enough distance that it wasn't suspicious. They had been loading up bags and passengers, and looked like any other vehicles pulling out behind the Land Rovers. They continued to maintain their distance, keeping at least six car lengths back as Tony pulled onto Ruta Nacional 3, which was one of the major highways that serviced the airport.

Inside the lead jeep, Varanus tapped a claw on the passenger door's side panel, smirking to himself as he instructed his driver to maintain a safe enough distance behind the Land Rovers. No need to crowd them after all; it was a long drive.

"Thanks." Vergil thanked Marie after she had moved over. "Well... in regards to my strategy... I seem to recall Rex reprogramming this waypoint... and I'm trying to remember..." he said distantly, closing his eyes and rubbing his forehead with his fingers. "He wanted to make sure no one else could follow this path... yes... he uh... he reprogrammed it to speak English... and he... he uh... I think he put in a program that would lock anyone out that wasn't him... which may be problematic... but I'm hoping anyone in his group, myself included, would be part of the 'access group', so to speak." The white gecko explained. "Which would be me, Kalis, and himself. I'm hoping it'll recognize me and allow me access."

"He reprogrammed it?" Tony asked, glancing at Vergil in the rearview mirror. "What an asshole."

"Yeah well... he was a smart cookie, from what I remember. He wanted to ensure only he would be the one obtaining this battleship. And this jungle one I specifically remember as the one he reprogrammed. I don't think... he did that to any others." Vergil commented here, looking out the windshield at the highway ahead. "At least... I hope not." he murmured.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 03, 2014, 11:50:30 AM**

Lily smiled. "Sure. And I like Triste. She speaks her mind, and she seems very competent. A lot like I pictured from what you'd told me of her."

She beamed when she saw Marita again. "Marita! Long time since we last met! How have you been?" Lily had mostly kept to herself during the plane ride, but now that they were assembling into cars she hadn't much of a choice.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 03, 2014, 12:12:21 PM**

lilly! So good to see you again!' Marita said as she looked at her before pulling out after Tony " as for What I've been up to, well i've been living with rose and Marie and making ends meet really. Corona is much much better than Lanthae, you can actually make a decent living there. So what have you been up to, and what brings you along on this little journey?' she asked the car moved on down the road..
-
a hooded figure entered Kalis room. " Sujeno, reporting for duty, my Lord" he said in a low voice. ' what do you have need of me for? he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 03, 2014, 05:00:31 PM**

Triste swallowed and looked concerned as Vergil mentioned Rex's reprogramming. "Well... we'll just have to hope you're right. If the three of you did share such a relationship then it *does* stand to reason you'd have access. And if not, then..." She shrugged. "We'll think of something." ***He's remembered that somehow the waypoint was reprogrammed. It'll only give access to select individuals, but as we have one of the select few, it shouldn't be a problem.***

She shrugged again. "Well, at least we won't need to translate it to find out if we fail," Triste said drily.

In the back of the second Land Rover, Axel smiled as Lily started to open up. He knew she'd been feeling slightly self-conscious about seeing the others on the trip over, but he was happy that she was starting to get more comfortable. Leaning back, Axel looked out the window and tried to keep his thoughts from the road they'd soon be trundling down. The rat's stomach started to knot regardless.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **Serris** on **June 04, 2014, 09:28:17 AM**

Soren watched for threats as the convoy moved through the grimy urban areas that Ruta Nacional 3 serviced. Amazingly, the city looked just like Lanthae. Except with Spanish and Quechuan instead of English. A Scarlet Macaw clad in a t-shirt and jeans, his normally brilliant red and blue feathers muted and greyed with dust and grime, waved at them.

Soren waved back but watched carefully. He noticed that this city's billboards and advertisements mentioned "Dorado Minerals" quite a lot. The Human entered the name of what he presumed to be a mining company into his smartphone and searched for it.

After a wait of several minutes, the results came back. Dorado Minerals was a Bolivian mining comglomerate that controlled half of the country.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 04, 2014, 08:30:51 PM**

((Sorry about the "meh" post. This tour's been a friggin' nightmare so far and it ain't over yet. Didn't have time at all today to plan my post out, so had to improvise.))

Vergil nodded, taking in Triste's words as she tried to reassure him. "Yeah... we will. Cause we're not going away empty-handed. And yeah heheh... least this time no translation needed." he commented mirthlessly, though cracked a smile all the same. It *was* kind of funny, in a demented sort of way.

"So uh... you know there's something I've been meaning to ask, Agent Acyle." Vergil said, growing a bit more formal now. "When Kalis's guys attacked us in the Archives, were they after me... or you?" he asked. "I mean I kind of get me but... he doesn't even know you, right?" the gecko asked here. "Or... does he?"

Tony studied the road they were heading out on. It was a two-lane highway that was winding its way through the mountains, but at least it was a paved road. The ferret knew pretty soon they'd be traveling on dirt and rocks and hanging dangerously close to the edge...

An olive green Jeep tore by them and passed them in the opposite lane; a dangerous move, but a common one here in Bolivia. It slowed down a bit after passing them and kept on ahead, gradually pulling further away but staying within sight for the moment. About six cars back, the second jeep was keeping well behind them as well.

In the lead Jeep, Varanus smiled to himself as he adjusted the sideview mirror and gazed at the leading Land Rover. "Thaaat's it. Got 'em sandwiched now... but no crowding. No need for that right now. Put that backhoe in between us and them!" the Nile monitor ordered his driver.

"Right, boss!" Speeding up again, the leading jeep overtook and passed a truck hauling a backhoe on a flatbed ahead of the Rovers. They knew where the group would be headed after all, so there was no need to stay close. Even if by some chance they weren't heading for the North Yungas Road, eventually they would be.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 04, 2014, 10:06:04 PM**

Marion soared over the jungles of Bolivia with her flying frame. No one paid her any heed, thinking that she was just another tourist enjoying the jungle. Indeed, a few other frame-flyers waved at her; she of course, ignored them.

Obviously, she made sure to avoid the no fly zones that the mining conglomerates established ó the last thing she wanted to do was piss them off and get shot down in the process.

Her GPS indicated that she was en route to North Yungas Road, right where her targets were headed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 05, 2014, 11:05:25 AM**

Triste frowned at Vergil's question. "No... no, that wouldn't make sense..." Although, thinking back on it, Kalis' men *had* seemed more focused on her during the attack, rather than Vergil. And they'd seemed more intent on capturing her than killing her outright... Triste's eyes narrowed. *Why? Why would Kalis be concerned about me? Especially when* he's *here*, she thought, her gaze flicking over to Vergil. *Unless... no. No, there's no way Kalis could know about...*

Exhaling slightly, Triste met Vergil's eyes and shook her head, not paying any attention to the green Jeep that overtook them. "As far as I know, Kalis doesn't know anything about me. Before the assault on Rex Sardolemuel's ship, where you were... lost, he never discovered you were working as a double agent for the Ivitz. At least, not to our knowledge. So I don't see why Kalis would pay any particular attention to *me*." Her lips tightened. "In any case, my assignment is to protect you. You're the only one who has knowledge of these waypoints, our only hope of finding the Cataract before Kalis. I can be replaced. You can't. So the priority is protecting *you.*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 05, 2014, 04:50:23 PM**

(OOC: In order to get Emilena back into things, I've edited this old post (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=13105&view=findpost&p=22064175) with their reappearance. Just FYI)

Lily nodded slowly. Above the car she noticed an individual on a flying frame whiz past, but she didn't pay them any heed, thinking that she was just another tourist enjoying the jungle.

"I've been fine," she replied to Marita. "Just living. Something I hope to continue doing...why are you and Rose going on this expedition anyway? Just wondering what stake you've got in it. Marita, how are you enjoying your job?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 05, 2014, 06:38:23 PM**

because we were involved in the business in Lanthae, and stopping a crazy dictator from taking over, well you better believe we'll do our part to stop him.' Marita said ' as for the job, it keeps a roof over my head and pays the bills. so are you married to Axel now, or are you two dating?' she asked as she continued driving.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 05, 2014, 08:25:00 PM**

"Oh... I see..." Vergil trailed off. He wondered if Rex had found out he'd been a double agent, and had somehow also found out his contact was Triste... but she didn't seem to think it plausible. He chewed his lower lip as she told him she was expendable, and he wasn't. He frowned, his brow furrowing. "No... that's a terrible thing to say." he said now, looking up at her to meet her eyes. "You're no more expendable than I am." he said sincerely. "What good am I if all my companions are dead? They're all I have... and you... you're the only link to the past I have." he admitted here. "I feel like if I lose you now... that link will be gone... but not just that... I don't see you as expendable. Maybe I used to but... not anymore." He shook his head here, lowering his eyes and gazing at the floor of the Rover.

He wasn't sure what to say after that, so he just kind of remained quiet and let her take that as she would. He barely knew her... barely remembered her... but still, every one of his teammates was valuable to him now... he'd hate to think of even one of them dying.

Tony turned on the radio, and adjusted the volume so it permeated the car in a mellow sort of atmosphere. The region they were driving through outside La Paz was mostly dusty and brown, and quite mountainous. They were in the Andes after all, and to see snow-caps on some of these mountains was truly awe-inspiring for the ferret. To be this high up and and to feel how chilly it was but knowing they were heading for a jungle was something he just couldn't wrap his head around yet.

Kalis turned around to gaze upon Sujeno with a look of death. "Not presently." he responded in his rasping metallic voice. "However, I may require you as backup should Varanus fail. Of course, you may be sent in to replenish any of his group should they fall. Still... I have confidence in him to handle it." Kalis informed Sujeno. Of course, he also knew Varanus to be brash and impulsive, but he'd wait to see what the monitor would accomplish first before leaping to conclusions. This would be his real test after all... to see if he was truly worthy of succeeding Kalis one day.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 06, 2014, 03:35:05 AM**

"Well...we can't legally get married, since I'm supposed to be dead..." Lily responded softly. "But we're as close as you can get without a minister saying so."

She debated passing out photos of Ejlert to the girls; you never know what they might find. But ultimately she decided against it. The odds of Marita or anyone chancing across Ejlert was slim, and she didn't want news of her looking for him getting around. It might even put him in danger if Kalis were to learn that his mother was an active ally of Vergil's.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 06, 2014, 08:27:45 AM**

"You might not like it, but it's the truth. It's what we have to live with." Triste raised her eyes and looked at Vergil as he stared at the floor. The gecko's tone sounded genuine, like he actually cared, and it was so unlike how he'd been before that it threw her. Looking at Vergil now, he appeared so... *vulnerable*. For a second, she felt almost sorry for him. Triste's jaw clenched. *What the hell's the matter with me?*

After a second, her expression softened. "Hey... I'm not exactly planning on getting killed. And I'll do my best to make sure everyone else stays safe too... although I've got to admit, they're more competent than I thought they'd be." Triste glanced at Tony and gave a thin smile. "Except for their taste in radio station, maybe. Look, as long as we keep focused, we should all be fine."

Axel nodded. "Right. And besides, planning for it would be a nightmare." He grinned. "We've just been living quietly, keeping to ourselves. I, ah, never thought we'd get involved with anything like this again. Lanthae was crazy enough..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 06, 2014, 10:54:00 AM**

Vergil looked up, and smiled here. "Well, I'm glad to hear that." he stated with some relief. He looked at Tony and Marie here and nodded. "Yes well, we've all been through a lot. A ragtag bunch but we're a good crew. I'm just glad to know you'll look after yourself in addition to me. It's kind of our creed, yea." He nodded again here. "I'd hate to see anything happen to you." he added in a much quieter tone, averting his eyes again in a shy fashion.

Tony frowned. "Hey! No backseat driving!" he chided humorously to Triste. As the group rolled on, the minutes turned into hours. They began descending, and entered into a more tropic region of Bolivia. Lush greenery surrounded them on the mountain slopes, and Tony was forced to crank up the AC as the temperature started rising. "Hoo! Remind me never to move here!" Tony exclaimed, wiping his brow. Vergil had spent the past two plus hours asking Triste about his life, and soaking in as many details as she could offer him. From what he'd gathered, he'd had a pretty good if dangerous life. He was courageous, if not a little reckless, and generous too.

The white gecko also spent time researching more of Rex's life, but felt he still wasn't gaining a better understanding of why he'd turned traitor in the first place. This story needed further study.

"Holy shit!" Tony said slowy as he took the exit for the North Yungas Road. "I gotta drive through that?" he asked reluctantly. Ahead of them lay a small dirt road carved out of the mountainside. On the left was a sheer drop, and Tony poked his head out the window to get a better look. "This... Is insanity! Whoever built this road should die!" he exclaimed in a choked voice, noting the jungle was hundreds of feet below, like small emeralds in deep bowl.

"Many of them did." Vergil murmured. He knew the Bolivians had used Paraguayan prisoners to construct this road, and many had fallen to their deaths. It used to be the only way to descend to the Amazonian lowlands until Ruta Nacional 3 had been built. Behind them, Tony could see Marita's Land Rover and a green jeep, with a second jeep approaching too. The jeeps had gotten mixed into the order, so that a jeep was behind each Rover. Great... Tourists.

Tony called Marita in the other Rover. "Uh... You uh... Ready for this?" He asked hesitantly as he gripped the steering wheel tightly, exhaling slowly to try and soothe the adrenaline racing through him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 07, 2014, 04:08:59 PM**

Axel turned his head to the left and looked out the window. He perked up at the view that stretched out on that side. "Hey! Hey, honey!" he nudged Lily and indicated. "Look at the..." His eyes wandered down, and he saw how far the drop was. "Oh." Looking away, he caught a glimpse of the road ahead... and how narrow it became. It looked like a small breeze could blow them over the edge, sending them to a fiery, violent demise on the sheer and deadly cliffs stretching below. "*Oh*..." Sinking lower in his seat, Axel's normally white face took on a green tinge and his ears flopped limply.

Weakly, the rat looked over at Lily. "Maybe I shouldn't have taken this side... Marita, please don't go, ah... you know, *off* the road."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 07, 2014, 05:55:41 PM**

marita listened to Axel and Lily explain when they had been up to before tony called ' just calm down Tony ' hug the side of the mountainsiide until the road widens, and take it slow' Marita said as she approached the rapidly narrowing road. she shifted slight to hug to mountainside, and slowed her pace.
- once this is over ' you guys can have a real wedding..' Rose said hopefully 'I've got a good thing going with Marita And Marie. and i'm clean. kicked my drug habit' she said with pride.."Marie won a large payout at the slots after work, that wy shes coming with us..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 07, 2014, 07:18:43 PM**

Lily glanced outside. To be honest, she was perfectly okay with heights. "Just wondering, why do you think Axel and I could be married after this?" She asked. "I'll still be a fugitive hunted by the government, thought dead, and I'll still legally be married to another man."

Further behind the convoy, a tow truck bearing the logo of a company that only operates in Mexico drove along the road.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 07, 2014, 09:36:31 PM**

if you are considered dead, that voids your marriage to your husband' Rose replied. hes free to remarry, and you'll be free to marry Axel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 08, 2014, 09:29:26 AM**

Tony gulped, and nodded (a pointless gesture since Marita couldn't see him anyway) before hanging up. "Oh man... uh... here we go..." he said slowly, and began pulling out onto the Death Road as slowly as he could, but noticed he couldn't exactly hug the mountainside either due to not wanting to damage the Rover against the rocks and Bolivian rules of the road stating those going downhill had to take the side closest to the cliff to allow those coming up to hug the mountainside. The ferret of course was only going to follow these rules if he saw an oncoming vehicle.

He glanced in his rearview mirror at the olive Jeep following after him and Marita's Rover behind that. Feeling the rocks slide and tumble out from underneath his wheels was a very unsettling feeling and caused his stomach to leap and flop all in one sickening motion He glanced over the edge again but then jerked his vision back to the road. Stupid! Great way to get vertigo here! He felt like his Rover would just slip off the road at any moment and plummet to a fiery fate below them, but these were mostly silly fears he'd have to get on top of. He had to face them if he was going to conquer this road.

According to Vergil's navigator, the waypoint was about halfway down the North Yungas Road. Greaaat. That's exactly what he wanted to see... not. But the ferret didn't have much to think about it: the rear window of the Rover suddenly exploded in a burst of glass that sent shards sailing into the rear seating areas, causing Tony to duck down and Vergil to cringe as fragments struck his right arm and his backside, scrapes forming that crisscrossed his otherwise white skin. "What the HELL?" Tony shouted, peering behind him to notice a shotgun sticking out the window of the olive jeep. "What the shit is these guys' problem?" he asked, realizing as his heart rate increased that he'd need to pick up his pace if they weren't going to get shredded.

Pushing the accelerator down, the ferret let the Rover pick up speed as he started driving faster down the Yungas Road. The Jeep followed suit, starting to accelerate as another blast from the shotgun was fired, this one impacting with the back of the Rover with a sickening thud. "Grrr! My luggage better be safe back there!" Tony yelled as he increased speed, trying his best to avoid having a heart attack as he slid the Rover around the edge and continued downhill with a slight screech of the brakes.

The second Jeep had opened up heavy assault rifle fire on Marita's Rover behind the first two vehicles, and unlike the first Jeep, which was looking to slow the first Rover down, the second Jeep was looking to kill the occupants of the second Rover.

Varanus grinned wickedly as he kept after the leading Rover that he knew contained Agent Triste Acyle within. Opening up the top of the Jeep's roof, the big monitor hauled himself out onto the top of the Jeep and balanced himself as he shouted down to his driver to get him close to the Rover. The driver complied, pushing the pedal down to pull up fast behind the charging SUV. When he judged the distance sufficient, Varanus leaped off the roof of the Jeep onto the top of the Rover, landing with a thunk before his energy blade ignited and began slicing off the top of the roof like a can opener peeling back the lid of a can of sardines.

Vergil glanced upwards as he could see the roof of their vehicle being torn into, the heat of the blade a mere inches from his cheek as suddenly most of it was ripped off and thrown over the side of the cliff, Varanus having used his telekinetic abilities to shear off the bulk of it and toss it away with a mighty roar. Glancing down, he sneered at the occupants within, glaring right at Triste. "'ello poppet!" he exclaimed, and immediately thrust a small syringe downward right towards her.

"No!" Vergil's eyes widened and his tail lashed out, looping itself around Varanus's wrist and forcing it up against part of the roof, causing him to cry out and drop the syringe on reflex, where it rolled into the back passenger foot wells.

"You little rat!" Varanus shouted, and overpowered Vergil's tail before backhanding the gecko fiercely across the side of his head, snapping it off to the left and causing the lizard to almost black out. Lights danced in his eyes as he gave out a gasp and slumped a bit forward against the back of Tony's seat, temporarily dazed from the force of the blow.

"Son of a bitch! I am SO not insured for this!" Tony said with exasperation, struggling to keep the Rover on the road. He wanted to turn around and help, but he was powerless to do anything without giving up control of his ride, and that kind of chance was way too risky to take on a road like this. The only thing he could think of was to slam on the brakes, causing them to screech and throwing Varanus off his feet, but the Nile monitor held on, his claws shooting out to grip what was left of the roof before hauling himself up as Tony sped up again, dirt and rocks flying out behind the Rover's tires in a great spraying gush that dinged off the windshield of the Jeep behind them...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 08, 2014, 01:19:02 PM**

Marita ducked as the windhield shattered into pieces from the gunfire and glass flew out of the broken backseat window. It was all marita could do to keep the jeep on the road, as she could only spare a few spluit second peaks out of the now windshield-less Jeep " looks like we have company, and not the friendly sort! she shouted. Marita stole glances at Rose who was curled up into a ball her claws covering her head. blood trickled down from cuts in her arms.. ' Axel' take the gun out of my purse and return fire ' she said looking back at him and Lily' Just hold them off us long enough so we can get to where the waypoint is ' As if this road wasnt hairy enough' she thought to herself

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 08, 2014, 06:04:50 PM**

"You have a handgun in your purse?" gasped Lily as the jeep hit a bump and set her sprawling. "How did you get that onto the airplane?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 08, 2014, 06:17:21 PM**

Triste threw herself back as Veranus plunged his hand down, the syringe glinting in the sunlight - but in the confined space of the Land Rover, she could barely move to avoid it. Luckily, Vergil's tail jerked it away from her just before the needle could pierce her skin. She heard a heavy *thwack* as the monitor's hand connected hard against Vergil's face, and in the corner of her eye she saw the gecko slump over... but she didn't have time to check on him. Using the distraction to her advantage, she jerked down and made to grab the syringe lying on the floor - but Tony hit the brakes to try and shake Veranus off the roof, and the momentum caused the needle to roll further up, out of reach underneath Soren's seat in front. Triste herself was thrown forwards, her shoulder twisting painfully as she fell awkwardly into the foot well. "*Damn it!*"

Looking up, she saw that the monitor was starting to turn his attention back on the rest of them. Triste tried to pull her knife out, but her arm was still numb. Swearing, she activated her camouflage augment and rolled over, underneath Veranus. Leaping up, Triste wrapped arm around the lizard's neck and swung her head forwards, headbutting him as hard as she could in the face.

Slouching back in his seat, Axel was trying to distract himself when around them the windows started shattering, glass raining down on them. From in front, he heard the unmistakable rattle of gunfire. Gasping, he leaned down even further and reached out with his right arm, making sure Lily was down too. "What... *what the fuck*?!" he yelled. Why did this have to be happening here, now, of all places?!

"Jesus christ... alright, I'm on it!" he shouted back to Marita, looking around desperately for her purse, but he couldn't see it. "Where?! Where is it?! I don't..." Craning his neck, he suddenly caught sight of it on the floor. Lunging, he snatched it up and ripped the handgun from it. Blinking in the dust that was being thrown up from the Jeep in front and flying through the broken windscreen, he tried to get a good aim... but another volley of bullets tore through the Rover, pounding the rear seats and he was forced back down out of sight. *Damn it... never gonna get a good shot like this...* Feeling sick, he glanced back at Lily. "Hold my shirt! And stay low!" Lying flat in the foot space, he reach up and pushed open his door, then started to lean out precariously. Craning his neck, he could just manage to peak under the door and catch a glimpse of the Jeep in front... and its tyres. "Oh, son of a bitch..." Trying not to think about the deathly drop meters from his face, or the fact that a bullet could rip his head off at any second, Axel squeezed the trigger, trying to aim for the rear left tyre. But the Rover was jolting around over the rough road, throwing his aim off, and the first few bullets slammed uselessly into the side of the Jeep.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 08, 2014, 06:59:15 PM**

now's not the time for asking questions' marita said as she struggled to keep the car on the froad..' lets just say i'm good at hiding stuff, and leave it at that' as said as she ducked and fresh flurry of gunfire just missing her.
-
marie was huddled down behind the pasenger seat, her eye squeezed shut..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 08, 2014, 09:19:37 PM**

Varanus grunted as Triste slammed her head into him and sent him reeling, but his foot claws tore into the third of the roof that remained on top of the Rover, and he snarled at her, sweeping his tail out to try and fell his unseen assailant. He knew it had to be Agent Acyle, since he'd seen her vanish using some sort of adaptive camo no doubt.

Vergil groaned and held his head just as Varanus activated his energy blade again and began hacking in the direction Triste had attacked him from. "Triste..." Vergil said weakly, not seeing her anymore. "Triste!" he yelled out, snapping back into consciousness in a rush. He searched frantically for her, but not seeing her, he steeled himself as he leaped onto the roof of the Rover and ignited his own blade, Varanus just barely able to block it in time as Vergil attacked him. "What did you do with Triste, you bastard?" the gecko demanded angrily as the monitor swung on him and Vergil ducked aside and parried the blow, using his agility to his advantage. Of course... he also had to be careful not to topple over the side, as standing up on this vehicle was hard enough as it was without it bouncing and swerving as Tony struggled to keep it on the road.

"Why don't you ask her yourself!" Varanus growled back as their blades locked, bounced away and locked again.

Behind them, the gun battle still raged, though Axel's first shots had been pretty ineffective. That being said, many shots went astray as the vehicles rattled on down the road. One of the assailants tried to hose the passenger areas of the Rover in front of him, but only about half made any real contact. Still, they got the same idea, and started attempting to target the tires of Marita's Rover, hoping to at the least disable it and at the most send it over the edge out of control.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 09, 2014, 07:34:21 AM**

Soren screamed profanities as the gun battle raged in and around the Land Rover. Rose was huddled in a ball next to him.

"Not this shit again!" He ducked down and dragged his automatic rifle from its position under the rear seat. Slapping a magazine into the weapon, he chambered a round and set the fire selector to burst.

He took aim at the jeep behind him. Not an easy task considering the bouncing and swerving that Axel was doing to try and evade the gunfire and stay on the road and he was leaning out the now shattered rear window. Neverthless, he managed to draw a bead on the center of the windshield and fire a 3-round burst.

Unbeknownst to everyone below on North Yungas Road, Marion was watching the gun battle unfold. The Human was clinging onto a sheer rock face several hundred feet above them. Her left arm had morphed into a set of four diamond tipped claws that dug into the rock and anchored her in place. Her legs also extended their grappling claws, anchoring her onto the rock face.

She nodded as she peered through the compnoculars. She spotted the white Gecko fighting with a Monitor atop one of the lead vehicles. Behind them, a few other vehicles were in a rolling shootout.

Marion snapped a few photos with the compnoculars and sent them to Mace. She then stashed them inside her bag.

"And now, time to fly." She released her anchors, allowing her to fall backwards from the rock face. The flying frame's wings extended and the engines sputtered slightly before she rocketed ahead of the battling vehicles.

But as she fell, her frame's wings briefly cast a shadow over the vehicles.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 09, 2014, 09:12:56 AM**

Marita was forced to weave as the cars in front of her tried to shoot out her tires. rocks and debris trickled off the sheer ledge, as the cars swerved back and forth. here the road was getting slightly wider but not by much.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 09, 2014, 04:25:43 PM**

Still cloaked, Triste ducked underneath Veranus' tail as it swung viciously towards her, falling back onto the seat. She winced as her hand came down a shard of broken glass, the jagged edge slicing into her palm. Beside her, Vergil called her name but she didn't respond - at the moment, her cloaking was one of the only advantages they had over the attacker. Jerking the sliver of glass from her hand, Triste pulled herself forwards, moving further up in the car as Vergil and the monitor battled above.

Clambering across the front passenger seat, she swung herself out the open window and onto the bonnet. Resisting the wind that was buffeting her from behind and the wild momentum of the car, Triste crept up behind Veranus as he swung his energy sword at Vergil and brought a knee up between his legs, hard. At the same time, she wrapped an arm around his right leg and tried to throw him off the roof... but the car suddenly swung to the side and she lost her balance, sending the two of them tumbling backwards and onto the bonnet. Triste felt a tingle as her cloaking augment deactivated. Staring into Veranus' eyes, Triste snarled and shot her elbow forwards, aiming to crush his trachea.

Axel fired off another shot, swearing loudly as it missed the Jeep completely. "*Godammit!* Marita, try and keep it still-" he started to yell. Then he cried out as the Rover swerved to the right and he slid forwards, almost tumbling right out of the car. Just before he did, his wildly kicking feet caught up in one of the seat belts and he was jerked to a halt, the rat's face inches from the rough dirt road speeding past.

Shouting, Axel's arms flew about wildly as he tried to reach back to pull himself back in, and his finger squeezed compulsively on the trigger of the pistol. The gun fired, and the rear passenger window of the Jeep in front shattered, blood spattering across the glass as one of the gunmen was hit. Axel didn't notice. "*Gah!* Help me!" he shrieked, tensing his caught leg and praying the seat belt didn't give out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 09, 2014, 04:33:39 PM**

Rose jumped across the Car and her claw grasped onto Axel's Leg ' Hold1" she called outr. the cuts of her arm,s were starting to stop bleeding, leaving crimsons streaks crisscossing her arm. Rose managed to get her other paw on his leg and began top pull him back into the car. ' got.. you' she grunted..
- marie tried to keep herself as small as possible as she wouldnt get shot.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 09, 2014, 05:09:27 PM**

Soren ducked down as bullets whizzed past him. He grabbed Axel with his free hand and helped pull him into the vehicle.

"It's okayóshit!" He fell back into the seat as a bullet smashed into hia chest. Luckily, he was wearing the ballistic vest that had been helpfully provided by Tony.

The Human was scrunched against the backseat and breathing heavily. He clutched his injured ribs. Even through the ballistic vest and the augmentworker's shock absorbant clothing, the impact was still quite harsh.

"Rose, take my rifle and return fire. I'm not sure if I have a bruise or busted rib," Soren said between gritted teeth. He unslung his rifle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 09, 2014, 05:21:22 PM**

Rose Grabbed the rifle from Soren ' Stay down " she said." She checked the ammo to see how much ammo the gun had left then she took a position Rose took aim at the Jeep and fired. and was rewarded with a loud pop as one of the jeeps back tires blew out. the jeep began swerving erratically.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 09, 2014, 10:06:38 PM**

Even though the Jeep's tire was out, the driver was skilled, and slammed on the brakes to prevent any skidding or swerving. The Jeep ground to a halt broadside to the road, and even though the gunman in the front passenger seat had been killed by Axel's lucky shot, the other gunmen exited with perfect, stationary shots to make at Marita's vehicle. Squeezing off a burst, one of the attackers was rewarded with the satisfying sound of both rear tires on Marita's Rover bursting, despite the moving target.

Above the first Jeep (the one Varanus had come from), one of the gun-toting assailants glanced up to see Marion high above them. "The hell?" he asked, pulling the slide back on his rifle and pumping rounds off into the sky, trying to down this mysterious "newcomer."

Up ahead, Varanus suddenly found himself keeled over from a blow between his legs. Vergil backed off, wondering what had happened, and then watched as both Triste and Varanus were thrown onto the bonnet, Triste suddenly becoming visible to him. That's what she had done! Used her cloaking device! Of course! But unfortunately, the swerving of the Rover caused Vergil to lose his balance as well, and as Varanus and Triste went down, so too did Vergil, the gecko flying off the side and just barely managing to grab on to the Rover's mostly open roof with one hand. Yelling out as he looked below him, he could see the fall was not insignificant... it was a *long* way down.

Varanus grinned wickedly and swiftly caught Triste's hand as she tried to go for his trachea. Roaring out, he smashed her hand down onto the roof and held it fast, squeezing it as he tried to crush it. "Not so fast!" he called, throwing a punch at her head now with all the strength behind it he could muster, which was a lot considering his build.

Vergil ground his teeth as Tony began slowing to see what was going on with Marita's Rover in the back. Groaning, Vergil stuck his sword on his belt and hauled himself up, getting a better grip thanks to the slower speed, though Tony wasn't backing off too much just yet. "Get off her you son of a bitch!" Vergil said through clenched teeth in his threateningly deep voice as he pulled himself back up onto the Rover.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 10, 2014, 12:50:18 AM**

Triste yelled as something popped in her hand and she felt a sharp pain run up her arm. Throwing up her remaining free hand, she tried to stop Veranus' attack, but his fist powered through her defense, crunching against her cheek and slamming her head down against the roof.

Dazed, tasting blood, Triste tried to pull away, but the monitor still held her firmly by the hand and she couldn't move. Numbly, she reached for her pinned forearm. If she could only get to her knife...

Axel gasped with relief as he felt hands pulling him back into the car. "Th... thanks!" Pulling the door shut, he bent down and checked how many shots left in the pistol. Three more, and he didn't know if Marita had any spare clips - they were going to have to count.

He heard a rattle of gunfire from the driver's seat, and he jerked his head up to see Rose fire off a burst at the Jeep in front. Axel heard the tyres burst, and he cheered. "Yeah! Nice one!" As they passed the slowing vehicle, he held a finger up to them. "Fuck you all!" he cried, a slightly unhinged grin plastered across his face. The gunmen opened fire, and he ducked down... and heard a loud pop as the rear tyres on *their* vehicle were torn apart. Swearing, Axel held on tightly as the car started to swerve, veering dangerously close to the edge. "Aw, crap! Don't stop!" he yelled to Marita, firing the last three bullets off at the gunmen as they disappeared in the distance. If they stopped here, he knew how quickly they'd be outgunned... and there was only one way that could end.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 10, 2014, 09:14:19 AM**

Marita Swore on both rear tires blew. metal scraped against the ground as she struggled to keep the car on the road ' up ahead the road was widening as it headed down, it was maybe 100 feet to go before they could breathe a bit easier.. and try and ditch the jeep.
Rose checked how many rounds were left in Sorens Gun ' Ok, I have 9 shots left' she said as Axel fired off a few more rounds..' better make them count..' she said. She took aim and fired at the Jeep ahead of them, the one menacing Tonys Rover. the back window of the jeep exploded in a hail of glass, who tricked both out of the vehicle and inside. screams from the vehicle indicated there had been some injuries from flying debris ' but Rose wasnt ready to celebrate just yet.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 10, 2014, 09:48:55 AM**

Vergil grimaced as he saw the monitor's fist connect with Triste's face. She seemed to be clearly dazed now, and Varanus had the upper hand. Swatting her free hand away, he went in for another blow before Vergil stood over him. "I said... *get off her!*" he ordered, igniting his blade again as Varanus was forced to roll to the side as Vergil swung at him (carefully though to avoid Triste).

Bringing his own blade out, Varanus once more connected with Vergil's sword, but this time, momentum wasn't on his side. Vergil used the blow of the two swords to cause his own to rebound and slice downward, connecting with Varanus's right leg, causing him to scream out in pain as he went down on one knee. Vergil didn't aim to cripple, but he did aim to disable, and the gecko was able to move to interpose himself between Triste and Varanus now, the monitor hanging on in this fight as he swung again, but much weaker this time. Vergil easily turned aside the blow and sliced into Varanus's arm, causing a burn that led to the bigger lizard dropping his sword off the side of the Rover.

Vergil saw his chance, and raised his hand even as the persistent Varanus moved to both telekinetically grab his sword and throw his fist into Vergil's chest. The gecko wasn't anticipating it, and the two of them connected almost simultaneously: Vergil managed to psionically throw Varanus off the back of the Rover right as the monitor's fist connected with his chest. The gecko had barely managed to beat Varanus though, making Varanus's blow less fierce, but it still knocked Vergil backwards and onto Triste with a big "Oooof!" escaping him as he went down.

Varanus was tossed backwards and slammed into the windshield of the Jeep behind him, cracking the glass and causing the driver to swerve dangerously as Veranus toppled and rolled off the Jeep. Both turned towards the cliff's edge, and the Jeep's momentum carried it onwards even as its brakes screeched. "SHIT!" the driver yelled, seeing oblivion before him as the Jeep drove right off the cliff and tumbled over the edge to impact with trees and vegetation on the way down, the force of the blows rattling, severely crippling and outright killing the occupants before the Jeep crumpled into a compact shell as it finally struck the bottom with a sound like a thousand panes of glass shattering at once. By the time it was over, the Jeep looked as if a giant's fist had slammed it into the Earth, and there was no way any of the occupants could've survived; the Death Road had just added even more victims to its record.

Tony began slowing the Rover down now to help out his companions behind him, as he saw they were in serious trouble with their tires. Varanus was nowhere to be seen: he had managed to roll over the side but had fortunately for him landed in a smaller tree growing off the side of the mountain. He'd managed to break his fall somewhat, but was still badly injured. He decided to remain stationary to avoid detection, and was barely conscious at this point anyway, the warrior struggling to remain aware of his surroundings even as blackness threatened to engulf his vision.

Tony fumbled with the trunk of the Rover, throwing it open and tearing into his luggage to retrieve a pistol he'd packed away in there. He'd opted for an older projectile weapon, since lasers would've raised more questions at the airport. "Come on!" he shouted to Marie. "We've gotta give the others some cover!" Taking shelter behind the Rover, Tony fired at the second Jeep off in the distance, doing his best to avoid Marita's Rover in between the two.

Vergil was winded, gasping for breath as he lay on top of Triste. "Damn..." he managed to wheeze. "Are you... are you all right?" he asked her, thinking only of her first as he battled to regain his breath. Some drops of water fell on his face from a small nearby waterfall that cascaded down over the Yungas Road. The water felt good to the gecko, and he closed his eyes, just barely having the strength to roll off of Triste and onto his belly.

Only the rearmost Jeep remained, but they weren't going anywhere with a blown tire. Although they continued firing on Marita's Rover, the distance was gradually increasing, and they were taking fire now from Tony up ahead as well. Suddenly, they heard Varanus's voice in their ear buds. "If any of you assholes are still alive, I'd really appreciate an extraction!"

"Uh, right boss!" the driver responded. "Get a new tire on this thing!" he ordered, and one of the three surviving gunmen moved to get the spare off the back of the Jeep and change it out, even as Tony managed to hit one of them in his neck, causing him to fall backwards behind the Jeep and leaving only two remaining.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 10, 2014, 10:09:44 AM**

Marie searched around in her belongings before locating a handgun buried underneath her makeup kit. ' got it' she shouted as she took a spot alongside Tony and started peppering the jeep behind Maritas Jeep. You take out the guys I'll go for the tires" She said to Tony.Marie managed to get in a hit after a few misfires, hearing a pop as the front left tire went out. ' thats one down' she shouted as she saw the two survivors trying to change out one of the back tire.
- marita saw Tonys Rover stopped on the side of the road, and pressed down on the accelerator/ sparks shot out from the ground as the jeep lurched forward, it was maybe 50 feet to the other Rover. " just a little further' Marita Grunted.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 10, 2014, 11:26:38 AM**

Lily's eyes went wide as she noticed Soren take a brutal hit to the chest. Quickly she reached around the passenger front seat and grasped Soren's hand. "Just try to stay still," she whispered softly in his ear.

Closing her eyes and seeming almost oblivious to the gunfire and the car chase, she traced his chest with her hands and took a deep breath. Slowly the pain in Soren's chest began to siphon away, the swelling going down and the skin over the rib regaining its normal color. At the same time, blood started to trickle down Lily's nose as an identical bruise started to discolor her chest underneath her dress. She gasped and shuddered in pain, but continued healing Soren.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 10, 2014, 04:27:25 PM**

Soren gasped as he saw what Lily was doing and from the fact that his chest no longer ached.

"Lily, stop before you harm yourself! I'll be fine!" he exclaimed.

The gunfire mostly missed Marion, but one bullet lodged itself in her flying frame's wing but doing no damage. She engaged the boost on her frame and sped forward, quickly taking her out of range.

"Mace," she said into her throat mike. "I have located Vergil. He is with the other infiltrators. However, they were attacked by a group of unknown alliegence. I am sending over the photos now."

She then pressed a button on her compnoculars to send the contents of the memory card to Mace via an encrypted satellite uplink.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 10, 2014, 04:43:02 PM**

Groaning, Triste sat up slowly, ignoring the sounds of gunfire as Tony covered the approaching Rover. She extended her arm outwards, and winced at the unnatural angle that her dislocated index finger was pointing. "Yeah. I'm fine," she muttered lowly, gripping it tightly and snapping it back in place with a *crunch*, breath hissing through her teeth. "Bastard." Triste paused, and probed the interior of her mouth with her tongue. One of her teeth was hanging loose, the gum torn from where Veranus' fist had knocked it out of place. Rolling her eyes in frustration, she reached in and yanked the tooth free with a grunt of pain, dropping it on the floor and spitting a mouthful of blood beside where it fell. "Bastard," Triste growled again.

She rose to her feet and staggered over to where Vergil lay on his front. "Are *you* okay?" Looking down at him, the gecko didn't seem like he was hurt too badly, at least. Triste offered a hand down to him. "Thanks for the help. He was... stronger than I thought he'd be." The acknowledgement of her failure left a sour taste in her mouth.

Axel glanced ahead through the broken windscreen, and saw with a rush of relief that Tony's Rover was drawing steadily closer. Looking back, he saw the gunmen from the second Jeep, dwindling in the distance, take cover from the bullets rocketing their way courtesy of Tony and the others. The rat grinned. "Holy crap... maybe we're actually not about to die..."

He turned to look triumphantly at the others in the car - and his expression froze when he saw Lily using her powers on Soren. "Hey!" Axel said quickly, sliding across the seat and putting a hand gently on the arm she'd extended to Soren. "Come on! Look, he's fine! You don't need to..." His mouth tightened at the sight of the blood trickling down her nose. "Please Lily... stop. You know I don't like it when you do this..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 10, 2014, 06:42:46 PM**

"Yes I'm... I'm fine." Vergil nodded, a bit breathless in his speech as he pushed himself up painfully to his knees. "Oooh! I think... I think I'm OK." He held his side, and was pretty sure it'd be bruised. It didn't feel like any of his ribs were broken though... which was probably a good thing, considering they'd most likely have another challenge at the waypoint. "I'm glad you're mostly all right." the gecko told Triste sincerely, noting the fire was starting to die down the closer Marita limped her Rover to the group. "He was... very strong, yes." Vergil nodded here, chewing his lower lip as he got shakily to his feet and look down the cliff. "Much stronger than I was anticipating. We didn't get him... don't ask me how I know... I just do." the gecko stated with concern, scanning the jungle below but seeing nothing.

"Let's get these vehicles around the bend up ahead! We can change out the tires up there!" Tony shouted to Marita as she got close. Fortunately, each Rover had a spare tire on the inside of the trunk... he just hoped neither of them had been punctured. Emptying his clip, the ferret backpedaled and headed for the driver's side of his Rover, sliding in and putting it in gear so they could move around a bend in the cliff and get some protection. That was the nice thing about the North Yungas Road: it had plenty of curves and turns offering concealment.

Leading the way, Tony drove ahead until they were around the corner and then pulled up a bit so Marita would have room to stop in shelter. Exiting his vehicle, Tony rounded the Rover carefully and headed for Marita. "Who were those assholes?" he asked Vergil on the way. Vergil, having managed to stay low on the roof as Tony drove, shook his head. "I have no idea. No!" he said suddenly, light coming into his eyes. "They were... yes the big fellow... he was... um... he was with me back when I served with Rex! Uh... can't remember his name but... he was pretty friendly with Kalis, if I recall. Yeah! So he must be one of Kalis's then!" Vergil exclaimed, pleased he could remember such details.

"Damn... how in the hell did he find us?" Tony asked, shaking his head as he walked over to the second Rover. He put on a grin for the others in the second vehicle, trying to keep morale up. "Lovely afternoon so far, eh?" he asked, shaking his head in amazement as he came around to Axel's side. "You all right?" he asked the occupants, looking inside. "I think we should get those tires changed and continue on our way as soon as we can... no use sitting out here, after all." he pointed out, noting they were still pretty high up on the mountainside.

Vergil hopped down from the roof now carefully, as too far and he'd fall. "Well... Kalis is clearly tracking us somehow... I don't know how but he's tracking us." He looked at Triste in profile. "So... it seems he wasn't after me though... why would he be after you?" he queried, finding this to be most curious. "That's twice now it seems he's tried to nab you. What gives?"

On the cliff side, Varanus was grunting as he was hauling himself up hand over hand, using his claws to their full advantage. He'd slide down every so often, but he was *not* going to die on this mountain! Snarling, he pulled himself the last few feet and up over the side. Panting, he stood slouched for a moment, catching his breath. Those... those *bastards!* No one got the better of him like this! How dare they! He was far superior to these worms! But that white gecko... who was he? Varanus thought he looked vaguely familiar... but he couldn't exactly place him. He was skilled with a blade... that was for sure... and was a psion to boot... perfect. But he'd been told Agent Acyle was psionic too. She hadn't demonstrated any of that in the fight... but perhaps that was smart... this way, he wasn't sure just what she was capable of.

Looking up the road to his two survivors, he growled in his throat. No... it wasn't over yet... he'd regroup... kill these bastards and take Agent Acyle to Kalis... he'd accomplish his mission. But first things first... he couldn't fight in such a diminished capacity like this... he'd need to recuperate... and then he'd get them... every last one of them... they'd all die slow and painful deaths for this!

Wiping blood from his mouth, the Nile monitor began heading back up the road towards the Jeep, a look of deep anger in his eyes.

Mace pulled the pictures up on the HUD in his office, and frowned. "Hmm... well hello... who are we here?" he asked, running some of the faces of the attackers through his database. Most of them were matched to soldiers in Kalis's army... perfect. So Kalis was getting involved in this. Mace had met him only once... years ago, and he'd been very timid and shy back then. Now he was a crazy nutcase hellbent on destroying the world. How times change...

Sighing, Mace tapped his chin thoughtfully. "I see... well... those are Kalis's goons. Interesting that Kalis would be after them... are you all right?" he asked Marion. "Were you spotted? You know... I'm thinking of something..." Mace said in quick fire, trailing off and not elaborating at the moment.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 10, 2014, 07:01:54 PM**

"Soren is...more useful than I am right now..." gasped Lily, suddenly having trouble breathing from her bruised rib. Nevertheless at both of their insistence she allowed herself to be pulled away from Soren. "Sorry..." she said to both of them quietly, not intending to have frightened them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 10, 2014, 07:57:46 PM**

marita pulled alongside Tonys Rover and staggered out of the Rover' just give me a minute to catch my breath ' she said, before looking at the shredded back tires 'geez' she said ' boy we're we lucky they didnt hit the front set' she said 'do we have a first aid jkit?' She asked Tony' i'm sure if theres one in my Rover or not.
' marie and Rose went over to help get the spare out of the back of the Rover.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 10, 2014, 08:03:20 PM**

"I was shot at but I don't think they recognized me," Marion replied. "Probably thought I was from one of the mining corporations in Bolivia. Anyways, what are my orders?" She was perched on a ledge of rock no wider than a Human hand. Her prosthetic legs had reconfigured into spiked "hooves" that gave her maximum grip. Her left arm had extended its grappling claws, anchoring her to the rock face.

Soren climbed out of the vehicle with the jack in hand. "I got shot but I'm okay thanks to the ballistic vest we packed." He slipped the jack under the Rover and slowly began to jack up the vehicle. "Anyways, anyone know those assholes?"

As he was jacking the vehicle up, he got a glance over the side of the road. He visibly shuddered.

He averted his gaze to avoid losing his lunch or fainting. He turned to Rose who had his rifle. "Could you keep watch, please?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 10, 2014, 10:50:05 PM**

Sure,I'll keep watch ' rose said keeping an eye on Soren as he jacked up the Rover.
-No, I didnt recognize them, but obviously someone wants us out of the way. they were clearly targeting us' Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 11, 2014, 09:47:12 AM**

Triste shook her head, climbing down and landing next to Vergil. They really *were* after her.. But why? She was sure Vergil would be the focus of their attention - if he wasn't, then there was only one reason why Kalis would be interested in her. *But how the hell could he know?*

She turned to look at the waterfall, her eyes fixing on the water as it thundered down. If the Ivitz found out that she was about to let this information slip, the repercussions on her could be... substantial. But the way things were going, maybe revealing why she could be of so much interest would be safer. She swallowed and glanced at Vergil. *Even to him*.

"I... might know why they'd be after me." Rubbing the side of her jaw where Veranus had struck her, Triste turned to Vergil. "If the Ivitz knew that I told you what I'm about to, I could be in *serious* trouble." After staring at him to make sure he got the message, she took a deep breath. "Kalis might not be interested in *me*, exactly. It's more the... information I could present him with. My brain's been modified to give me a neural link to the Ivitz Federation's entire defense network. It lets me communicate with the lead members of the Federation, and - more importantly - gives me direct access to the information passing between the various fleets and defense forces. So if Kalis ever managed to get his hands on that kind of data... he'd know everything. All the Ivitz's strategies, all plans taking place - Kalis would be one step ahead of us, and the Federation would be powerless."

Triste clenched her jaw. "It's the Ivitz's greatest secret, how they've managed to secure their power. There's a number of us that have the ability, but nobody else is meant to know - not even other agents working for the Ivitz. So when I was trying to think why Kalis would be interested in me, I didn't think... I still don't know how he could have found out. But we have to work under the assumption that if he's going to this much trouble, then he must know." She looked Vergil directly in the eyes. "Kalis *can't* be allowed to gain access to it. At any cost. Even if it means..." she pointed a finger to her temple and mimed pulling a trigger. "And if for some reason I'm not able to, I want you to promise that *you* will."

Axel blinked. "It's okay, don't be sorry. Hey, you're okay, aren't you? Nothing hit you?" He quickly looked her over, but apart from some small glass fragments on her dress, she seemed alright. He brushed it off and gave her a shaky smile. "Okay... it looks like we're fine."

He looked at Tony and grimaced. "Oh yeah... lovely... but not enough bullets and close calls, if you ask me." He saw his legs were shaking, and he willed himself to calm down. They weren't out of the woods yet, and losing his nerve now wouldn't help anyone. He took a deep breath and scratched his head, nodding across at Soren. "Alright, I'll, ah... I'll help put on the other tyre." He flashed a grin at Tony. "Thanks for the cover back there... for a second I thought I was gonna have to get used to looking a lot more, ah... holey than usual."

Axel walked around the car to the second shredded tyre and shrugged his shoulders. "I've got two ideas who those guys were. They were either the worst tour guides in the world or -" he gestured in Vergil's direction, where the gecko was talking with Triste - "It was Kalis' guys trying to stop him. Though I'd be willing to bet on the tour guides idea." He looked over at Lily. "I hope Ejlert's friendlier than *they* were. Especially when he finds out I'm involved with his mom." The rat stopped himself, realising it probably wasn't the best time to make a joke like that. "Sorry."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 11, 2014, 10:40:04 AM**

Vergil could tell what Triste was going to say needed to be kept secret, so he allowed her to pull him aside so she could relay the information. The gecko habitually chewed on his lip as he listened, taking in the information with a steely gaze, looking for all the world as if his brain were processing it all with the efficiency of a super-computer. "I see..." He said slowly here, digesting it. "You... my god... the entire defense network... that would explain it!" he gasped softly, shaking his head. "So... it's not just the warship he's after... he wants it all... to know our every move before we even make it! That... that makes sense... but how did he find out?" he asked, more to himself than to her, as he knew she didn't have the answer to that.

He tapped his fingers on his snout, drumming them thoughtfully. But then she asked him to kill her if she was threatened with capture if she wasn't capable of doing so herself. "What?" he gasped, going paler than usual as his eyes bulged out at this. "No! I-I couldn't!" he shook his head, almost fearfully here, his voice stammering. "I don't believe in... sacrificing others like that... that's... terrible." he said softly, lowering his eyes and averting his gaze from her.

Swallowing hard, he finally looked up at her again after a moment. "Triste... I can't promise you that... but... I promise if it comes to that... which it won't because I'm going to keep you safe no matter what... then I'll assess the situation and make a judgment based on what I think the best course of action to be. It won''t come to that, OK? It won't." Vergil said sternly. "Because I'm going to keep you safe... all right?" Vergil told her sternly, the conviction of a steel wall behind his words. "No one gets left behind... no one." he said resolutely.

He then turned, and headed towards the others now, flexing his wrist to crack it and exercise it after having been using his blade for the past several minutes.

Tony was smiling at Axel's jokes, and shaking his head. "Yeah... if you can't laugh at your imminent death, what *can* you laugh at?" the ferret asked, chuckling here at Axel's "holey" comment. "I dunno... maybe they *were* guides pissed off we didn't take their tour... somehow though... I doubt that." Tony stuck out his tongue and jogged over to the back of his Rover to get the tire out and roll it over to Axel.

As he was performing this task, Vergil spoke up as he rejoined the others. "They were Kalis's men... that monitor... he was friends with Kalis... I remember a little about him. Makes sense he'd be one of Kalis's best after Kalis killed Rex. They were after me." he lied to the others, keeping Triste's secret safe for now. "The waypoint is a few miles ahead... but we're gonna have to reach the top of the mountain... Tony brought some climbing equipment, so hopefully none of you are too banged up to do some rock scaling." the gecko commented here, looking around at the group.

Tony had by now rolled the tire over to the rat. "Sure! I mean what are we gonna do? Turn around and go home? We came this far after all..." the ferret commented wryly.

Mace continued pondering his next move, then finally spoke to Marion over the comm link. "Would you be comfortable making contact with them to gain further information?" he asked her here. "I know you're more a security agent but... is that something you could do?" he inquired.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 11, 2014, 10:09:38 PM**

Lily crawled out of the Jeep, holding her chest and wincing. "Is anybody wounded?" she asked. She glanced at Soren. "How are you feeling?" she asked him.

Still, she couldn't help smirk at Axel's joke despite the situation. *It's nice to see most of us still have the same survivalist spirit that got us through last time,* she thought.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 13, 2014, 03:47:44 AM**

Triste stared out at the waterfall as Vergil walked away, his words replaying in her mind. *He... really has changed...* She looked over her shoulder and watched him walk towards the rest of the group, chewing her swollen lip thoughtfully. After a moment, she sighed and shook her head, almost irritably, and turned to make her way over and join the group.

Axel pulled the ruined tyre off, slid the new one onto the frame then started tightening the lug nuts back on. After several minutes, he stood back up and rolled his shoulders. "Right, that's done. I guess I heard wrong down there, but it sounded like you said we're going to use climbing equipment?" He chuckled.

"You've got a problem with that?" Triste asked as she came up behind the others, folding her arms.

Axel's chuckle was cut off with a strangled sound. "You... you're serious? We need to climb?" He gulped. "Climb *high*?"

"So? You've never gone rock scaling before?"

"Oh no... as a technician, we've all got to pass the rock scaling exam. I'm an expert, trust me." He rubbed a hand through his hair, unknowingly messing it up with black grease, and blinked. "Okay... can't, ah... can't hurt to try new things, I guess." Axel looked at Tony. "Just as long as the equipment doesn't make my ass look big," he tried weakly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 13, 2014, 05:23:51 AM**

Seeing that everyone else was just kind of standing around, Tony sighed, and went to change the second tire while Axel worked on the first. "Oh I don't think you'll have to worry about that." the ferret grunted, beginning to pull off the nuts with a spanner from his Rover. "Besides... strong guy like you with those augmented arms... climbing rocks should be a piece of cake, right?" he asked, grinning as he looked over at Axel from the other side of the vehicle. "You can't get muscle fatigue like the rest of us, right?"

Vergil shook his head at Lily's question. "No... just some cuts and bruises." He indicated the cuts on his arms from the glass, and rubbed his side a bit from where Varanus had struck him. "Thanks, though." He gave Lily an affirmative nod.

Tony swapped out the tires and began tightening up the nuts. Vergil gazed straight at Axel now, his large eyes calm and reassuring. "You'll be fine, Mr. Whent. If you can survive killer droids and the Death Road, you can survive a less than 150 foot climb. Just remember to stay calm... panicking leads to more chances of an accident occurring. Maintain your cool and stay collected. Just think of making it through... for Lily's sake." Vergil suggested.

"And... theeere we go!" Tony grunted, making sure the last nut couldn't move any further to the right. "Provided we're all good, we got about another 20 minutes down this road and then we'll be at the spot. As for a first aid kit... uh it's one of the bags. Can't remember who packed it though." Tony confessed, scratching his head and wiping his brow. Damn it was humid in this jungle! His fur was practically matted to his body and his clothes were matted to his fur; not a pleasant situation.

Vergil looked to Triste. "Need any patching up before we go?" he asked her, knowing she'd gotten the worst of the exchange between herself and Varanus, unless of course Varanus was dead... but Vergil didn't sense that.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 13, 2014, 05:42:49 AM**

I suggest we patch up any injuries that we can, cuts bruises, and the like, before climbing.'' Marita said . ' Who's hurt the worst?"
- Rose went to working digging through the bags and finally dug them out of Vergils bag. " found it, she said, wiping sweat from her brow. the humidity made it feel like it was close to

90. Roses clothes stuck to some of her cuts, leaving streaks of red where the clothes absorbed the blood from the cuts, sweat caused streaks to run down her arms as some of the blood trickled off her arms onto the ground.
_ Marie was helping to sweep out some of remaining glass out of Marita's Rover. There were bullet holes in the seats, and the windshields and back windows were gone, the remaining windows had holes in them from debris hitting them..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 13, 2014, 07:22:42 AM**

"I'm fine," Soren said as he gently lowered the car back down. He then winced as he heard the mention of scaling a sheer cliff.

"Wait, we climb up there?" He pointed to one of the peaks high above the ground.

"Affirmative," Marion replied. "Marion out."

She released her anchors and fell backwards from the cliff. As she did so, her flying frame's engines revved up and propelled her forward. Thinking that posing as a tourist with a broken flying frame would arouse the least suspicion, she cut the engines and activated a smoke charge in one of the engines.

The Human soon glided towards the group. Thick black smoke trailed from her right wing engine.

Soren happened to look up as he wiped sweat from his brow. As he did so, he saw a line of thick black smoke in the sky and it appeared to be heading for them!

"The fuck!?" He snatched a pair of compnoculars from the bag and trained them on the object trailing the smoke. His jaw dropped. "Shit! Guys! We've got a frame-flyer coming in for a emergency landing!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 13, 2014, 08:06:28 AM**

Vergil shook his head. "No, no. We're climbing up there." Vergil corrected Soren, pointing to the top of the sheer sides above the road, about 100 feet above them. "The waypoint is on top of the Yungas Road... so technically, we only need to climb above the road." he explained.

But his thoughts and speech were interrupted by the personal glider belching out black smoke. "Shit!" Vergil exclaimed, noting the troubled look of the flying frame. "Get back!" he ordered, waving everyone back. "Give it room to land!" He held up his hand, ready to telekinetically catch the glider in case it threatened one of the Rovers, and to save the reckless tourist's life.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 13, 2014, 08:31:25 AM**

Lily glanced at all the climbing equipment. "Thank you'd be able to help me figure out what I need to put on, and how?" she asked Triste. "I've never willingly gone rock-climbing in my life, at least as far as I know."

While Lily used to be quite fit before she transferred her conscience into a clone body in Lanthae, the logistics of the clone body having never exercised a day in its growth-accelerated life had taken away her muscles and left an awful lot of baby fat around the curves. She'd since repeatedly learned that a body lacking in fitness was far tougher to work out in than the toned, decently muscled one she'd had before.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 13, 2014, 04:55:34 PM**

Triste shook her head at Vergil. "No, I'm fine. It wasn't my favourite tooth he knocked out. Let's just focus on getting up there." In truth, the torn area of her gum where it had been torn out hurt like hell, but there were more important things to worry about.

She looked at Lily. "Of course. It's not hard to get the hang of." Her eyes flicked over to Axel. "Well, not for most people."

Axel, who'd been staring up open-mouthed at where Vergil was pointing, heard her tone and snapped his gaze down to her. "Hey!"

Triste gave a small smirk at him, wincing at the pain it caused in the side of her mouth, and headed over to Lily. She was about to start explaining what piece of equipment went where, when Soren warned the group about the inbound glider. Turning, the spider gecko eyed the figure warily as they approached.

Moving around the car to stand closer to the group, Axel bit his lip as he gazed up at the smoke billowing from the broken craft. Something tightened in his gut. It could be completely innocent... but after all they'd been through he'd learned that it was worth being suspicious around the unexpected.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 14, 2014, 09:50:59 PM**

Marion circled around to bleed off speed from her "broken" flying frame. When she had bled off enough speed, she descended in preparation to land. While most flying frames relied on an exoskeleton to absorb the impact of landing, Marion opted to use her artificial legs instead.

Unfortunately, she miscalculated and came in too fast. She deployed the anchoring spikes on her legs, carving small gouges in the road as they slowed her down. To further slow herself down, Marion used her left arm (which had a line thrower built in) to launch a projectile that embedded itself deep into the nearest rock face.

She breathed a sigh of relief as the cable grew taut and stopped her mere inches from the edge. Tumbling over the edge was not exactly a problem because of her flying frame but if she flew off, that instantly blew her cover as a tourist with a broken flying frame. Marion grabbed the cable with both arms and carefully reeled herself in.

Once she was safely on solid ground, she severed the cable, leaving it to dangle from the rock face.

Soren put the compnoculars away and rushed to help Marion. "Are you okay, sir?"

Marion took off her helmet and tucked it under her arm, revealing a middle-aged Chinese woman. "I could be better." She retracted the wings on her flying frame.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 15, 2014, 10:52:23 AM**

The pilot was revealed to be a woman of Asian origin, and Vergil relaxed upon seeing she posed no immediate threat. With their string of luck lately, you never knew. Clearing his throat, he stepped forward. "Yes well... I'm glad you're safe, but if you need a ride I'm afraid you're out of luck if you're going back to La Paz. We can't retrace our steps at this point unfortunately thanks to some crazy gunmen back the way we came. Bandits most likely." Vergil lied, but didn't feel ashamed in doing so. They were losing enough time out here as was, and they weren't ultimately here to run a charity service after all.

"To be honest..." he continued here. "We aren't going much further down this road, so I'm not sure we're your best bet for assistance out here. But other motorists should be along at some point if you need a ride somewhere. If not, you'll have to wait until we're done with our 'sightseeing' before you can hitch a ride with us back to La Paz, and we'll gladly take you. Sorry for the abruptness, but we're on a bit of a schedule here..." Vergil stated, glancing back down to the bend, behind which he knew Varanus's men lay in wait, repairing their Jeep to quite possibly continue the chase.

Tony finished changing out the second tire and stood up, wiping his brow again and giving Axel a nod. "Right! I think that about does it for the repair. I couldn't find a lug wrench, so I had to make do with a spanner, but I got the tire on there." Brushing his paws off against his pants, the ferret gave out a "hoo!" of satisfaction that the job was over with.

"Good... then let's get moving." Vergil stated. "However..." he regarded the large flying frame with skepticism. "I don't think we can fit that thing into our Rovers. You'll have to ditch it here, so I hope it wasn't too expensive." the gecko commented. "Oh yes... and I'm Vergil... Vergil Speicher." he introduced himself.

"Tony!" Tony waved, not bothering with his last name for the moment, as he knew some tended to react negatively to the Stracci part, even in this corner of the globe.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 15, 2014, 11:20:03 AM**

Marion sighed. She stepped out the frame, leaving it standing on its own. She pressed a button on the frame and watched as it folded in on itself, leaving a heavy but ordinary suitcase.

"It's a foldable one," she replied.

Soren went to pick up the "suitcase" but couldn't even budge the object. He grunted with exertion but only suceeded in moving it an inch.

Marion chuckled and effortlessly picked up the "suitcase", her powerful mechanized arms whirring slightly. "It's a bit heavy. Anyways, I'll follow until I can find an airport or bus stop."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 15, 2014, 11:50:42 AM**

Axel squinted at Marion's mechanical arms as she lugged the compacted flying frame with apparent ease. "Why couldn't *I* have been fitted with arms like those?" he asked wistfully, noting how heavy it appeared to have been for Soren. Shrugging dejectedly, Axel leaned forwards and folded his arms across the front of the car. "We should hurry. The faster we get there, the quicker we get this climb over with. And the more distance between us and the... ah, bandits." He waved a hand at Marion. "I'm Axel, by the way."

Triste frowned at the newcomer, not giving her name for the moment. "We're not exactly tourists," she told Marion, her brow knitted. "I'm not sure you're going to like where we're heading." Triste looked over at Vergil and lowered her voice. "Letting her follow us to the waypoint isn't a good idea, Vergil. We have no idea who she is - and even if she's just a civilian, we can't risk her screwing things up for us."

"Guys!" Axel called over anxiously, drumming his fingers against the car's bonnet. "We going?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 15, 2014, 05:59:39 PM**

"Of course not, I know that." Vergil responded to Triste in hushed tones. "I'm not gonna let her accompany us up the cliff, after all. She'll have to wait until we get back." he quietly informed the spider gecko. He noticed Axel impatiently calling for them to get moving, and the white gecko nodded his head. "All right! We're coming along then! Let's reach this point!" he called over, jogging back to Tony's Rover. Marion would have to go with them, as there was no room in Marita's Rover.

Starting up the engine, Tony got the Rover rolling again, glad to be moving away from the gunmen as quickly as they could. It wasn't much further on. Only about 20 more minutes of fur-raising driving along the edge of the North Yungas Road, and they arrived at a hairpin turn. There was a slightly wider area here to safely park off to the side to allow for traffic to still move by them while they left the Rovers to go rock-scaling, and Tony graciously pulled over.

"All right! This is the spot!" the ferret declared, putting the Rover in park and killing the engines.

"Right... let's go!" Vergil exited the vehicle now and moved to the trunk to retrieve the climbing gear. "Sorry." he told Marion. "But this is where we're going to leave you for a bit. This is something we've come here to do, and it doesn't concern you." the gecko stated as he raised the trunk's lid up and began rummaging through the luggage. "We'll be back in a few hours, by my estimate. Just wait here... or flag down a passing motorist if you desperately need a ride; the choice is yours."

Taking out several piton guns, the gecko began passing them out to those gathered around him. "We have four of these, so we'll have to make several trips, but basically just point, fire them at a spot close to the top... they have a range of 200 feet, so we should be fine getting them up there. Then..." He pulled out several harnesses. "Put these on, attach them to the ropes, and begin the ascent. Make sure you get good handholds as you go... if you slip, the ropes should hold you, so there isn't TOO much worry of plummeting but... be careful all the same." he instructed them, then turned, took aim, and fired off the piton. The rope lanced out into the air and upward, the metal spike becoming embedded close to the top of the cliff with a satisfying *clink*.

"Right... here we go." Vergil murmured, beginning to strap on the vest and fit it snugly around his smaller form. It was like a youth wearing an over sized life vest. He was almost engulfed by it, but he did manage to get it on tightly. Attaching the carabiner to the rope, he gave it a tug a few times and then set off on his climb, jumping up and getting both handholds and footholds. Grunting, he bared his teeth and began hoisting himself up hand over hand, climbing higher to start his ascent a get a pace going.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 15, 2014, 10:55:27 PM**

"Pleased to meet you. I'm Mariah Yin," Marion said, shaking Axel's hand.

Soren was strapping himself into the harness. His rifle and a few spare magazines were strapped across his back.

He took aim with the piton gun and launched the metal harpoon. When he heard the *clink* of the harpoon penetrating the rock, he gave the cable a gentle tug. "Here goes," he muttered clipping himself into the harness and slowly climbing up the rock face.

Marion watched as the group began climbing. She needed to make sure they were all out of sight before she went digging through their cars.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 16, 2014, 01:46:55 AM**

Triste was helping Lily fasten her equipment. "Just do what... he says... and you'll be fine. There." She finished tightening the harness around Lily's body and stooped down to pick up her own piton gun. "And just keep looking up."

Axel had been watching, and strapped his own harness on to match how Triste had done it. "Oh really? We were going to spend the whole time looking *down*," he muttered, attaching the equipment to the rope.

Looking back at him, Triste fired the gun up the cliff and heard a clunk as the point hooked into the rock. "That looks good on you."

Beaming, the rat looked down at himself. "Really?"

"No." Triste quickly fastened her straps, and looked between him and Lily. "See you at the top." Giving one last suspicious glance at Marion, she turned and started the climb up.

Axel scowled and poked his equipment. "Would this look good on *anyone*?" Reaching up, he tested the rope's strength - it seemed to be holding well. "Alright... well, let's do this," he sighed, wrapping his mechanical fingers around two handholds and pulling himself up. "Shout if you need any help, honey," he called across to Lily, climbing higher. "20 credits says I reach the top first!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 16, 2014, 01:26:04 PM**

The climb wasn't particularly strenuous, but it was challenging, Vergil would give it that. He grunted as he pulled himself up, figuring the faster he got this done, the sooner he'd reach the top. The rocks were mostly well embedded into the cliff face, but there was a lot of vegetation to navigate as well. Spitting a plant out of his face, the gecko brushed it aside and continued on climbing, hauling himself up as he exerted himself to make this effort.

Suddenly, he found his fingers suctioning on somewhat well to the sides of the rocks. "Hey!" he exclaimed, noting the effect. "I didn't know I could do this!" But then again, it did make sense, as he was mostly a gecko. "Oh this'll make things easier!" he grinned, practically walking up the side of the cliff now, albeit on all fours. Putting his head down, he moved much more rapidly up the side of the mountain's face, not hesitating as he set his sights on the lip above him.

It wasn't too long before the nimble gecko reached the top, pulling himself up into dense jungle before him on a gradual upward slope. Unbuckling himself, he smiled as Axel proposed a 20 credit competition with Lily. Who knew which of the two would make it up first? He dropped his harness down to Tony, who took hold of it and began strapping himself in. "That was quick!" the ferret called upward.

"Yeah well... never knew my fingers could stick to surfaces like that!" Vergil shouted back down.

Pulling the harness over himself, Tony exhaled heavily, looking up at the wall before him. "OK... I can do this..." he said, and ran forward, jumping up and getting a hold on the rock ledges and closing his eyes for a moment to let it sink in that he was securely on and not plummeting back down to the road. "OK... ha! I did it!" he declared happily, grinning widely as he held himself on. But he noticed he still had a ways to go, so he stopped congratulating himself and pushed on, his muscles already starting to burn as he began scaling the mountain, reaching out for a plant that snapped off in his paw, causing his left side to flail outward a bit dangerously.

"OK! Don't grab the plants!" Tony reminded himself, talking to himself to keep him calm. Lashing out with his left arm, he caught hold of a rock, and pressed onward, not intending to quit; he could rest at the top after all.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 16, 2014, 05:21:16 PM**

Lily smiled. "You're on!" she retorted, mainly to keep him in a good mood. Fashioning her harness, she began climbing arm over arm.

In a few minutes she was huffing and puffing. She couldn't see where Axel was, but her completely unfit body was not taking this hike well.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2014, 05:51:15 PM**

(Congrats on 6000 LBT!)
Rose Marie and Marita began climbing up, each wore a harness and were making decent progress up the cliffside. Rose ripped out some vegetation so Marie, who was beneath her could get a firm hold. Marita huffed and puffed as she climbed up, her claws not really suited for grabbing holds for very long.. but she made do..they were about a third of the way up the cliff now..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 16, 2014, 07:32:33 PM**

Tony was about even with the trio, struggling to keep up his pace. "God! I'm so not in shape for this!" he bemoaned, noting how difficult it was to keep going. "Hey Vergil! I don't suppose you could like... levitate me up there, right?" Tony asked, grimacing as he battled to hold on.

"Sorry! Not really!" Vergil called back down. "I still need to carry your weight mentally the whole time... not something I can sustain for prolonged periods!"

"Dammit!" Tony cursed under his breath. That would've been way too easy. Looking over at Marita, he decided to try and make conversation to keep him distracted from the climb. "So Marita... you uh... you used to be a stripper, right? And I know you like... are with Marie and Rose... but like... do you like guys at all, or not really?" he asked, grunting again as he pulled himself up a bit further, moving onto a small outcropping of rocks which gave him a foothold. Of all the things to distract himself with... but the ferret supposed there were worse things to be distracted by whilst climbing a practically sheer cliff face. But still... why he was thinking of Marita in this moment was a bit strange, but he'd just roll with it... the words were out of his mouth after all, and there were no take-backs.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2014, 08:10:45 PM**

An Interesting set of questions Tony. To answer your first question, no I was never a stripper, that was Rose' Marita said as she kept climbing.' We both had drug addictions, but went about sustaining our habits in different ways. She sold her body, I sold my talents with computers. As for guys, well I've had relationships with guys before, in high school and college, but I've found my relationships with girls to be.. well more fulfilling, in an emotional sense. In the strictest sense, I'm bisexual, with preference towards women. So I don't hate guys, if that's what you are thinking. And Tony, if you're wondering about that kiss the girls and I gave Anne, fret not, it was just a friendly goodbye kiss, nothing more than that. We're not involved with her in anyway, other that the fact shes a roommate of ours and is a friend. " Marita continued as she kept climbing up. she was approaching the halfway point "So you can rest easy on that score, and I promise I wont kiss Anne like that again."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 16, 2014, 08:22:45 PM**

"Oh uh... well no, actually..." Tony responded, trying to keep pace with the girls. "The thing with Anne... I dunno if I have a chance with her or not. She didn't really seem... well I dunno. Maybe when I go back I could ask her again but... actually I was asking out of interest for you." Tony admitted now quickly, wondering just what he was saying. "Thought had just crossed my mind really... an innocent little flight of fancy, I guess." he stated nervously, sweating profusely from the heat, humidity, and exertion he was subjecting his body to.

He tried to laugh it off or act like it wasn't a big deal. He guessed the mind could do strange things when it wasn't sure how much longer it had to live. "So just thought I'd ask is all..." he stammered, wrestling with the rock face as he got higher. Vergil was clearer now, and getting closer in his vision.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2014, 08:46:21 PM**

"Are you interested in me Tony?" Marita's face soon had a smirk on it.. ' Well, if you're asking me out, Sure, I'll give you a shot. Pick out a place to eat and dinner time and I'll mark it on my calender. First things first though, we need to finish climbing.. looking down from heights isnt good for the appetite " She said as she kept climbing. Marita was slightly ahead of Tony now, which Marie and Rose a bit behind him. it was probably another 25-30 feet to the top now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 16, 2014, 08:57:07 PM**

"Oh! Well uh... sure!" Tony responded with some enthusiasm, or at least as much as he could muster climbing up a near vertical face of rocks. "I uh... how about after the waypoint, before our flight back?" he suggested, straining a bit as he suddenly felt his legs slip. "Whoa!" he exclaimed, fighting to hold on. Closing his eyes, he waited for the dizzying sensation of vertigo to pass, and stared back up the cliff with determination.

"Dammit... not getting stuck on this mountain!" he snarled, and began hoisting himself up paw over paw. "I hear La Paz is nice generally all year..." he said with trepidation evident in his voice. But he was only a few feet away now, and with a last cry, he pulled himself up and over the ledge, Vergil grabbing hold and tugging him up the last few feet. "Thanks!" Tony breathed, rolling over onto his back and gazing at the sky as he placed a worn paw on his belly, stomach rising and falling as he caught his breath.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 16, 2014, 09:04:02 PM**

Soren was sweating profusely as he hauled himself up the cliff face. He wasn't totally out of shape but he wasn't used to this degree of vigorous exercise. Luckily, being a Human and thus of Simian heritage, he didn't find it as hard as he thought it would be.

"Hey Tony, you get a weird feeling about Mariah?" he said as he clung to a small handhold in the cliff face. "Like she's not who she says she is?" Being an augmentworker, he knew that the woman's augments were a bit overbuilt for simple jungle adventuring. Especially how he saw her effortlessly lift the folded flying frame with one arm.

Marion noticed that the group was out of sight. Double-checking to make sure no one else was around, she retrieved a lockpick from a compartment in her left arm. Heading over to the trunk of Tony's rover, she got to work picking the lock.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2014, 09:09:31 PM**

Sure, thats fine. Never been to La Paz, or Sucre for that matter. ' Marita said as she finished her climb, just before Tony finished his. Rose and Marie climbed up a few minutes later, but were worn from the long climb and needed a couple minutes to recuperate.. ok' we've made it..' Marie said, wiping the sweat from her brow.. ' How far until the waypoint?' She asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 16, 2014, 09:18:32 PM**

"Cool!" Tony responded to Marita breathlessly. "Me neither... uh... yeah! Totally!" he replied to Soren now. "I don't trust her at all! Way too convenient and she had some pretty sweet augments for a clueless tourist. I don't think... I left anything in the Rover that'd give us away though..."

"The really important thing is this." Vergil stated, pulling the locator out of his pouch now. "It shows us directly to the waypoint, which at this point is..." He fiddled with it, adjusting the resolution and studying the distance on the screen. "Half a mile in that direction!" He gestured with his hand, chopping it downward and straight out in the direction they needed to head. "But let's wait till we have everyone, shall we?" he suggested, looking down the cliff side to see if he could spot Axel and Lily and especially Triste, who was foremost in his mind right now.

"Well... I don't think I have anything in my luggage aside from clothes and guns... and she's welcome to either, though I might have something to say about that when I get back down... hoo!" he sighed as he rolled over and tried to push himself up to standing. "OK... time to... do this..." he said with reluctance, groaning as he got to his feet. "Ugggh! That was... a workout." he confessed, shaking his head here and brushing his paws off on his pants.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 16, 2014, 09:44:33 PM**

Soren hauled himself up to a small ledge and took a seat to rest and recover. He nodded. "We need to get rid of her."

Marion popped open the Rover's trunk and dug through the cargo. "Clothes, hiking supplies...just a bunch of...hello!" She retrieved a 12-gauge automatic shotgun. She smiled. Maybe these guys were government operatives.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 17, 2014, 03:20:32 AM**

Axel kept putting one hand above the other, reaching up to grip handholds in the rock and pull himself higher. He resolutely kept his eyes above chest level, the wind starting to buffet his hair into his face distractingly. The climb wasn't as hard as he'd thought it was going to be... but he'd still feel a lot better when there was actual ground beneath him, rather than the small, narrow ledges that he was precariously pushing his feet into. Axel raised his eyes and saw that the top of the cliff was getting close. Ahead a short distance, he could see Triste almost up and over. "We're almost there!" he called across to Lily, picking up speed. He felt a small sprinkling of dust and dirt shower his head, then a small pebble bonked him between the eyes and he yelped. "Hey! Watch it!"

"Sorry!" From above, Triste could see she'd arrived at the peak. Reaching up, she clasped the edge of the cliff and pulled herself over with both hands. Standing up and brushing herself down, she leaned back over the edge, grasped the spike and yanked it out. Turning back to the rest of the group that had already arrived, Triste nodded. "That went well." Removing her gear, she made her way over and leaned next to the others as they recovered. "I suppose it'd be too naive to hope the rest of this goes just as easily."

From behind, Axel's faltering voice drifted up. "We're there! Afterburners engaged!" One hand came over, then the other, and the rat heaved himself into view. Shaking his hair out of his eyes, he looked up at the others and grinned. "We did it! I feel like I could conquer a mountain!" He looked back over the edge, and instantly looked unsettled again. "But not right now..." Flattening himself on his stomach, he reached down and stretched a hand out for Lily.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 17, 2014, 12:22:08 PM**

"Get rid of her, eh? Well then we can always dump her with the next motorist that wanders by, and she can be someone else's problem." Tony suggested, straightening up and looking back down the cliff. "Heh... she's going through our stuff... looks like you were right, Soren." Tony nodded. "Anyway, let's get Lily up here and press on. We got a waypoint to find."

"Right... here..." Vergil reached down, and began hauling up Lily's rope, straining a bit as he wasn't terribly physically strong, but he used his mental abilities to provide short lifts to her, making it easier for her to reach the top and reduce the strain on himself. Finally, Axel was able to get her the rest of the way up, and they were good to go. "Let's bring the ropes up with us, so we can't be followed all that easily... though I'm not sure of course what her capabilities are." Vergil stated, yanking the piton out of the cliff and beginning to pull his rope up.

Tony started doing the same with his as well. "Look, if she somehow still manages to follow us, we deal with her then, all right? No need worrying about it if it won't happen just yet."

"Right... well let's press on. We have a bit of a hike through the jungle, and then we'll be there. I imagine we'll start seeing some ruins before long." Vergil commented, slinging the rope over his shoulder. Taking point, he held the navigator out in front of him, starting to follow it as they entered the thick jungle on top of the mountain now. Insects buzzed around them, and the cry of birds could be heard in numerous trees. Vegetation crunched under his feet as he walked, and he noticed by now the sun was sinking as late afternoon wore on. It would be evening or perhaps even after dark by the time they arrived... hopefully that wouldn't complicate matters. "Lovely stroll through the jungle, eh?" Vergil asked, slapping a mosquito on his neck and killing it with a satisfying splat. He didn't have to worry about picking up any diseases down here: the Federation had provided vaccinations for all of them before departure.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 17, 2014, 02:14:59 PM**

Soren followed. A quick yank on the rope and the piton came free. He placed it back in the gun and tucked the launcher back into its holster. "All I can safely say is that we can assume that her strength and stamina are significantly above Baseline levels. Also, judging from what I saw of her arms, she might have tools in them."

He swore as a mosquito landed on him. He flicked it off before it did anything. Sighing, he sprayed himself with more insect repellant.

Marion sighed as dusk approached. All she found were some weapons and usual travelling gear.

"Mace. This is Marion," she said into her throat mike. "The group I'm with is quite heavily armed but there is nothing that suggests they're government or corporate operatives. Right now, all I know is that they ascended a mountain that I'm currently at the foot of. What are my orders? Over."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **yeswonderful** on **June 17, 2014, 07:16:54 PM**

"Well, they're an exuberant bunch."

In the dense undergrowth several hundred yards from the top of the cliff, a dark form crouched. Sweat rolled down Kaien's back and insects buzzed about her face, but she remained still, watching and listening. She had heard the voices of the group filtering up from the bottom of the cliff, and then watched as each hauled themselves over the precipice. The woman continued to watch as they moved away from her, their conversation fading into the forest. One word, however, caught her attention as they left the cliffside.

Ruins.

So, that was their purpose.

"How interesting," she murmured to herself. Kaien unfolded herself from a crouch and made her way through the jungle behind them.

"Lovely evening for a jaunt, isn't it?" she called nonchalantly, a hand on one of the shoulder straps of her pack. Her jacket was open, and a pistol could be seen clearly at her hip, her augmented right hand resting upon the grip of the weapon. Over her left shoulder an energy blade handle protruded. Her expression was that of light amusement, her body posture seemingly relaxed despite being faced with the heavily-armed group in front of her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 17, 2014, 08:04:46 PM**

Soren scowled. He kept his hand near his piton gun. While it lacked the range of his rifle, the hardened metal harpoon it fired was just as deadly as a bullet. "I suppose it is a nice evening for a walk. So what brings you here?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 17, 2014, 08:15:15 PM**

"Yeah well... we'll deal with her when we get back down. I agree though... she seems more heavily augmented than normal." Vergil gave a nod here. A noise came from behind them now however, and a voice to match. Whirling around, Vergil went for his blade, but didn't draw it just yet, his hand only hovering near it as he gazed upon the newcomer.

Tony had to admit, Kaien had caught him by surprise, and he jumped a bit at the voice, spinning around as well with his paw shooting down to the pistol he'd brought along strapped to his side. "Jeez... a lovely jaunt you say?" he asked, noting the temperature was starting to drop as the sun set. They may be in the jungle, but they were still on top of a mountain, and night could bring rather chilly temperatures up here.

Another one Vergil thought to himself, eyes narrowed a bit here. "Ahem... and you are?" he asked. "What brings you to the top of such a remote peak?" he asked at just about the same time Soren did. Somehow, he thought he already knew her response though. He tapped a finger on his blade, ready to draw it if necessary, but noticed she was rather relaxed, and hostile action was not likely to follow given her posture.

Mace heard Marion's query, and sighed a bit here. "No... I suspect rummaging through their belongings wouldn't confirm their status as government agents. If they do work for the Federation, they'd be much too careful to leave IDs lying around after all. I take it you didn't worm your way into their good graces, then? I can't say I expected you would though, given your augments. Hmmm... have to earn their trust somehow... but before that... is it possible for you to ID their attackers? Did you pick up anything useful about them?" he asked here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 17, 2014, 09:06:11 PM**

Lily staggered to her feet, panting heavily. "Thanks..." she groaned.

"Hey. Turn around."

While Marion was talking and searching, a motley gang of five had crept out of the woods and had an array of handheld rifles and shotguns aimed at her. Their leader, a heavily scarred female fox, pointed an unwavering pistol aimed perfectly between her eyes.

"We're claiming these vehicles and everything in them. You have one chance to turn and walk away, or lock yourself in a trunk and we'll ditch you somewhere. Do I make myself clear?"

Emilena had made it clear to her gang members; if the stranger did anything that they merited to void her one chance, they had the right to fire without waiting for approval. Flora in particular seemed yearning to take that opportunity.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 18, 2014, 03:13:24 AM**

"Lovely?! That's what you call this?!" Axel stood slouching at the edge of the group, his face twisted in discontent. After only a few paces into the jungle, the oppressive humidity had started to work its way through his clothes, making him feel sluggish, and in an attempt to keep cool he'd taken off his shirt and tied it around his waist. Unfortunately, this had made him an even easier target for the bugs flitting around, and he'd spent most of the time cursing and slapping his body with disgust.

The rat fixed a glum expression on Kaien and shook his head. "Lovely... lovely isn't the word..." He felt a tickle, and out of the corner of his eye Axel saw a spider scuttle into view on his shoulder. His face twitched.

Triste folded her arms and stared back at the woman, her expression not changing at the cries and slaps coming from Axel behind her. Eyes narrowing as she focused on the pistol and energy blade, Triste nodded at Vergil's question. *She's not here for a 'jaunt' through the jungle...* "Have you been following us?"

"Yeah, bitch. Take a fucking hike," Rio reiterated, waving a small pistol towards Marion with one hand. The other was clasped around a blue ice lolly, which he was licking with satisfaction. Still pointing the gun, the boy turned to look up at Nairda and popped the ice lolly out of his mouth. "Can't we just lock her ass in the trunk anyway?" he asked. His tongue had taken on the same colour as the sugary treat.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 18, 2014, 05:42:36 AM**

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a lovely hike is not what i would call this.' Marita said looking at the newcomer. " We have business of our own to attend to, so you are free to go on your way." Marita was not keen on adding another to the group.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 18, 2014, 11:09:29 AM**

Marion frowned. There was no way she'd be able to take on all of them and come out unscathed. She decided to cut her losses.

"Fine, you win." She picked up her compacted flying frame and walked away from the vehicles. Routing around a large tree, she looked up at the high mountain and sighed. A climb would be too slow but at the same time, if she flew, her cover was blown. Making sure there was no one around, she unpacked her flying frame and donned it.

The metallic wings unfolded and the engines spooled up with a quiet cough. The woman then began to slowly rise into the humid air.

Soren looked over the woman. He didn't recognize the Augment nor could he tell what class of augments she had. Regardless, despite the weapons she carried, she seemed to be harmless.

"We're a bit pressed for time," he said. "So pardon us for not wanting to chat. The sun was already below the horizon and only the faintest slivers of light could still be seen.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **yeswonderful** on **June 18, 2014, 06:02:13 PM**

Kaien did not attempt to suppress a chuckle at the reaction of the group. Ranging from surprise to discontent, they responded to her appearance on the trail behind them. She shrugged and tilted her head to the side thoughtfully.

"I heard you come over the cliff. Seems an odd place, this jungle, to go for a group foray." She motioned to their weapons. "Even more odd to be loaded down as you are. It's not often I see anyone here, much less those such as yourselves. So, as a wanderer, currently of these parts," her tone darkened, and her eyes narrowed in the slightest, "perhaps it's best that I inquire as to why *you* are here."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 18, 2014, 06:16:09 PM**

Vergil stepped forward now, softening a tad. "Well to be frank, it's not your business. It's something we have to take care of, and it doesn't concern outsiders we don't know, I'm sorry." he apologized here, not being confrontational, but making it clear she wouldn't be coming. "We'd prefer it if we parted ways here with you, no offense."

Tony noted her announcement about how heavily armed they were. "Take our word for it... we aren't up to no good... if we were, we wouldn't be talking right now but most likely engaged in combat so... yeah. Time constraint, as said." the ferret reiterated what Soren had stated.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 19, 2014, 01:45:17 AM**

Triste kept her eyes fixed on Kaien, waiting to see how the woman would respond. Something about her set Triste on edge, and she had no qualms about displaying her suspicion openly and unapologetically. The corner of her mouth tightened - in the brief time they'd been speaking to this newcomer, the jungle had darkened slightly. They were losing light. "We really *are* in a hurry, and we're on important business. So if you know what's good for you, you'll turn around and forget about us." Her eyes narrowed. "And you won't follow."

Rio watched Marion go with a disappointed frown. "Aw. I wanted to lock her up." Looking towards the vehicles, he saw they'd already been broken open and his expression brightened again. "I call dibs on any of the good shit!" he grinned, dropping his lolly in the dust and running over.

Reaching the closest car, he made his way over to the boot and reached in, grasping one of the travel bags kept inside and pulling it closer. Unzipping it eagerly, he started rifling through the contents. "Shit. Crap," he muttered as he went through, pulling out various items of clothing and dumping them unceremoniously around him. "More shit." His expression creased as he realised that all these clothes seemed to be straight out of an old gangster movie. Rio pulled out a fancy looking cap and turned back to the rest of the gang, waving it around. "Who the fuck *dresses* like this?!" Turning, he tossed it like a frisbee and watched it sail over the edge of the road. Grinning, Rio turned his attention back to the contents of the car and started rummaging through other bags.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **yeswonderful** on **June 19, 2014, 08:21:03 PM**

Kaien motioned them onward with a waving of her augmented hand.

"Go on then, off with you all. Enjoy the bugs."

With a fleeting smile and tipping an informal salute, she turned and retreated into the undergrowth, quickly disappearing in the gathering darkness.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 19, 2014, 08:29:39 PM**

Soren swatted a mosquito away. "Call me suspicious but I think she's up to something."

He shook his head as it became dark. "Anyone remember to bring the headlamps?"

Marion flew partway up the mountain but then perched on a rock outcropping as she retracted her wings. Her grappling claws were extended to anchor her in place.

Thanks to her helmet having an inbuilt night vision system, the darkness posed no hinderance to her.

Her left arm's panels slid back, revealing her built-in piton gun. She took aim at one of the rock outcroppings and fired.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 19, 2014, 10:25:06 PM**

Vergil watched her go suspiciously, knowing there wasn't something right about this, and he didn't need to tap into her mind to read that. He was wary and on edge, knowing they were getting close to the ruins. "She might be close by, so don't drop your guard. We've had too many newcomers for this to be a coincidence." he commented.

Tony nodded, and the group pressed on into the jungle, the temperatures falling as darkness began overtaking the mountainside. Tony cursed his lack of foresight, but at least he had his fur to keep him warm. As for Vergil, he didn't seem to mind it so much, pressing on with determination in his orange eyes as they followed the navigator.

Before too long, upon a gradual slope, black forms rose up like teeth in the night. The moonlight bathed them in a soft glow, revealing them to be stone ruins that had mostly collapsed over the years thanks to the elements. A large, open area stretched out ahead of them, with some of the same paintings from before clearly visible on what remained of the walls. "Here we are!" Vergil declared, grinning as he made his way forward. He almost stumbled as blocks of stone came out of the Earth to meet his feet, the remnants of an ancient stairway leading up to the ruins clearly visible to him now.

It was strangely serene up here, but foreboding as well. The night air didn't stir as they advanced. The silent ruins were watching them, or at least that's how it seemed to the gecko. The remains of the walls were more like bared teeth or silent sentinels as opposed to a temple. The years had not been kind to this place, and it showed. It was like they were walking through a cemetery for giants, the massive stone slabs resembling tombstones 20 feet or more in height. It was unnerving to say the least.

"So this place looks cheery." Tony cracked, half expecting zombies to suddenly pop out of the ground. He kept his hand on his pistol, planning to go right for the headshots if that did occur. He'd played enough Left4Dead and Resident Evil to be ready for it, after all.

Vergil could clearly see the waypoint in the middle of the ruins. It's chrome-like surface glinted dully in the moonlight, the metal sphere sitting silently atop its podium. There was also a console that was badly rusted in front of it, and Vergil stopped upon reaching it. "Well... moment of truth... let's see if Rex is the only one capable of accessing this thing... in which case we're shit out of luck." Placing his finger on the activation screen, a sickly blue light suddenly burst in his face, causing him to blink. A garbled voice emanated from the console, slowly becoming coherent as the ancient device came to life.

"Greetings, travelers. Parameters prevent me from allowing you access to this place. Initiating neural scan now." Vergil silently prayed that either the machine was too broken to effectively perform this, or else he was one of the few who could gain access. A light-blue beam shot out and struck his forehead, but otherwise no other sensation was felt by the gecko. After a minute of this, the beam faded, and a green light appeared on the screen. "Neural pattern recognized. Welcome back, traveler." Vergil sighed gratefully, and relaxed visibly.

"Yes!" he whispered, but the sphere wasn't activating for some reason. Suddenly, a red light washed over the screen.

"Warning: Differences detected in neural patterns. Inconsistencies perceived. Conclusion: you are not the same traveler who programmed these parameters. Access denied."

"What?" Vergil asked, surprised. "Wait a minute! I've been here though! You said that! Isn't there some way to prove that?"

"I am only programmed to allow access to the one who programmed me. Processing... processing... unable to reconcile neural inconsistencies. Access denied." the console repeated.

"Dammit! Isn't there some way to show that I was one of the ones here before? Some way to prove it? Some way to unlock these parameters?" Vergil figured this machine was seriously malfunctioning, or worse, it did recognize him, but only accepted Rex as its programmer, which meant they were screwed anyway. "Some sort of other test? I can prove I was here before and that I can access the waypoint!" he demanded.

"Processing... processing... please wait... solution confirmed. You must face a trial by combat to prove you are a match with my data banks. Succeed, and you may progress. Fail and you will die." With that, the console blinked red over and over again, and suddenly, the ground began shaking.

"Oh shit! The hell?" Tony exclaimed, struggling to keep his balance as panels in the ground began to slide back, splitting the Earth and throwing up dirt as they moved away. Out of the ground, giant insects began to crawl. But not organic... they were metallic as proven by the glint they gave off in the low light. They weren't like the previous droids, however. These were agile looking, with four legs, long, thin bodies, and once again the arrowhead featured craniums. Long, prehensile tails whipped gracefully behind them, and they let out unearthly shrieks in the night that split the ears and caused Vergil to temporarily hold his hands over his ear holes to block out the banshee wails.

"Agh!" he gasped, noting two green lights blink to life on each of the creatures, creating ghostly sets of "eyes." There were nine in all this time, their tails cracking in the night and their legs digging into the ground as they got ready to charge. These roughly resembled cheetahs, or at least to Vergil they did. "Well... here we go again!" Vergil declared, igniting his energy blade, its red glow lighting up the night with an eerie ambiance. "I guess I have to prove I'm the warrior I was when I first visited this place with Rex and Kalis. I do remember we had to fight... but that's about it. All right... let's do it!" Vergil shouted, charging forward now towards one that sprang right towards him, its pointed front feet bared outwards. Suddenly, the feet sprouted multiple spikes, and Vergil just barely managed to dodge to the side in time. "Whoa!" he exclaimed, landing in the dirt a few feet away.

Tony pulled out his laser, figuring it'd be more useful here than his old-fashioned pistol. "Well Soren... you get your first taste of the killer droids... and I guess I do too!" Tony said now, gritting his teeth as he fired off a blast at the nearest one, only to watch in horror as the light beam refracted right off the surface. "Dammit! Must have weak points, like the other ones!" he shouted as the entire group was charged now by the machines...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 20, 2014, 12:02:45 AM**

Figuring that a steel harpoon that was designed to dig into solid rock would be more effective against an armored war machine than copper jacketed lead bullets, Soren opted to use the piton gun. He grunted as he dropped to avoid one of the droid's lunging at him.

Swearing profusely, he took aim at one of the glowing green eyes and pulled the trigger. The gunshot echoed painfully in the dark chamber.

(OOC - I'm picturing the droids as lean anthro Cheetahs but they're hunched over.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 20, 2014, 12:55:21 AM**

"Smart girl." Emilena sheathed her pistol. "Alright, ladies, its all ours. Tuck in."

Foley immediately popped the trunk and began checking the make and model of the car. "Steering column is locked, but I can get around it," he said to nobody in particular, as technicians have an annoying habit of doing.

Flora giggled as she grabbed the coat Rose had left in the backseat. "Ooh, doesn't this look splendid on me?" she curtsied sultrily at Rio. "Tell me I look *darling*..."

Nairda was busy stealing all the loose change from the glove compartments and drink holders. There wasn't much, this being a rented car, but he was certainly giving it his best shot.

Emilena glanced at the direction Marion had taken. "I think she's following the group. Well, that's our best chance of figuring where they're going. Nairda, with me. The rest of you, get these cars somewhere else and hold this position unless I radio you otherwise."

"Wait...we're staying behind?" asked Flora, lip quivering.

"No complaints here," shrugged Foley, who was already unscrewing the metal casing covering the wiring harness connector. Nairda seemed ready to volunteer Flora for his position, but knew better than to argue, and nervously exhaled and followed the leader.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 20, 2014, 04:20:55 AM**

"Oh *come on*! What the hell is it with these places and killer robots?!" Axel yelled, grabbing Lily and tugging her over to the side, out of sight behind one of the small, jagged ruins. Bending down, he quickly patted his pockets, feeling for a weapon - but he had nothing on him. "Shit..."

Gritting his teeth, he peeked over the top of the stone and saw Tony trying to shoot them. "That doesn't work!" he called over. "You've gotta break the weak points! They're at... hold on..." Axel switched his vision and focused on one of the machines charging around. He instinctively looked on their back... but there wasn't anything there. "What..." Then he saw a bright glow lower down on the robot's body, on its underside between the two rear legs - protected by its hunched posture and spiked legs. Axel glanced quickly at the other eight and saw the same glow in identical locations. "Guys, the weak points - they're between their back legs! In the... ah, special place!" He looked down and Lily and grimaced. "What kind of *weirdos* built these things?" Raising his head, Axel's face blanched when he saw one of the machines turn and fix its set of green 'eyes' on him. Swiveling its body, it charged across the grounds towards their position. "Aw, crap..." Scrabbling to his feet, he ran out, waving his arms, trying to lead the machine away from Lily. It started to close with him, quicker than he'd anticipated. Swearing, Axel swerved and scrambled up a tall, moss-covered pillar that had toppled over, leaning at an angle against one of the crumbling walls.

Reaching the top, Axel looked back... and his stomach dropped when the machine arrived at the base and kept going, creeping lithely up the stone towards him. The rat tried backing up, but his hand closed on empty air. There was nowhere else to go... and the fall down to the floor didn't look inviting. Three quarters of the way up now, the machine hunched down, preparing to leap at him. Axel gritted his teeth - then gasped as a spike slammed into the side of its head, causing it to lurch to the side. A rope was attached to the end of the spike and as he watched the rope looped up and around its neck, again and again, pulling the robot down and holding it fast to the pillar.

As the robot struggled, Triste shimmered into sight on its back, holding her piton gun. Cutting the rope and slinging the gun over her shoulder she jumped back, landing on the pillar behind the machine, and stabbed her knife up between its legs. Sparks flew out from the energy source, and the robot slumped over, the green lights on its head dying out. Triste looked up and met Axel's eyes. "That's twice," she muttered, stepping off the pillar and sprinting away.

"And I'm... I'm grateful every time!" Axel called after her numbly. "Holy shit..." Taking a deep breath, he slid down and wrapped his hands around the spike embedded in the machine's head. Straining, he managed to tear it free and ran down the rest of the pillar to try and help the others, holding the spike as an impromptu spear.

Rio looked up from the mess of belongings around him, and smirked at Flora. "Makes you look like a fucking lesbian," he told her breasts, as he fished out an expensive looking pair of sunglasses and slipped them on.

When he heard Emilena's command, the boy looked up at her. "What? We just wait here?!" He grimaced and brushed his hair out of his eyes. "That sucks..." As the pair headed off, Rio sighed and rushed over to Nairda. "Be careful!" he said, hugging his waist.. and snaking thin fingers into the fox's pockets, fishing out all the change Nairda had found. Surreptitiously palming the loot, he broke the hug and grinned up at him. "Good luck!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 20, 2014, 06:27:17 AM**

Great' More robots for us' To kill' Marita groaned as the machines rushed at them. these were smaller than the robots they fought at the first Waypoint, they were also faster. Marita moved around the ruins, ducking behind the stone pillars and making her way over the uneven ground. Rose tried shooting at the Machine pursuing her, but the shots simply pinged off the robots midsection. marie was throwing small rocks at her pursuer, and not having much luck.. Rose finally managed to get a shot on the inside of the machines legs and destroyed the energy source keeping it alive.. ' shoot.. well its privates!;' she called to the others. ' those things dont have privates! Marie retorted as she ran ' Well, where its privates would be if it were a living breathing thing!" Whoever designed these things sure had a sick sense of self preservation' Marita muttered as she looked for a way to attack the machine pursuing her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 20, 2014, 10:03:19 AM**

((Not anthro; they're kinda like this: this (http://img3.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20130929030903/finalfantasy/images/a/aa/Klikk-enemy-ffx.png)))

Vergil lunged at his opponent, thrusting his blade forward to have it knocked aside by the sharp tail, which the gecko was discovering could be used just like a sword. He'd need to get force behind his swing to shear it off, he reckoned, but right now, he went for one of the legs. Ducking under the slashing tail, Vergil ran forward and cried out, hacking off the right foreleg of the machine and watching it totter before it righted itself.

The thing must've utilized nanotechnology however, for a new leg began sprouting from the stump of the old one, a process that was curious to watch as it seemed to simply grow out from the remnants. "These guys regenerate!" he shouted out to the others, finally hearing Axel shout out where the weak spot was. Perfect...

Dodging another lightning slash from the creature, Vergil leaped up, and landed upon its back. This was short-lived however, for an electric jolt suddenly passed through his body, hitting him like a brick, the force of which threw him off the back of the creature and deposited him unceremoniously on the ground. "Agh!" he cried out, his backside burrowing into the dirt. "Ugh... OK... these things don't like you touching them..." he murmured, getting back up as the droid advanced once more upon him.

Tony meanwhile was feeling a bit in over his head. He wasn't able to line up a shot on his opponent, and was fleeing across the ground, trying not to stumble and break his leg on any of the numerous stones poking out of the ground. He came up with the idea to get the creature to pass over one of the numerous piles of temple jutting out of the ground, hoping it'd rip its vital spot open. The first attempt was interesting, if unsuccessful. Tony vaulted over a block in his path, the droid followinghim right over it and demolishing the ancient stone as if it were nothing more than a toy, rocks flying everywhere in the process. One struck the ferret in the back, knocking him to the ground with a sharp exhale.

He'd just barely managed to avoid having the wind knocked out of him as he rolled over on to his back and attempted to struggle his way back to standing, something he failed at as the creature loomed over him, its spikes extending from its hands as it went for the killing blow. Tony flinched, and then took his shot, noting that as the creature reared up it exposed itself. Firing off multiple shots with a shout, he missed the first few times, growing more and more desperate, his heart pounding in his chest with fierce hammer blows before his fourth shot finally scored. The laser beam lanced into the creature's underside and it screamed out, toppling forward onto him.

Tony shut his eyes and shut down, crying out as the thing's head landed on top of him. "Ooof!" Opening his eyes, the ferret saw he was still alive, and began fighting to lift the thing off of him. He was slowly succeeding, groaning with exertion as he managed to start to wiggle out from underneath.

Vergil meanwhile was still battling with his first opponent. He was attracting the attention of another one though, and knew he had to finish this first one off quickly. Spinning underneath the droid, he drove his sword upward, slicing into the thing's underbelly as he ran along the length of it, slashing through the weak point and clearing the creature by its tail as it shuddered and then collapsed onto the ground. Four down, five to go...

He barely had time to catch his breath however as the second droid attacked him, Vergil feeling the rush of wind on his back as the creature missed within centimeters of his skin. Vergil spun and sliced off the spikes, which quickly regenerated.

The piton that imbedded in the eye of one of the creatures from Soren's shot was quickly electrified, the charge shooting out down the wire and right towards Soren, even as the droid advanced on him, claws flexed for action, and a laser bolt shooting out of the only functioning eye it had left right towards him...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 20, 2014, 10:42:26 AM**

Soren screamed in agony as the electric shock forced his muscles to contract, locking the gun in his grasp. Luckily, the shock was also strong enough to throw him away from where the droid had aimed with its laser as well as rip the piton from its eye.

The Human groaned as he lay prone on the rocky ground. It was then he heard someone say that the robots' weak points were where the genitals on a living creaturw would be.

He reached for his piton gun and removed the wire spool, leaving just the ten round harpoon magazine. Normally the gun could not fire without both components but he decided to shove a piece of debris into the spool holder in an attempt to bypass the safety.

He lay down in the rocky debris field. Soon, he felt the ground shudder as one of the war machines crawled over him. By the light of the energy blade Vergil was using, he was able to see what looked like a battery pack between the droid's hind legs. He only had one shot at this, seeing as the machine's tail and legs were out of the way.

Muscles screaming in agony, he braced himself against the rocks, raised his piton and pulled the trigger, sending the metal harpoon flying *sans* cable to its target. Unfortunately, the recoil of the projectile forced out the rock Soren had lodged in the spool holder.

"Well, I guess I could try tripping them with the cable," he muttered as he slowly searched for the discarded cable spool.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 20, 2014, 12:25:05 PM**

Trying to move as quietly as possible, Axel sprinted through the ruins, trying to avoid coming into direct contact with one of the machines. The night air was filled with sounds of shouting, shooting and the bizarre, piercing screams that the robots emitted. He swallowed, and was about to start making his way back to check on Lily when he heard another robotic scream, this one much closer than the others, and a reverberating thump as something hit the floor. Picking up his pace, Axel vaulted over an old slab, rounded a section of wall... and almost fell flat on his face as he caught his foot on the machine Tony was trapped under.

"Jesus!" he gasped, steadying himself then quickly bending down to help Tony struggle free. "Never thought... I'd say this," he panted as he heaved the 'dead' machine up. "But... fuck robots..." Tony had just managed to crawl out when Axel was struck hard from behind. Flying forwards, he landed heavily on his stomach. Struggling around onto his back, the rat gaped as he saw one of the machines looming over him. It swiped a spiked limb down, aiming to skewer him. Yelling, Axel raised the spike he'd retrieved before, stabbing the point into the limb and stopping it inches from slicing into him. Straining to keep the machine at bay, Axel shouted across to Tony. "Kill it! Fucking kill it!"

Across the other side of the ruins, Triste was ducking out of the way as a robot lunged at her. Rolling on the floor, a cloud of dust flying around her, she turned to face the machine as it started pacing. Triste was waiting for an opening, a way to get at its energy source, but the machine wasn't making it easy. Gritting her teeth, she activated her cloaking... but the machine's eyes tracked her, and as she tried to move in for the kill it swiped its tail at her, forcing the spider gecko back. *Okay... so that's not going to work...*

Deactivating the cloak, Triste looked around for something that could help... and her eyes settled on Soren as he searched for something. Swallowing, she darted across towards him, feeling the ground vibrate as the machine gave chase. She reached the human and, unceremoniously seizing the back of his shirt, Triste threw him over to the side. The pursuing machine swiveled its head towards the sprawled human, and started approaching him instead. It reared up, and just when it was about to strike him Triste darted in from the side, running beneath its body and skewering the power core. As the robot toppled to the side, Triste made her way over to Soren and offered him a hand up, frowning. "Had to be done."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 20, 2014, 01:47:24 PM**

Emilena gritted her teeth as she pulled herself hand-by-hand up the rope. "You better not be falling to your death back there!" she snapped over her shoulder at Nairda.

"Doing my best! Hehe..." Nairda shivered as the air got thinner and colder.

"Whatever you do, just don't look down!" Emilena advised.

"Gotcha!" he replied nervously. *Don't look down...* he thought to himself, *don't look down...*

And then they reached the top and to his delight he had managed to restrain himself from looking down.

"Now where'd that overgrown hang glider get off to?" Emilena muttered to herself.

Flora sniffed at Rio's suggestion. "Well, I never!" she scoffed, mimicking a British noblewoman's voice. "I am a refined gentlewoman, you scurrilous whelp!"

"Could you two be dumb somewhere else?" groaned Foley, still tinkering under the steering column with a long thin silver instrument. "I'm working here."

Flora walked further away from the Jeeps, and noticed a waterfall not too far away. "Oh, Rio..." she whispered coyly, so that Foley couldn't hear. "It was an awful long trip to get here. How about we take a little...shower? Hmm?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 20, 2014, 08:18:35 PM**

They were down to only three opponents now, but one was hotly engaged with Vergil, and the second was approaching Tony and Axel. "Thanks!" Tony grunted, crawling out as Axel lifted the deceased robot's head off of him. "Fuck robots? Heheh, Fucktherobots.com, right?" he asked, chuckling a bit at the joke they'd developed about the Purifiers half a year ago, which seemed like forever now.

"Oh shit!" the ferret exclaimed, eyes going wide as he saw another one aiming to attack them now. Axel managed to block the blow however, and the rat yelled at him to kill it. "Uh... right!" Tony replied, quickly springing back into action. The moonlight certainly lent an unearthly feel to this battle, with light sources dancing and being snuffed out, then reappearing and swirling about in the darkness.

Tony darted forward as Axel held the droid off, moving underneath rapidly as he raised his laser and fired just as the droid multitasked like a boss and whipped its tail underneath its body to strike at Tony. The laser burned into the sensitive area of the droid, causing it convulse and shudder but not before its tail struck Tony, tossing the ferret into a stone pillar and causing him to fall painfully to the ground with a brief cry and look of anguish on his face, his arms drawn in close to his body as he lay sprawled on the ground.

Vergil twisted and spun in his "dance" with the penultimate droid. His sword flashed here and there, looking almost like a glow stick at a rave as the gecko tried to get in and deal the finishing blow. He ducked low to avoid incoming spikes, hacking the hand off only to have it reform. He felt a sharp pain in his back this time as the claws didn't miss, and raked across his backside, drawing some blood. "OK you son of a bitch..." Vergil replied, skidding in the dirt with a look of intense concentration on his face. The droid was suddenly lifted off the ground, though it was clear Vergil was exerting himself greatly to do so. Sweat ran down his skin, and what muscles he had bulged as he telekinetically held the droid in place in the air.

Roaring out, he threw it backwards against part of the temple, the thing rattling and shattering a bit as its spine broke and it was nearly torn in half. Vergil struck like lightning, darting forward as the droid began repairing its midsection, and plunged his sword into the now very exposed weak point, watching the robot writhe and die in front of him like a mortally wounded animal. One to go...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 22, 2014, 07:02:59 PM**

Marion was at the top of the mountain. "What the..." She trailed off as she watched the fight between the robots and Vergil's crew through her compnoculars.

"Mace," she said into her throat mike. "Do you see this?" Thanks to the encrypted satellite uplink, Mace was seeing everything that Marion saw.

Soren accepted the hand. "Thanks," he said with a grunt as he pushed himself to his feet.

He looked at his piton gun. "So did I kill it?" His bosy twitched a"slightly as an aftereffect of the electric shock.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 23, 2014, 04:02:08 AM**

Axel heard a cry from Tony, but with the robot shuddering and convulsing above him he couldn't see what had happened. "Tony! You alr- Argh!" The disabled machine's body collapsed down on Axel, winding him. Struggling, he stretched out a hand and hooked his fingers into the dirt, managing to drag himself out from beneath the metal shell.

Rolling over and stumbling to his feet, Axel darted his head around. He couldn't see the ferret anywhere. "Tony? Where'd you go?!" He suddenly saw a dark shape huddled on the floor, and his eyes widened. "Oh crap..." Rushing over to Tony's side, he crouched down and gently shook his shoulder, starting to help him up. "You okay? Come on, we need to get moving..." He knew trying to move Tony probably wasn't a great idea in case anything was broken... but they were exposed out here, and he had no idea how many more of those machines were roaming around - he didn't fancy their chances if another came across them.

Further across the grounds of the ruins, Triste helped Soren up. "Yeah, you got it." She noticed his twitches, and cocked an eye. "You feeling alright? Keep your guard up, I think most of them are down..." From behind, she heard a sudden rush of movement. Triste spun around to see the final machine rushing across the grounds, almost on them. Swearing, she shoved Soren out of the way and raised her knife to try and go for its weak spot... but too late. The robot slammed into her and she sailed backwards, flying up and over one of the ruined walls and landing none-too-gracefully on the other side. Grunting, holding her side as she rolled over and stood up, Triste caught a flash of white and glanced to the side to see Vergil standing over a 'dead' robot. "I can't say this is the vacation I hoped it'd be..." she muttered, wincing at the pain in her ribs.

She was about to say more, when the wall she'd been thrown over crashed inwards in a rain of dust and broken stone. The machine charged through, and darted towards them.

Rio shook his head at Flora's voice, annoyed at being interrupted from his game of 'Flick the pebbles at Foley'. "What? No. I already had a shower a few weeks ago." After a second he paused mid-flick and looked up, sensing the tone of Flora's voice. "Wait... are you..." He beamed. "Well, shit! Yeah! I want a shower!"

The next time Flora blinked, Rio had already shot past her, tearing off his grimy T-shirt as he practically flew towards the waterfall.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 23, 2014, 07:51:47 AM**

Soren grunted as he was thrown aside. He swore as something dug into his side. He silently cheered as he realized it was the cable reel for his piton gun.

Loading the reel, and waiting for the harpoon to attach to the cable, he took aim at the creature's battery pack between its hind legs. Seeing as he had only one shot, he pulled the trigger. But mindful of what happened last time, he immediately cut the cable. This time, the steel harpoon went towards the target trailing a remnant of the cable.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 23, 2014, 08:55:44 AM**

Mace could see the battle on-screen, and nodded to himself. "Yes... yes I can... it's not the first time I've seen these... creatures, either." he added. He knew full well what was below his building. His brother had told him, and he'd investigated it himself, but had decided after losing some personnel that it wasn't worth pursuing. It had led to his brother's defection and demise after all, and that was something that still rankled with him. He didn't elaborate just yet though, silently watching the battle unfold as Marion broadcast it back to him.

Vergil, though exhausted, noted that Triste was in trouble, and shook his head. "No... no!" he exclaimed, trying to stand up straighter so he could spring back into action. "Dammit... get out of there!" he called, but that didn't help, as the machine advanced relentlessly on her. Soren managed to fire off the piton at the droid, and though it found its mark and impacted on the soft spot, it had no visible effect. Vergil immediately realized it hadn't had the strength to penetrate the still considerable armor these things were sporting, most likely due to the greater distance this time.

"No!" Vergil gasped as it continued moving on Triste and Soren. "Dammit!" He ran towards its back, knowing he'd only have one chance or he'd be spent. He held out his hand, focusing on the spike, and trying with all his might to drive it up further into the belly of the beast.

Tony coughed a bit, regaining his breath, and was helped up painfully by Axel. "Oh!" he winced. "I... I dunno... I can stand... maybe..." But he instead wobbled, almost toppling if not for the fact Axel had him. "Ow! That... that really hurt..." Tony said, feeling as if his back had been struck multiple times with a sledgehammer.

He looked up in time to see the piton Soren had imbedded in the beast get telekinetically pushed upwards into the creature, as if by magic. Vergil was there, straining himself visibly as he managed to drive the spike upwards, causing the machine to start convulsing, its arms gyrating violently before it collapsed in a scrap heap on the ground in front of Triste and Soren. Panting, Vergil stumbled over towards them, making right for Triste. "Are you... are you all right?" he asked her, concern on his features before he sank down to his knees in front of her, gazing up into her face with hope.

"Ugh... I guess we did it!" Tony exclaimed painfully, having Axel move him over to a stone block so he could sit down. "That was... pretty tough. Hey uh... Rex didn't reprogram any more waypoints, did he?" Tony asked, with Vergil shaking his head.

"No... I don't think so." he replied breathlessly.

"I think I'm... I think I'm OK..." Tony informed Axel. "I think... I'll tell you in about ten minutes, how's that sound?" he asked.

"Neural pattern recognized in combat scenario. Deactivating security parameters. Have a nice day." the console spoke up now, its screen turning green and then going off as the waypoint activated. The chrome sphere lit up like a Christmas tree, millions of points of light shooting out of it to form a 3D projection of the Earth that began rotating, like before. Now only three red dots blinked into existence on the surface: one in the Atlantic between South America and Africa (though it was closer to Brazil than Africa), the second either in southern Egypt or the northern Sudan, and the final one in the southern China region.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 23, 2014, 05:47:49 PM**

Lily had found somewhere to hide. This wasn't exactly her forte. She glanced at Axel nervously. Why couldn't he demonstrate some amount of self-preservation?

Flora grinned and raced after him. At the edge of the water she stripped off her shirt, revealing her fluffy white chest.

"Why can't Emilena be more like you?" She giggled, keeping only her skirt on for the time being to toy with him. "We're going to have so much *fun*!"

She paced towards Rio, muscles arched, herding him into the water. Her bright blue eyes were inflamed with expectation, and her hands were quivering.

Emilena and Nairda stumbled back to the cars. "These mountains are impassable..." she groaned. "Did you crack them yet?"

"Yes, ma'am!" Foley sat up, wiping his brow on his shirt. "These vehicles are driveable and humming! You're welcome, by the way."

"Excellent, let's get moving." Emilena hopped into the driver seat of the first one. "Where's Flora? Driving is her only blasted job."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 23, 2014, 07:31:23 PM**

maerita, Rose and Marie slowly approached the others, their clothes stuck to them, from the exertions of avoiding the machines..' so whixh one do we tackle next?' Marita asked ' The one in the Atlantic looks closest.' She said ' Course getting a flight out there woill be tricky.,. we could get a boat and ride it out there although that might take awhile' She said.
- the first one had 6 machine, this one had 9, well if the patterm continues, we'll face 12 at the next stop, 15 at the 4th and 18 at the 5th and final one.." marie said.'I'm not loing forward to that..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 24, 2014, 10:08:46 AM**

Axel looked down at Tony and nodded. "Alright. Well... just take it easy, okay?" He tried to give a small smile. "If you need a band-aid, you know who to ask. First one's free." Scratching his ear, he turned and made his way over to Lily. "You okay, honey? I think they're all dead." Sitting next to to her, he sighed and rubbed her shoulder. "Hey, you know what I was saying before? About taking a vacation here?" Axel frowned. "I, ah.... I think I've changed my mind. I want to stay at home, where the only thing that could kill us is my cooking."

A short distance away, Triste leaned down and gently pulled Vergil up to his feet. "I'm alright... just disappointed I can't get my hands on whoever built these things." She tilted her head. "How about you? Your psionics are useful, but... I know how exhausting using them can be..." Triste said quietly, her face looking concerned as she saw how worn out Vergil appeared.

The voice coming from the console interrupted her before she could say anything else. She looked around to see the globe spring into existence and start rotating slowly. Her eyes flicking between the three remaining waypoints highlighted on the hologram, Triste shrugged. "I'll go with what the majority vote for. The waypoint in the Atlantic's as good as any."

"I, ah, vote for somewhere that *doesn't* have killer robots trying to blow our asses off," Axel called out.

"Hell yeah, we are!" Rio agreed vehemently with Flora. He reached the small water pool just by the waterfall and started hurriedly kicking off his trainers. "This is gonna be -" he started, hopping around on one leg as he pulled his shorts off. He glanced over one shoulder and froze mid-hop when he saw she'd taken her top off. "*Fucking awesome...*" Rio finished, staring with wide eyes. His foot skidded on the wet rock, and he tumbled backwards into the water pool with a splash, the cold hitting him like a brick wall.

With a splutter, his head cleared the top of the water and he shook his wet hair out of his eyes. "C... come on, hurry up! It's not cold!" Rio lied, trying to stop his teeth chattering as he reached down and pulled his shorts all the way off, then threw the wet clothing next to his discarded T-shirt.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 24, 2014, 11:49:59 AM**

Vergil sighed as Triste helped him up to his feet. "Yes... I... I just exerted myself too much, that's all. I can't remember the last time I had do something like that." he stated, shaking his head. "But how would you know...?" he trailed off here, flashing back to her battle with Rex on the bridge of his ship. "Wait... wait you... you have those abilities too... don't you?" he asked, remembering specifically her combat against Rex now. "I just... remember seeing it... but you never mentioned it before." he stated, being interrupted by Axel chiming in about where they should go next, as well as Marita.

Looking over to the globe, Vergil watched it spin pensively. "I don't care!" Tony piped up now. "I just... we gotta do this after all."

Vergil considered this a moment. "Yes... yes we do. If I recall... the ones who made these robots are long dead so... no chance of vengeance there, I'm afraid." he chuckled now. "Anyway... let's go to the Atlantic." Vergil concluded, nodding here. He approached the waypoint now, gazing at it as it spun around, but taking no action. He only stared, as if entranced by all the lights. Finally, he reached out, and touched the one over the Atlantic. Coordinates sprang up on the screen now, but oddly, it didn't look as if the waypoint was on an island... or any landmass for that matter. Pulling out his phone, Vergil snapped a picture, and the map, after completing one rotation, disintegrated and faded from view.

"That's strange..." the gecko commented here, looking down at his phone. "It didn't look to be on land..." Pushing the coordinates into a finder on his phone, the finder quickly sent back the relevant information. "Huh... you know it's funny but... I don't remember anything about this waypoint. It says the coordinates are the location of a deep sea mining platform run by Judaken Industries called Voltaic Station, but a floating resort has also sprung up around it, also run by Judaken. It's capable of submerging itself to give visitors 'a view of the ocean they won't forget.'" Vergil read from the wikipedia article. "Apparently, in 2009, Air France Flight 447 crashed in the vicinity, and the discovery of the wreckage during the investigation also unearthed an incredibly rare substance buried on the sea floor: koltonium. Koltonium is extremely rare but extremely useful in the production of high-powered lasers, so Judaken naturally filed a claim and now owns exclusive mining rights to the site. Well... if it's a resort, it at least gives us cover for being there, but I also read that Judaken takes security there very seriously, so we'll have to tread carefully." The gecko chewed his lower lip now, glancing up from his phone.

"Really? It's the site of the Air France crash? I remember watching a special about that. Scary shit... but still... the waypoint... is what? On the bottom of the ocean? How in the hell...?" the ferret trailed off here.

"I'm not sure... perhaps a straightforward approach would be best here. Talk to the Judaken executives directly when we get there to avoid tension. I don't remember anything about this waypoint... it's possible Rex accessed it without me." Vergil commented. "Is everyone ready to head back to the SUVs? At least we can simply ride the ropes down, this time." he commented on a lighter note.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 24, 2014, 02:24:19 PM**

"She was here a minute ago..." Muttered Foley, suddenly realizing he had been all alone in camp.

"Well, go find her then!" Snapped Emilena. "They could be back any minute!"

As Flora's excitement grew, her skirt slowly stopped hiding the one last surprising part of her bizzare body.

Hungrily she tore her skirt off and combat-rolled into the water. Springing up and looming over Rio, she gave him an all-too-good look at her fully-functioning male genitalia.

"All right, little boy..." She panted with expectation, her every muscle quivering with lust, "*bend over!*"

"Yeah," I don't see much reason to hang around here," agreed Lily.

She had been particularly useless on this trip. She began to wonder whether it was worth the group even having her around.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 24, 2014, 05:22:30 PM**

"It's underwater?" Axel shook his head. "Well... that's something. At least this time, we're gonna have the choice of getting ripped to pieces *or* drowned if everything goes wrong." His tail flicked nervously. "Alright. I'm good to head back when you all are." Axel started to rise up when he noticed Lily's despondent expression. "Hey... are you okay? You know, I was only kidding about the 'getting ripped to pieces or drowned' thing. We'll probably get shot way before then." The rat started to grin, then realised it probably wasn't the best kind of comment to make. "Uh, I... I mean, you only live once, right?" He paused. "Actually, that's not really much better..."

As Axel comforted - or, at least *tried* to comfort - Lily, Triste glanced over at the couple, her eyes narrowing thoughtfully as she watched the human woman. After a second, she rubbed a hand over her still aching jaw, and turned her attention back to Vergil. "So, we'll be going in blind for this waypoint. Let's hope our luck'll hold out." All things considered, they *had* been extremely lucky - after all this combat, none of them had lost so much as a digit.

We've decided on our next destination - the Atlantic, near a deep sea mining rig called Voltaic Station.

Good. Anything else, Agent Acyle?

No. He still can't remember, and... I'm keeping it that way.

"You're right... about my psionics," she said out loud to Vergil, nodding. "I do have *some* ability, although it's not really anything to write home about." She shrugged. "And I never mentioned it because... well, I'd only ever use it as a last resort. Using them takes a... toll on my body. Besides," Triste said, pulling out her hooked knife so it glinted in the moonlight. "This works for me. And it's more personal... just how I like it."

As Flora rose up from the water, Rio's grin broadened as his eyes moved down, over her shoulders, her chest, and then lower, to her... His grin suddenly froze. "What." He stared at Flora's decidedly non-female body part for a moment, before finally his brain registered that yes - it was, in fact, a penis. Rio's expression transformed into one of horror. "What the fuck that's a fucking are you kidding me you've... *what?!*" he spluttered, his words a dumbstruck ramble.

Rio's stomach churned at her command, and he took a nauseated step back. "*No!* What the hell is this? You're packing heat?!" Stumbling, he floundered in the water for a second before managing to start splashing his way towards the side of the pool. "How is that even... even a thing?! *You* were meant to be the one bending over!" Rio wailed sorrowfully over his shoulder as he tried to scramble up the rock to dry land.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 24, 2014, 07:07:17 PM**

"Let's get going, then." Vergil stated, beginning to head off now towards the exit of these ruins and back towards the cliff. It was pretty damn cold up here, that was for sure. He wanted to get back into the car and off this mountain; back to a hotel in La Paz for a long night's sleep.

"Yeah... ugh..." Tony groaned, standing up now, and beginning to slowly follow.

"Hmmm, well... it certainly tires me out if I use it excessively, as you saw." the white gecko commented as he walked next to Triste. "But still... good to know you're one too. Varanus was one as well... Kalis must be collecting them or something." he mused aloud bitterly. "Makes sense though... Rex was one of the best out there." he stated. "At least of what I remember of him. Still... glad to know I'm not alone in this. I guess I just feel... a bit isolated sometimes." he confessed.

"You guys hear... shouting?" Tony asked, hearing distant voices off down on the Yungas Road. "Sounds familiar actually..." He clutched his side as he quickened his pace a bit here.

"Hmmm... not to me." Vergil responded, moving ahead a bit here towards the edge of the cliff. Stopping near the drop, he crouched at the edge and looked down. "We got some company it seems." he informed the others.

"What? Lemme see!" Tony moved over to the edge as well, looking over. "The fuck? Isn't that Emilena and... that brat that was in your house a few weeks ago?" Tony asked, motioning for Axel to join him. "The hell is she doing... messing around near our vehicles... and... why are all my clothes on the ground?" he demanded, angrily, eyes flashing a bit as he stood up here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 24, 2014, 08:33:04 PM**

Soren scrambled up through the entrance to the hole. "What's all theóHey! That's my stuff!" He exclaimed as he saw the group rooting through their vehicles.

Sure enough, Soren's spare ammunition and his various personal goods were strewn all over the rocky ground. What's worse was that his wallet appeared to be missing too.

Marion was perched above the group and listening in with her directional microphone. The conversation she recorded was transmitted straight to Mace.

"Mace, Marion here. It looks like the group's heading to Judaken's Voltaic Platform out in the Atlantic. I have transmitted the whole conversation to you. Marion out."

Unfortunately, just as she ended the transmission, the weathered rock face that her diamond tipped grappling claws had dug into finally gave way. Swearing profusely as her flying frame automatically deployed its wings and ignited its wngines, she quickly veered behind the rock face to avoid being seen or having the moon cast a shadow.

Soren scowled as he heard the distinct whine of a flying frame engine. "Do you hear that?" He looked skywards. All he saw were stars and the moon.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 24, 2014, 09:31:39 PM**

'Lets just get down there and grab our things and get going' Marie said ' I dont know why they are here, but its obvious our little quest isnt exactly a secret. I wager we're being marked, if not by them, then by others. I just want to get back on the road ' She finished. " Havent seen Emilena in a long time ' Marita said. ' as I recall we were not exactly on good terms the last time I saw her. so its not as if we can count her as an ally." Marita began working her way down the cliff, going doing was easier than climbing up, the trick was not to descend too fast.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **Pterano** on **June 24, 2014, 10:18:12 PM**

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." Vergil said, shooting the piton into the cliff for anchorage as he clipped on the harness. Marita was sure jumping the gun here, but whatever. They'd need to crash this party at some point. Activating the descent, Vergil began to drop down the cliff face. In regards Soren's comment about the flying frame, he looked up as he dropped down, noticed Marion with his keen orange eyes, and pointed her out to Soren. "Might be her again!" he called up to the human. "Doesn't look like she's attacking yet so..." he trailed off as Tony got ready.

Tony did the same as Vergil, setting up the piton and strapping on his harness as well. "Forget her for now, let's deal with these clowns first!" Descending, he drew his laser and leveled it down at the group below them. "Hey! The hell you doing with our stuff?" he demanded angrily, snarling a bit as he dropped down at a controlled rate, not wanting to go too fast. "And the fuck are you doing here in the first place? You can just back away nice and slow, you got that?" And if you go over the edge, not my problem, he didn't add.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 24, 2014, 11:29:20 PM**

Soren saw the faint outline of the frame. "Ehh, she's flying off."

He fired his piton, anchored himself to the rope and slid down. When he reached the ground, he had his rifle out and leveled at the group. "Drop whatever you've got and step away from our vehicles!" he ordered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 24, 2014, 11:52:47 PM**

"Not you too!" screeched Flora, eyes bulging. "First Emi, now you! *I can't take it any more!*"

She darted forward, snarling, cornering Rio so he couldn't escape the lake.

"Flora!" Foley, who had just arrived on the scene, quickly gauged the situation and darted forward. "Flora, you get the hell away from him!"

Flora ignored him until he drew his sidearm and fired it in the air. "Flora, I'm not fucking around!"

Flora growled threateningly, but Foley splashed into the lake and, defending himself with his sidearm, wrenched Rio away. "Go jerk off or something!" he snapped angrily at the seething folf.

Just then Emilena appeared behind him. "I have a better solution," she responded grimly. "Run."

"What's going on?" asked Foley, confused, as the others followed Emilena's lead and booked it.

"The group returned with inhuman speed," Emilena responded. "I literally don't think anything but light particles were capable of moving at that velocity. Regardless, our cover is blown."

Nairda waved his arms excitedly at the people pointing guns at him. "Oh, hello! Hello my friends!"

He started jumping excitedly. "Soren! How I've missed you! I haven't seen you in *ages*! Marie, my darling damsel! Shame you and Zula didn't work out!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2014, 12:34:33 AM**

Soren's eye twitched; Nairda was no less annoying than he was at Lanthae. "Shut the fuck up, drop our stuff and get the fuck away from our cars!" The rifle was trained on Nairda's chest.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2014, 12:39:26 AM**

"Soren, Soren, Soren...don't be that way..." Nairda smiled and approached him. "You know...I never told you......but I kinda...have a crush on you..." he squealed and blushed. "I never...had the courage to tell you. You're still single, right?"

Lily groaned. "The, uh, others are getting away," she pointed out. Maybe if they were captured she'd have an opportunity to debrief with them. She hoped Nairda (and Axel, for that matter) was smart enough not to reveal her association with them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 25, 2014, 06:17:28 AM**

Axel blinked at Nairda, then watched with a frown as Emilena and the rest of her gang tried to make their escape. "What..." He glanced at Lily out of the corner of his eye. *I know they're working with her, but... did they need to go through our cars?*

Stepping to the front of the group, Triste shifted her position. "We can still catch them... Did they take anything important?" she said, looking around at the others, not asking how they knew these individuals for the moment.

Axel paled and ran over to the car he'd been riding in. He quickly rifled through the compartment he'd stored his wallet in. Of course, it was gone. "Oh godammit, Rio! Not again!" he called after the boy as he sprinted away with the others.

As he ran, awkwardly pulling on his clothes while moving, the weight of all the wallets he'd snatched making it even more difficult, Rio shuddered. "What the hell Foley?! You could've told me I was going to a fucking sausage party!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 25, 2014, 08:39:37 AM**

Tony quickened his pace down the mountain, trying his best to rappel and not hit anything. The terrain wasn't always even, but it wasn't a gradual slope either, and mostly just straight down.

Vergil seemed to be doing it much easier, but he was a nimble little bugger, Tony would give him that. Vergil reached the ground before the ferret, and unclipped himself quickly. "Hmmm... Rio... is that the... 'brat'"? the gecko asked, referring to Tony's term for the kid.

"Yeah! That's him!" Tony said as he hit the ground a bit harder than he wanted to. He was in no position to chase after the fleeing group, so he lined up a shot on Emilena, who was already a good ways down the road. He dialed back the power level on the laser, leaving it just enough to stun her if it hit her, but not kill her; it was rather a low setting. Firing off, he unclipped himself and headed for the Rover, stopping to look down at all his stuff scattered about. "What the hell?" he exclaimed with exasperation. "What the fuck were they looking for?"

"One way to find out!" Vergil responded. "They're fleeing on foot... and we have cars. May as launch an effective pursuit!" He threw his hand out, and effortlessly tripped Rio with a single thought, causing the kid to go sprawling out face first. "Axel, you want to do the honors of retrieving your wallet?" he asked the rat, turning to him.

"Well I can't just..." Tony was bending down now, starting to collect his stuff.

"Forget it! Get to the other Rover! The one that hasn't been searched!" Vergil insisted, looking behind him.

"Right!" Tony dropped a pair of his pants, and started to make his way over to the Rover Marita had been driving before.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2014, 02:05:19 PM**

Emilena skipped through a fern, accidentally bushwacking Flora in the process. "Head for the trees," she commanded. "It'll be tougher for their vehicles to navigate there!"

Foley sighed at Rio's statement. "You really need to stay away from her," he cautioned, "she's absolutely insane. Psychotic."

As if to drive the point home, Flora was pleasuring herself as she ran, tongue lolling happily. Then, in a sudden whirlwind of leaves, a noose tightened around her ankle and dragged her into the boughs of a tree, dangling from one leg.

"What the...?" Emilena gasped, before ducking away from automatic fire. As she hit the dirt, she got a glimpse of heavily armed men hiding in the bushes, reloading for another salvo. "Oh goddammit. We stumbled across *poachers*..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 25, 2014, 03:03:17 PM**

Axel winced as he saw Rio go sprawling, just as he reached the treeline. He glanced back at Vergil. "You bet. This is the second goddamn time he's taken it!" Shaking his head, he ran towards Marita's Rover and slid into the passenger seat. Just as the car door slammed, the rattle of automatic gunfire drifted towards them, from the direction Emilena and her group had run in. Axel froze and looked around at the others.

Tilting her head at the sound, Triste sighed and jogged up to the car. "I'll back you up," she muttered, sliding her knife out.

Skidding face-first along the dirt, Rio rolled over and looked down at his knee, where the rough ground had scraped the skin. "*Son of a bitch* -" he started to yell. Then two things happened almost simultaneously. Flora flew up into the air with a crashing of leaves, and gunfire exploded from nearby, kicking up clouds of dust from the floor all around him.

Swearing, he scuttled crab-like along the ground until he bumped into Foley, who was taking cover behind a thick tree trunk. "What the fuck?!" Rio yelped, pressing himself into Foley's bulk as the bullets started to tear apart their cover.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2014, 03:44:43 PM**

Gunfire erupted as Soren grabbed his ammunition and threw them into a suitcase. "Not this shit again!"

He looked around. He didn't see anything. Nevertheless, he took his positikn in the backseat and clicked off the safety of his rifle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 25, 2014, 03:45:07 PM**

Tony winced as he heard the sound of gunfire. But the road really had no trees except shrubbery growing on the side of the cliff, and he could see that this was a terrible place to run into... well who were they? Freedom fighters? Why anyone would lie in wait on a road only about seven feet wide with a sheer cliff on one side and a sheer drop on the other was beyond him. It made zero sense, but he supposed it was in line with what they were encountering so far. Was this Varanus returning? He couldn't tell at the moment.

"What?" Vergil asked, noting the newcomers. They were coming around the bend in the road that the party had parked behind, though they'd apparently set traps along the cliff as well. He flipped backwards, towards the Rover.

"Well shit! What do you want me to do?" Tony asked now as Triste stood by his window. "I can't exactly turn around on this road!" the ferret pointed out.

"Just back up! Run 'em over! We'll sort 'em out later! But watch the kid!" Vergil cautioned.

"Run 'em over?" Tony asked, gulping, but Vergil was right. His vehicle could be used as a deadly weapon against people on foot on this road. They had seven feet maximum on either side of them. They'd either have to climb the mountain or drop to their deaths down the cliff. With such choices, it made vehicles all powerful on this road. Turning the Rover on, he threw it into reverse and began backing up, creating a wall that would force everyone behind him to start running down the road or else jump to their deaths. Looking behind him, the ferret began "plowing" the road, backing up towards where Flora hung from the tree.

He hit the brakes before he ran over Rio however, and nodded at Axel to open his door and pull him inside. "Grab him!" Tony ordered.

Vergil was following after the Rover, but saw there wasn't much he could do. He couldn't really walk around the Rover while it was moving without getting crushed against the mountain, since Tony was playing it safe and sticking to the wall (nor would he want to walk into the fire of the gunmen either). "Why don't we let these assholes kill Emilena and her group?" Tony shouted out to Vergil as he popped his head out the window and began returning fire to cover Axel.

"Up to you! I barely know her, after all!" Vergil pointed out, considering briefly leaping over the Rover to cut Flora down... but he'd wait for this firefight to die a bit first before taking part. Why lend Emilena any assistance after all? She was now sandwiched between the Rover and the gunmen. It was an ideal situation for his group at this point. There was literally nowhere she could go. To her left was the sheer sides of the mountain they had just climbed down, to her right was the cliff that dropped hundreds of feet to the jungle below, ahead of her were the gunmen, and behind her was the Rover, completely blocking the road.

"I suggest you come towards us... without your weapons!" Vergil called over the Rover to her. "You've got nowhere to go, and we're you're only way out!" he pointed out the obvious. "Or you take your chances with whoever's shooting at you!" As he spoke, Tony managed to score a hit on one of the gun toting poachers and watched as he fell off the road and down towards the jungle.

"Score!" he shouted, grinning here as he kept it up.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2014, 03:51:43 PM**

Emilena sent a combat knife twirling towards the rope binding Flora, who fell to the ground with a crash.

"What are...?" asked Flora, dazed.

"You sprung a poacher's trap," Emilena said crossly, "And now we're trapped."

Foley took one look at his options and decided, "Screw that!" He made a run for Vergil's group.

Emilena dragged Flora behind a tree. "Where the hell are your clothes anyway?" She opened fire with her pistol. Flora didn't respond, busy watching Emilena's beast heave with barely-hidden excitement.

The poachers, realizing that they weren't fighting for a successfully captured victim, began retreating.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 25, 2014, 04:45:30 PM**

Axel reached out and dragged Rio inside the car as Tony covered him. "Got you, you little douchebag! Where the hell's my wallet this time?!" he demanded as he dumped the kid in the back next to Triste.

Rio blinked as he saw who it was, then swore loudly. "Aw, fucking hell. Alright, here - take it back," he muttered, fishing it from his pocket and holding it out. "I left your credit cards in the other car though! I'm not a total dick!"

Outside, the gunfire had started to die down as the poachers retreated. Snatching the wallet from Rio's fingers, Axel saw an overweight human dashing towards the car, and from his appearance, guessed he must be the 'Foley' that Lily had told him about. He was about to yell for the human to hurry up when he heard Triste speak up behind him.

"Why *don't* we just kill them? They know you... they could be a threat."

Axel turned, and saw Triste pressing the edge of her knife painfully against Rio's throat. His eyes widened - without Emilena and her team, the chances of finding Ejlert were slim to none. "What the hell are you doing?! No! We can't kill them!"

Triste squinted at him, not lowering the blade, the hooked edge curving neatly around the boy's throat.

"*This is the worst day ever!*" Rio wailed.

Axel swallowed. "Look... Emilena helped me and Lily before... back in Lanthae. We *can't* just kill her. Or her team. We owe her that much."

After a moment Triste sighed and lowered the knife, and Rio scrambled to get away from her. "Fine. But if we're bringing them back, let's get on with it."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 25, 2014, 05:24:20 PM**

Marita Rose and Marie had joined the others after climbing diown the mountain. seeing Tony had grabbed her rover, Marita went for the other Rover, the one that had been searched. ' Better Buckle up girls' This is going to be a hairy ride' Marita said as she strapped into the Drivers seats and started the engine. the lights of the rover turned on and Marita crouched, hoping they weren't hit by any stray gunfire. Marie and rose had done the bare minimum of cleanup, basically all they had done was pull clothes off off the road and thrown them onto the floor behind the front seats before climbing in and getting buckled. " so whats the next move?'

Marie asked as they looked forward at the shrubbery where the remaining members of Emilena's group were located. ' so what do we do with them?' Rose asked " bring them back with us into town , I guess' Marita said ' thats what I would do, but I dont think I get to make that call.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2014, 06:09:22 PM**

Soren was more or less blindly firing in the direction of the poachers' gunfire. He ducked down and changed magazines.

As the poachers retreated, he watched as Foley and Rio climbed aboard. The Human watched as Emilena retreated. As much as he wanted to put a few rounds into her, he decided to follow Axel's wish and let them escape.

"All right, now what?" he asked as he let his rifle dangle from its sling.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 25, 2014, 06:14:39 PM**

"What the hell?" Tony asked, noticing that Marita was backing up the first Rover to join them. He was afraid she'd block him in, and having two Rovers was completely redundant to plug the road, so he did the only thing he could. He blared his horn at her, and waved at her to move the Rover up so she wasn't blocking him in in case he needed to accelerate. He wasn't going to go back any further, after all. "Move up a bit!" he called.

Vergil allowed Foley to pass by him, noticing the poachers were retreating. "Oh sure! The hell we CAN'T KILL HER!" Tony snapped at Axel. "She helped us in Lanthae and then loots our stuff? Screw her, I say! She's probably working with Kalis! And I swear to god kid..." Tony swiveled to look at Rio now. "If I find my hat isn't in my luggage, you're gonna be eating your own brand of sausage tonight, get my drift?" he snarled.

"Just hold on, Tony." Vergil said, attempting to calm him. "Now let's think about this. She wasn't with Varanus's crew."

"Still, she's NOT coming with us." Tony shot back. "We seat 10 here, so unless any of you want to volunteer giving up your seats and hitchhiking back to La Paz, we don't have room for them since last I counted, we're at nine right now." the ferret pointed out to Triste.

"Right... anyway..." Vergil stepped from behind the Rover now. "Care to explain what you were doing going through our things?" the gecko asked as he approached Emilena.

"Who cares? Let's just search 'em and ditch 'em!" Tony muttered, gritting his teeth as he gripped the steering wheel. He wanted to be back in La Paz on a bed relaxing... not... dealing with Emilena.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2014, 06:22:11 PM**

Emilena stashed her pistol and stepped out, hands raised. Flora did the same, giving everyone an uncomfortably good view.

"We were hired by a government agent named Marion," Emilena said slowly. "She was the woman in the flying frame. I don't know what her agenda is, it was a simple escort mission. But I heard her mention someone named 'Mace' over the radio."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 25, 2014, 06:37:33 PM**

Vergil narrowed his eyes. "Well then you're an idiot for thinking she was a government agent, or a liar. Mace is CEO of Zaloga Industries. I see he's keeping tabs on us. Well it's not worth the money he's paying you." he told her bluntly. "We'll let you go this once, but we catch you tailing us again, we'll ensure you can't follow, do I make myself clear?" the gecko asked, giving her a steely glare. "Also, hell of a way to repay your former comrades, wouldn't you say?"

"She's scum!" Tony cut in. "Soren, don't you have a grudge to settle with her? Now's your chance! Skin her alive! Hold her over the edge of the cliff! Drop her sorry ass! And remember... a dead woman has few secrets! A flayed woman has none!" Tony goaded the human on in the back seat.

Veril's eyes widened a bit, but he said nothing at the moment.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 25, 2014, 07:01:08 PM**

Marita heard Tonys horn and moved forward by about 10-15 feet, enough so tony could squeeze past her. ' Marita stopped the Rover and waited for the 'meeting' to conclude so the group could get back to La Paz. she had a date scheduled with Tony, which truth be told, she was looking forward to.but for now, she could do little but wait.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2014, 07:23:18 PM**

Soren recalled what Emilena did to him in Lanthae. How she attacked him for simply calling the cops. How she did jack shit when the Purifiers burnt his house down and nearly killed him.

He smiled as he stepped out of the vehicle with his rifle at the ready and approached Emilena. "Strip and throw all your possessions in a pile."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2014, 07:58:38 PM**

Emilena removed all her clothes, looking blankly at him. "I'm sorry, have we met before? You seem really mad at me."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 26, 2014, 02:28:42 AM**

"Tony, shut the fuck up," Axel glared at the ferret, then stuck his head out of the window. "Soren... we can leave her behind," he called out as the human forced Emilena to strip down, "But you *can't. Kill. Her*."

Triste slid the knife back into the sheath. "If you want to kill her, Mr. Almaya, I don't see why not." She shrugged, ignoring the look Axel threw back at her, and rested her chin in her hands as she waited for whatever Soren was planning to play out.

Rubbing his throat, Rio sneered towards Tony. "That was your hat? It made a better frisbee, believe me."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 26, 2014, 09:03:40 AM**

"The hell we can't!" Tony shot back, ignoring Axel. "She's NOT a reliable ally! I don't know why Axel insists she is!" He glared right back at the rat. "But he apparently forgets she was willing to lead Lily into a trap! I don't care if she helped us in the end... the only thing that proved is that she's not reliable to start off with. She's working with Zaloga! You really want THEM following us around from now on! Make an example of her!" he shouted to Soren.

This could've continued, but then Rio opened his mouth, and that was it. Tony opened his door, and went around to the back door. "Move it, Triste!" he ordered, reaching over her and roughly grabbing the boy. "A frisbee, huh? Let's see how good of a frisbee you make!" Pulling Rio out and purposely holding him low so he'd be dragged over the ground, Tony walked to the edge of the Death Road.

Vergil would've intervened, but he sensed no intent to kill the boy just yet within Tony, so he held up his hand towards Axel in case the rat got any ideas and lightly shook his head. He was standing near Axel's door, so was in good position to catch his attention.

Holding him out over the edge of the Yungas Road now, Tony snarled, then dropped Rio without warning, but quickly caught him, though by now, Rio was about level with Tony's knees. "You now owe the Straccis, kid. And if you've never heard of them, you'll know who they are soon enough. You won't be able to take a piss without one looking over your shoulder, making sure you're working hard to repay me, got it? If I don't hear a 'yes sir' out of your mouth RIGHT NOW, I'm gonna send you on a way one trip to look for that hat of mine, got it?" he asked, shaking the kid a bit here.

Vergil could sense Tony's irrationality building now, and prepared to catch the kid should Tony make good on his threat... and hope he didn't miss.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 26, 2014, 11:10:00 AM**

Rio's teeth rattled as Tony shook him. He could feel the wind whipping at his hair, tearing at his clothes. Holding onto the ferret's wrists, he looked down, and saw the huge fall stretching beneath his dangling feet. Then his eyes focused on a thick branch just a short distance down the cliff, almost exactly beneath him, poking out over the drop. It looked sturdy enough to take the weight of an adult.

Looking back up at Tony, Rio narrowed his eyes. "The Straccis? Why the fuck would I give a shit about them?" Tightening his grip on the ferret's wrists, he grinned. "And seriously? You're threatening me with *heights*? Bad move, fucker." Hooking his trainers on a small rocky outcropping beneath him, Rio pulled down with his legs, sending him and Tony tumbling over the edge. As they fell, he angled Tony so he'd slam painfully into the overhanging tree branch. Letting himself fall slightly below, he shot out his hands and hooked his fingers into the cliff, sticking himself to the side.

Still grinning smugly, he climbed spider-like up and past Tony. Near the top of the cliff he turned, and dangling one-handed, flipped the bird at Tony. "Now, you owe *me*, cocksucker. Hope *you're* not afraid of heights!" Reaching up, he flipped himself nimbly over the side and back up onto the road.

Axel had been gaping ever since he saw the two of them vanish over the edge. When Rio lifted himself back into view soon after, Axel leaned out the window. "Rio?! Oh my... what the fuck did you do?!" he gasped.

"Relax... he's hanging in there," Rio said, stepping away. He looked around. "Someone might want to help him before he goes on the fall of his life," he smirked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 26, 2014, 11:43:29 AM**

There was nothing Tony could do. One moment, he was standing up, the next, Rio played it suicidally, and sent the two of them toppling over the edge. Despite it looking as if the branch would be large enough to support an adult, the branches here weren't particularly strong, growing on the side of the cliff as they were. They held the mountain together, but their roots were stronger than their branches. Tony could only cry out in pain as the branch struck his side, and then... began to snap. It seemed as if Rio had miscalculated rather badly...

The ferret's arms flailed out, but they couldn't grab hold of anything but the branch as before Rio's eyes, it broke, and with an incomprehensible shriek, the ferret plummeted into the jungle below.

Vergil didn't have time to react. His eyes widened as he charged forward, sliding over the roof of the Rover but it was too late. He couldn't see Tony... and with no visual, it was impossible to catch him. "NO!" Vergil cried, shoving Rio out of the way as he bent down on his knees, but could see nothing but jungle... green as far as the eye could see, and no ferret.

"No!" Vergil slammed his fist into the ground, tears starting to stream down his cheeks as he searched desperately for Tony's life force. But there was so much down there... it was confusing him with his anger and anguish. He couldn't get a lock on anything solid... plenty of animals... but where was Tony? It was too dark to see anything... far too dark, even with his vision.

Getting shakily to his feet, his mind clouded over. He drew his blade and ignited it, then walked over to Emilena. Without warning, he brutally sliced into her hamstring, bringing her down on her knees. He then gripped her chin with one hand, and looked straight into her eyes. "If I ever see your face again... I'll cut it off and feed it to the catfish, you got that?" he asked, then beaned her with his own head. "She's all yours." he said to Soren.

Deactivating his blade, he gazed darkly at Axel. "Well... you insisted on saving the brat before... now Don Stracci will flay him alive... speaking of flaying. We're leaving him to his fate. We're not sheltering him, end of discussion. I don't need Kalis AND the mob down on me for this. You can be the one to make the call and explain why his son is dead. Let's get out of here..." Vergil stated, heading for the Rover now. "You better find a place to hide kid, and fast... but it won't do you any good, now that I think about it. His father will find you no matter where you go. You can stick with miss hamstring over there, except I don't think she's done much for you to start off with."

He slid into the seat where Tony had been only moments before, tears welling up in his eyes. "Marita! Start driving! We'll proceed down the road and get to Coroico, then turn around and pick up the highway to La Paz!" he ordered, gripping the steering wheel tightly, his hands shaking violently as he struggled to control his emotions. Flashes of red... the desire to kill Rio on the spot were murderingly strong. Something was in him... a part of him he didn't know existed... it was fighting for control, urging him to kill everyone and face Kalis himself. He could do it... he was strong enough... he could kill Kalis...

But he knew leaving them out here with no transportation and with Emilena having a sliced hamstring meant they were as good as dead anyway. If the mining conglomerates didn't get them, the rebels would. Throwing the Rover into gear, he gave one final look at Rio, being within inches of mentally crushing his skull. Perhaps the kid would feel a headache, or perhaps not, it was hard to say. Vergil didn't care. It was time to get out of this hellhole.

Down the road, Varanus watched the whole thing. He could see perfectly in the dark thanks to his eyes, and smiled wickedly to himself. He could sense Vergil's anguish and frustration... but something else as well. Something he hadn't felt in a long time. He could see what Vergil couldn't, and it was delicious. Positively delicious. It also made Vergil vulnerable, and could perhaps be something they could exploit later on.

"Kalis..." He opened up a direct channel to his lord now via an implanted comms link in his throat, speaking softly. "You need to hear this... you'll never guess what I just saw..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2014, 12:16:11 PM**

"Aaaauuugh!" screamed Emilena, falling to her knees as often happens to those who have had their hamstring cut. "Jesus, what did I do to you? What's with people I don't know being violently mad at me?!?!?"

Lily ran over and grabbed Rio. "Oh, Rio...what have you done? Are you okay?" she asked nervously, eyes misting over. She tried to sense Tony, but her powers weren't nearly powerful enough. She could only feel people within tactile range.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 26, 2014, 12:20:00 PM**

"Because you brought him here in the first place!" Vergil called back to Emilena. "And you meddled in our affairs! I don't need to hear surprise from you!" He then turned his attention to Lily as she got out of the Rover.

"I already told you... we're not taking him with us! You want to stay with him and face the don's wrath, fine! But this is where you get off!" he shouted over to her sternly. "Who cares if he's OK? He just KILLED our friend! Isn't Tony a little more important here? Are you coming or staying?" he asked, drumming his fingers impatiently on the steering wheel. "That brat doesn't set one foot in either Rover though... final warning."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 26, 2014, 12:58:51 PM**

Soren's heart raced. Anger, fear and pretty much every emotion possible ran through him. In just a span of minutes, he had seen Rio kill Tony and Vergil cripple Emilena.

It was then he realized something terrible. Rio was going to get them all fucked. First he had pissed off the *Bak Long* Triads by stealing creds from one of their low level black marketeers. And now he had killed Tony Stracci. He did *not* want two powerful organized crime syndicates after him. And there was of course, the fact that he considered Tony and Axel to be good friends of his.

His arm twitched as he slung his rifle across his back. He headed for one of the rovers but instead of getting into the backseat, he grabbed the metal jack handle from the trunk.

Without warning, he swung the metal pipe at Rio's head. "You cocksucking brat! We helped save your ass from the *Bak Long* Triads! And this is how you repay us!?" he shouted. "By stealing Axel's wallet, *killing* Tony and marking everyone else as targets for Don Stracci!?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2014, 01:12:04 PM**

"Tony was *dangling him over a cliff*, I'm not sure what you all were expecting him to do!" snapped Lily. She stepped in the way of Soren. "Soren, put that pipe down! You'd hurt a little boy? And Vergil, I'm ashamed of you! Letting your aggression and anger get the better of you! Where I come from we don't solve our anger problems by hurting people weaker than us!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 26, 2014, 01:26:52 PM**

"Ashamed of me?" he asked. "TONY JUST DIED!" he roared at her. "All his help he gave you meant NOTHING to you? If you think that's 'just a little boy', you are seriously fucked in the head, lady! Tony should've dropped him! Better the kid than Tony! Now what do we have?" he asked, feeling his rage boil over. "We're now down a member and for what? Huh? For what? Get your priorities straight!" He exited the vehicle, slamming the door now.

"You know what? Screw this! Kalis can have this world for all I care! We're not gonna make it now! It's over!" He began walking forward, towards Marita's Rover, but didn't stop, and kept walking on past it. "Find your own damn way to the waypoints! I'm done with this. There's no hope left..." He shook his head here, the tears rolling down his face.

Walking a bit beyond the first Rover, he finally stopped, and sank to his knees, trying to crawl forward, until he finally exploded, shrieking out in anguish. The ground rumbled, as did the Rovers, shaking as if Bolivia were experiencing an earthquake. Wailing, he let his emotions out, unable to stop them. He finally devolved into a crying heap, assuming a fetal position, and trying to will himself away from here...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2014, 01:38:44 PM**

"Look," Lily said, as Vergil left. "Tony was my friend too! But he wouldn't want us devolving into barbarians just because we lost him! If you don't want Rio to come with us, fine, Emilena can take care of him, like she has been."

"I, uh, don't think Emilena's capable of caring for anything right now," noted Nairda, glancing over at her.

In response, Lily walked over to the fallen vulpine and put her hands on her slashed legs. Slowly, the hamstring tendons and muscles reformed, until Emilena could painfully walk again.

Emilena glanced at her functioning legs again, in shock. "Why would you...?"

"Go," Lily cut her off firmly, tears welling in her eyes. "Just take your team, take your stuff, take Rio, and please go. And *don't* follow us to the waypoint in the Atlantic."

Emilena's eyes narrowed in understanding as Lily gave her the name of the next target. Shakily she got to her feet. "Let's move out, gang." she glanced at Soren. "You're a bigger coward than I thought. Remind me to buy you a dress when this is all over."

Then, with Flora's and Nairda's help, she began limping into the forest. Foley gathered the scattered equipment and silently followed them.

Watching them go, Lily suddenly staggered and fell to the ground. Blood was seeping from both of her calves.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 26, 2014, 01:56:08 PM**

Soren's eye twitched as he heard Emilena. He dropped the pipe and raised his rifle. He then shook his head. "Fuck this, let them do whatever!"

Fuming, he climbed in the backseat of one of the Rovers. "Just mark my words, if I see them again, I'm shooting them."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 26, 2014, 04:03:01 PM**

Axel rushed to Lily, shocked tears blurring his vision as he gently scooped her off the ground. Tony was dead... He couldn't quite believe it, the thought refusing to process. The shriek Tony had given kept replaying over and over in his mind.

Rio stood still, his gaze flicking between his gang as they headed out, and Vergil's group, the side of his head cut and bleeding from where Soren had hit him before Lily stopped it. He'd never killed anyone before... but given the circumstances, he didn't feel too torn up about it. From his own time in the slums, Rio had learned that most people who worked for a gang - as the ferret apparently did for the Straccis, whoever *they* were - deserved whatever they got. That being said, he could see the group cared for each other, and the reaction of the others rattled him, especially Lily and Axel's, the only two who'd actually helped him so far.

Walking up to the two, he blinked the blood out of his eye. "I'm... sorry," he said quietly as Soren climbed into the backseat of one of the Rovers. "I didn't do it on purpose... but he was gonna throw me off a fucking cliff..."

"Rio, just... look, just go, alright?" Axel said. Looking back to make sure the others couldn't hear, he added quietly, "When you and others follow us... make sure you don't get seen."

Rio nodded and turned, jogging towards Emilena and the others as they headed away.

Letting out a shaky breath, Axel stood up and carried Lily to the Rover, putting her in the backseat carefully so he didn't hurt her bleeding calves. "Jesus, I... I can't believe that happened..." he whispered. Axel looked out of the window to where Vergil had wandered further down the road, and was about to go and try to talk to him when he saw Triste approaching the gecko.

Taking slow steps towards Vergil, Triste carefully stretched out a hand. Tony's death meant almost nothing to her - except perhaps for the fact that now they were down a man, and now at a disadvantaged situation. But she'd seen the look in Vergil's eyes, heard the tone of his voice... and for one of the first times in a while, she was afraid.

He was closer to remembering the past than ever before.

Triste's hand gently touched Vergil's shoulder. "Vergil... I'm sorry about what just happened. I'm so, so sorry," she said softly. "But we can't give up. We *can't* let Kalis win. Tony was trying to help us stop that monster - and if you stop now... if you decide to run away, his death will have been for nothing. And all the innocent men, women and children that're going to die if Kalis reaches his goal..." Triste ran a hand along his cheek. "I can't imagine how you're feeling right now... but all that hate, the anger - you have to focus it. *Use* it. Against Kalis." She stared into his eyes. "Okay?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 26, 2014, 05:18:17 PM**

Vergil could barely focus. His memories were clawing their way back to the surface, and he couldn't stop them. Her words were reminding him too much about the past... and it was there...

He was standing on a shore... a beach somewhere. He was tired. Rex and Kalis were there as well, panting, as if they'd just outrun something. "We have to... we have to warn them!" Kalis was saying. "If they conduct their descent their troops will pick up the virus too, and they'll spread it across the planet! I know they're our enemies but... we can't let them turn this war into a pandemic! We have to warn them!"

Rex placed his hands on his knees, and nodded. "Yes... yes you're right. If they contract the virus, it'll be all over! This war won't even matter! But... but be careful, Kalis! I'm afraid... something within me... is making me very uneasy..."

"I will!" Kalis said, nodding. "Open channel to Admiral Schreiber's flagship!" Kalis yelled, and

soon, his communications device sprang to life, and the face of Admiral Schreiber, commander of the Alliance's fleet, could be seen sneering.

"You two again?" he asked. "What is it this time? Come to beg me to stop our offensive? Finally surrendering, are you? Realized the futility of your position?"

"No! Admiral Schreiber, we just left Hafta, and there is a plague rampant in its borders! Your recruits are being turned into monsters! If you land the transports, you'll infect everyone! The disease will spread! There will be no stopping it! Do NOT land in Hafta! I repeat! Don't land!"

Schreiber continued sneering. "Well... this is an unusual development, isn't it?" he asked. "Thank you, for bringing this to my attention. I have a simple solution to prevent this virus from ever spreading beyond Hafta."

Kalis's eyes widened, and he looked up to see Schreiber's fleet hovering overhead. "NO!" Kalis shouted, turning his head upwards to scream as a bright flash emanated from the center of Schreiber's ship and streaked downwards.

"No!" Rex gasped, realizing what was happening. "No he can't!"

The glowing missile left a burning trail in the sky before it impacted with the ground, shaking them to their cores. And then the sky burned. The nuclear warhead went off, thundering its blast outward in a force that sent Rex and Kalis backwards in their tracks, unable to resist the power of a thousand suns exploding in front of them. Everyone on the beach was thrown backwards as the mushroom cloud grew.

"NOOOOOOOO!" Rex cried, powerless to do anything to stop this. Millions of men, women, and children... vaporized in an instant... and it didn't end there. The nuclear bombardment continued, Schreiber relentlessly pumping nuke after nuke into Hafta. "NOOOOOO!" Rex cried again, sinking to his knees in anguish as the screams started filling his mind... the screams of the dying... those burning, their flesh stripped from their bodies in searing heat as they called out for help... for someone that would never arrive... it was too much, and he held his head in agony, unable to stop their screams. The red gecko collapsed into the sand, Kalis standing over him, looking worried and trying to get him to move into the ocean, to get away from the spreading blasts.

"We have to escape the radiation Rex! Come on! All of you..." Kalis turned to look at Vergil now. "Get back! Into the sea! Get back!"

Vergil blinked, his lower jaw trembling. The pain... the death... it was terrible... he'd sensed it back then... just as painfully as Rex and Kalis had... it was the worst feeling in the world. He couldn't recall anything that felt worse than tens of millions of lives snuffed out at once. He closed his eyes, trying to block it out, and focus on her hand rubbing his cheek. "You don't understand..." he said softly, shaking his head sadly. "You were right..."

He stood up slowly, as if doing so were an effort. "We can't bring them along... I got Tony killed... worthlessly... he was killed in such a needless way... none of them... can stand up to Kalis. He'd kill them all with a thought... what's the point of having them with us? I'd only watch them die before me. He's too... powerful. Tony couldn't survive a simple accident... what chance do any of these non-trained, non-psionic, everyday people have against him? If he ever caught us... he would torture them beyond their endurance... they would die horrible, miserable deaths. And that would be my fault for bringing them along. We've already lost one, and Kalis wasn't even here. Varanus wasn't even here... it's over." He shook his head again here. "They'll all... die... and I can't subject myself to that. We need to press on alone... without them. You defeated Rex... but what chance do they have?"

He was trying to sense Tony again, but his mind was too distracted. He couldn't focus... other things in his mind were vying for attention, including his memories, and he didn't look at Triste, but gazed past her shoulder, out into the distance at something else far away.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 26, 2014, 07:02:11 PM**

Marita rose and Marie had gotten out of their rover when the accident happened. maritac gaped as she heard Tonys primal scream as he fell off the cliff. 'NO!" she cried in anguish, the full realization of what had happened hit her in a split second. she remained rooted to the spot through the scene, staring at the cliffs edge. finally after a couple minutes she moved towards the edge and stared at the broken branch below that had failed to stop Tonys descent. she looked down for a minute or two her head bowed her eyes red from crying and her face stained with tears Once her silent vigil was over she turned and headed back towards her rover" Alright, those who want to come with me, climb in back. we now have a new motivation- honoring Tony, and his memory. we will now need each other more than ever, so if anyone thinks of leaving, think again.its too late to back out of this, the chance for doing so was before we left the country to come down here.I... was planning to go out on a date with Tony, once we had returned to the city,and truthfully i was looking forward to it.' she said to the others.' but now, well, everythings changed...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2014, 02:40:05 AM**

"Wow, and I thought *we* were psychotic," remarked Foley wryly once the vehicles were far enough away.

"So, umm...what exactly are we going to do about the whole mafia thing?" asked Nairda uncomfortably. "Cause I've seen the Straccis before, and they're ruthless. They'd kill us all trying to get to--"

"--We stick by our own," Emilena interrupted firmly, as she began putting their clothes back on. "Kid did nothing wrong, he was being held over a bloody cliffside. Frankly, Tony was one of the most arrogant people I'd ever met, I can't think of a more karmic death for him."

Flora hadn't lost her erection throughout everything that had happened, and looked incredibly vasocongested. "If you all don't mind, I need a moment to..." She trailed off, then crawled gingerly behind a large fern.

"Look, I don't mean to throw Rio under the bus here," pointed out Foley, as heavily panting started emanating from Flora's fern. "But the mafia can be bad news, and we're on thin ice as it is."

"I've survived the Straccis before," Emilena assured him. "They're not that tough." She reloaded her pistol and started hacking vines out of her way with her katana. "For now, we try to reach civilization and secure passage to the next waypoint. Lily wants us close by once Koalas or whoever shows his face."

Lily painfully crawled over to Marita's side of the vehicle. "I'm sorry..." she said softly, wrapping her arms around Marita. "I'm truly, truly sorry. Tony was in the prime of life, and you two would have made each other so happy. If you want, when there's some downtime, I'd love a chance to console together. I've actually lost someone very important to me as well recently, we could help each other through this rough time."

Tears stung her eyes. With all her healing powers, she could still do nothing to alleviate the pain in Marita's heart.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 27, 2014, 06:21:19 AM**

Thank you Lily' Marita said hugging her back ' fresh tears brimming in her eyes. ' I think, once we reach the city and find a place to crash for the night. we'll just let it all out, I guess. it would be good for both of us.'

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Marie and Rose climbed into the back of the Rover. neither of them felt like making conversation, they had come to know Tony during the events at Lanthae, and had come to respect him, not just because of who his dad was, but because of how he carried himself. to use the past tense to describe him was still very surreal at this point, and it would not get easier.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 27, 2014, 08:01:02 AM**

Crouching down next to Vergil, Triste didn't say anything for a moment. "They know what they signed up for," she sighed after a while. "They knew the risks. Look, what just happened to Mr. Stracci... Tony... Nobody could have seen that coming. But no matter how powerful you are - no matter how prepared we are - we're going to need help to finish this. The more people we have working with us, the better our chances." *Even if we have to lose a few more to succeed.* Rubbing his shoulder again, she stood up and glanced back towards the vehicle. "Vergil, if you really want to go on without them, we could bring it up to them. But something tells me they're not going to want to give up so easily."

In the back of the Rover, Axel ran a shaking hand through his hair as he watched Lily hug Marita. "I'm... Jesus, I'm so sorry, Marita. I know you and Tony had a connection. I... I just wish you two could have had more time together." He took a trembling breath, the shock of what just happened still leaving him numb. "Maybe if we get time we could... make a toast in his memory or something." He swallowed. "He deserves that much."

Rio edged away from the bush Flora had ducked behind. "You guys aren't going to throw me out?" He didn't really know how to react - in all his time doing jobs for sleazy gangs in the slums, he'd never met any who'd acted like this to him. "Thanks... I guess..." he said finally.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2014, 12:00:39 PM**

Emilena grinned. "You're one of the gang now. Where we're going, you won't be able to trust a damn thing, so you better hope you can stand by your teammates."

She clapped him on the back and gave him her combat knife. "And in the future, if another wackjob holds you over a cliff and threatens to drop you, do the *exact same goddamn thing*. You hear me?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 27, 2014, 12:26:28 PM**

Varanus could clearly see he was dealing with a pack of idiots. They were already breaking apart on their own, and that was perfect. It would make them easy to shatter later on. As Emilena approached his position now, the big monitor stepped out from the wall he'd been leaning against and centered himself with his group, which had grown in size thanks to a hovering dropship that whined overhead but kept itself dark.

"Oh bravo." He mockingly applauded her group now. "Thanks for killing one of them for me. You're doing a fantastic job at dividing them while I come in and conquer. Now one half won't trust the other half, and before long, we'll have an out-and-out civil war on our hands... while I come in and mop up. Brilliant! Ever consider a job working for the world's most powerful warlord and future global leader? Benefits are great after all, but meanwhile, I've got a job to do, so you may go on your merry way, and just keep doin' what you're doin'." He grinned wickedly here, and stepped aside for the group to pass, signaling his goons to do the same. There were now about ten of them, as opposed to the two that had been left alive before.

Varanus kept an eye on them all the same, as he had no idea who they were, and if they tried anything stupid, he'd take them down quickly and quietly.

Vergil shook his head here. "They aren't going to agree to that. Hence why it'd be better to ditch them at some point and continue on our own. They may have known what they signed up for, but we can get assistance just as easily with you calling in a Federation strike team. You had elites taking on Rex after all, and they succeeded. We can do that again. I just don't have any faith in this group anymore." he said softly, turning his eyes back to her. "I don't trust Axel and Lily, since they clearly have some agenda they neglected to mention to us regarding Emilena and her group, and how can you trust someone who's not being honest with you?" he asked her now, eyes searching her as he didn't realize the irony of that question.

"We're breaking into our own little factions, and the same thing happened before when we took on the Purifiers. This is MY mistake... I brought them into this knowing our force wasn't unified enough to constitute a threat to Kalis. It was my error, and it's a recipe for disaster. They're not the types that inspire confidence. If anything, they're only making it worse." he hissed, shaking his head. "I need people I can rely on... the only problem is, I just don't have that right now." he pointed out to her. "I regret getting them involved... and if this is how it's going to be like... what hope is there for any of us? What if we ARE all like Rex and Kalis in our own way? I'm remembering more and more about them... and they suffered... a lot. From what I know of the Scorched Earth War, it was NOT pretty, but to experience what they did... I'm beginning to see why they'd turn traitor. It's enough to make anyone a little crazy; it's maddening even. While I still don't have the full story... it's starting to become more clear." he stated gravely, looking at her with almost dead eyes. There was a deep sadness in there, as if a light were slowly starting to go out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2014, 12:53:09 PM**

Emilena blinked. "Uh, okay. Thanks," she replied to whoever this was. Not being in any state to fight, she hoped to part ways with...whoever this is...still as congenial as he is now. "Yeah, good luck to you as well."

Nairda suddenly piped up. "Would you be able to direct us in the closest way back to civilization? Other than the road? The road's kinda occupied."

There was suddenly a loud squealing coming from behind Flora's fern, which continued unabated for quite some time.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 27, 2014, 12:57:36 PM**

"I'm afraid this road is your only way back to La Paz." Varanus sneered. "However, if you're looking to avoid the group you just left, there's nobody behind us... I made sure of that." he stated, without elaborating. "Of course, it'd take you about a day on foot... it's a three hour drive from here to La Paz. There are some villages you might be able to steal a car from on the way though, choice is yours. Either way, that direction is the only way to go." He pointed down the road, in the opposite direction she had come from. "Just keep heading that way."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2014, 01:13:38 PM**

"We can handle that," nodded Emilena. All things considered, she'd prefer not to have to deal with people right now. "Thank you for your help."

Flora crawled out from behind the fern, panting heavily. "I'm...heh...ready to go now," she blushed.

Nairda curtsied to the newcomer. "May the wind be at your back and the road rise to meet you, good sir."

Foley helped Flora to her feet and, at Emilena's encouragement, the group began their hike down the road.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 27, 2014, 03:39:48 PM**

Triste's throat grew dry at Vergil's comment about things becoming clearer. *This is bad... fragments, pieces of his memory... if they keep coming back to him, everything could be lost...* She blinked. *But this group... this group consists of some of the only people he's known since the incident. If there's a chance keeping them around can keep his memories... can keep Vergil from how he was* before*... can I really take the risk of sending them away?*

She swallowed. "Vergil... do we really have time to arrange a new team? Every minute we waste is a minute Kalis gets closer to the warship. And so far, they've seemed able enough to me... at least, as far as dealing with the waypoints. Apart from what your friend just did, they've shown they're capable. The only time something went wrong was when Tony decided to... hold a child over a cliff," she said softly. "Come on, Vergil. We've come this far."

Rio stared back at the group of strange men standing before them. Whoever they were, they made him uncomfortable - but the weight of the combat knife Emilena had given him, tucked into the back of his shorts, gave him some degree of assurance.

As they passed, Rio stumbled over a loose stone and bumped against one of Veranus' henchmen. "S... sorry!" he mumbled, rushing ahead to join the others.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 27, 2014, 05:07:37 PM**

Thank you Axel' Marita said, turning to him. ' we'll need to come together now even more. we cant afford to fall to pieces.One of us is going to have to break the news to his father and that is not going to be pleasant at all. but it must be done. a toast in his honor would be appropriate, and we need to finish the job, for him and everyone else.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 27, 2014, 07:09:40 PM**

Soren fumed as the vehicles headed down the road. "Fine," he growled. "I'll call Don Stracci and tell him the news."

He was still sore about not getting to kill Emilena and Rio.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 27, 2014, 09:17:17 PM**

"A child who was part of a group who showed up under suspicious circumstances and whom two of our own seem completely fine with letting go, despite knowing they're working for our opposition. I'm sorry but you've failed to convince me." He brushed past her now, heading for the second Rover. "However you are correct. Standing on this road is only wasting our time. Whatever we choose to do, I'll decide for myself later on." he stated. Walking past the first Rover, he hesitated, then climbed into the back.

No one had offered to drive the second Rover yet, and Vergil clearly couldn't with his height.

The soldier that had been bumped into roughly knocked Rio away from him. "Watch it, punk!" This elicited a laugh from everyone gathered around them, pointing out the pipsqueak and how out of place he seemed, plus the blood gushing from his head from where the pipe had struck him. They had all seen him get knocked up, and it seemed to amuse them greatly. They all had killer in their eyes, and every one of them had killed multiple times in both the Scorched Earth War and Rex's Rebellion. None of them looked as if they'd hesitate to shoot Emilena's group dead if they detected so much as an improperly placed comment.

Varanus smirked as he watched the group go, pleased with the progress they'd made at dividing Triste's group. Another encounter might finally seal the deal, and that'd be it. Already he could sense them breaking from afar, and it was just getting better the more time passed. Nodding upwards, he signaled at the dropship above them, and suddenly, all of them vanished, teleported instantly into the dropship as it began flying back in the direction of the Rovers. It kept its lights off for now, keeping itself well out of sight as it proceeded on its mission. For now, Varanus had business to attend to, and then he'd have to heal up before his next encounter with them. He had been weakened by his ordeal today, and knew he couldn't face that white gecko in his current state, but give it a few weeks, and he'd kill all of them in a most painful fashion. They wouldn't be escaping next time...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 28, 2014, 04:13:22 AM**

Emilena's gang continued on their way.

"Nairda, I know you hide your social insecurities by sounding like an idiot when with people you don't know, but those goons outnumbered us two to one." Emilena reprimanded. "Let's leave out archaic Irish idioms the gentleman might not understand."

Nairda's ears drooped. "It was just a polite thing I thought of saying..."

"Then in the future, don't say anything at all!" Emilena smacked him in the head. "Asking for directions on a cliffside road with only two directions! When talking to people like *that* you don't try to draw attention to your own stupidity!"

Foley glanced at Rio. "Hey, kid, you all right? That's a pretty nasty head wound. Sorry we don't have anything like a first-aid kit, but we'll make it top priority once we reach the nearest town or village."

"I would like that," Lily smiled through tear-stricken eyes at Marita. "I think we can help one another."

She hugged Axel, Tony's death having reminded her how lucky she was to have her husband alive and with her. "This road is awful; let's get out of here before anything else horrible happens..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 28, 2014, 09:46:00 AM**

As Vergil walked away and headed across to the second Rover, Triste sighed and stared out at the horizon, rubbing a hand across the top of her head. Things were getting complicated... and that was the worst thing that could happen in a situation like this. After another few moments of staring out thoughtfully, she turned and made her way to the same Rover Vergil had climbed inside. *I need to keep a closer eye on him...*

In the other vehicle, Axel hugged Lily back. "Yeah, let's... let's get the hell out of here," he said softly. Glancing back at the other car, he could see there was nobody in the driver's seat. Axel looked over at Rose and Marie. "Do you think one of you could take the other one? I'm, ah... I'm still not too good with these roads..."

Rio looked up at Foley as they walked. "It's alright, it probably looks worse than it is." He pressed a hand against the gash on his head, and hissed breath painfully between his teeth. At least the bleeding seemed to be slowing, although the area felt like it was swelling to the size of an egg.

He swallowed then let his hand fall away, and stretched out the other to reveal the credits he'd swiped from the pocket of the henchman he'd 'stumbled' into. "Drinks on me at the next village?" he grinned at the gang.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 28, 2014, 03:56:01 PM**

"You cheeky bugger!" Emilena couldn't resist grinning. "God, you're even worse than Nairda!"

Flora began laughing, long chortling howls interrupted by sporadic snorts, and somehow it spread across the other gang members. Even Foley couldn't resist when all of his comrades were rendered hysterical by Rio's ballsy caper.

Only Nairda's laughter didn't seem completely genuine.Eventually it was he who broke the respite and continued the long hike, and the group followed suit in far better spirits than they should be.

Lily nodded tearfully. "My legs aren't reactive enough for this sort of driving, I'm afraid..."

But the bleeding had gone down considerably. She was beginning to note that her advanced healing methods appeared to apply to herself as well. Though to be fair, she only ever gained lessened version of whatever ailment plagued her victim, and she'd only healed Emilena to the extent that she could walk.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 30, 2014, 07:20:16 PM**

i'll drive ' Rose said going over to the second Rover and climbing in the drivers seat.' Whats the quicjest way to town?' she asked as she looked over her shoulder at Vergil and Triste, then started the engine.
_ Marita sighed as she started the engine of her Rover and began driving forward.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **June 30, 2014, 07:23:45 PM**

"Straight down this road to Coroico, then we turn around, pick up Ruta Nacional 3, and head back to La Paz. Can't very well turn around here after all, so I'd think that'd be fairly straight forward." Vergil replied with disinterest. "Should take about three to four hours to get back."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 01, 2014, 09:26:43 AM**

As the vehicles slowly trundled down the treacherous road, Soren retrieved Tony's phone and dialed Don Stracci's phone number.

"Come on," he muttered as the call tried to get through.

Marion had watched the fight from her perch. Including Tony's death.

Hoping that he might have something useful, she detached herself from the rock face and let herself enter freefall and glide into the darkened jungle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 01, 2014, 12:01:50 PM**

The phone rang twice, and finally, the don's voice sounded on the other end. "I don't have a lot of time right now, Tony, so make this quick." Don Stracci seemed busied with things, but of course wasn't expecting news to break in the form of a microburst over his head.

Vergil, for his part, was looking out the window and trying to determine how he could best proceed. He felt no particular affinity for his task at hand, and began to muse over Rex and his life. He had been a hero... but what had he seen deep in the Unknown Regions that had made him turn against his country and everything he had fought for? He would need to find others who knew him in life, and see what he could discern from them... nothing like eyewitnesses after all. Most of those who had known him were currently fighting for Kalis, he knew that much, but there had to be other witnesses.... non-combatants, or defectors who no longer shared Kalis's view of the world. They just had to be out there...

As Marion glided down into the dark jungle, she could see a disturbed area of trees that looked as if something had ripped through them recently. At the bottom was the body of Tony Stracci... or at least, it should've been the corpse of Tony Stracci, but something was off. Movement could be detected from the prone form. He lay stretched out on his right side, but his arms were showing slight signs of spasms and his tail was flicking from left to right.

If Marion looked carefully, she could also see signs of breathing as the ferret's sides rose and fell in very slow, almost relaxed motions that made it look as if he was asleep, though his eyes were just barely open. One paw was grasping out for... something, but it wasn't doing anything aside from flexing and relaxing.

It was impossible. No one should've been able to survive a drop of over 3,000 feet the likes of which the ferret had just taken, but regardless, there he was, lying on his side, bleeding, barely conscious, but very much alive. Perhaps it had something to do with that dropship that was starting to descend into the valley now, and was at this juncture very much lit up, its lights glowing like a UFO in the night as it dropped downwards, though Marion beat it in terms of descent, both because the dropship was making a controlled descent and also because it seemed to be in no great hurry.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 01, 2014, 12:23:57 PM**

Soren gulped. "Don Stracci, sir," he said. He tried to keep his voice neutral. "This is Soren Almaya. I have terrible news. Tony...he was killed by Emilena and some street punk." He held his breath awaiting the inevitable explosion through the phone. He assured himself that Don

Stracci was a reasonable man, but he *was* a powerful crime lord.

Marion wrinkled her forehead as she spotted the disturbed area thanks to her helmet's built-in night vision equipment. She banked around and circled to bleed off speed.

As she approached the now brightly lit clearing, the woman activated her flying frame's thrusters to slow down further and landed, letting her prosthetic legs and exoskeleton take the impact.

She then folded her flying frame's wings as she approached Tony Stracci. Her helmet's enhanced vision allowed her to see him twitching slightly. She shook her head, a fall from that height was almost always fatal ó even to an Augment, let alone a Baseline.

As the dropship approached, she ducked behind a bush and got her compnoculars out to record the scene ó and scan the dropship.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 01, 2014, 12:36:35 PM**

"WHAT?!" Came the inevitable roar on the other end. "Emilena and some street punk? Who?" he demanded now, snarling. The don was fuming, and with good reason. Emilena had escaped his clutches once before, and while he hadn't been actively hunting her ever since thanks to his son, she apparently decided to celebrate by taking away his underboss and his only real hope for a continuance of his family. "Where are they now? Please tell me you at least wounded them to the point they can't get away..." he said now, seething, the explosiveness evident on his end.

Tony attempted to raise his head from his neck, but couldn't accomplish this, only lifting a centimeter or so off the ground. "Is someone... there...?" he could barely ask, but couldn't turn his head to look at Marion. "H... help. Help..." he trailed off hoarsely.

The drop ship was continuing its descent, and was beginning to fly towards the two of them now, but whereas Marion was now concealed, Tony was not. Marion's scans would reveal a standard Scarab Mk IV dropship that was pretty prevalent during Rex's Rebellion. It was armed to the teeth with lasers, rockets, and heavy caliber machine guns. It was also armed with a sonic emitter, the waves of which were capable of bringing down a formidable high-rise.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 01, 2014, 05:56:09 PM**

Marion scowled as the compnoculars revealed what the dropship was. A Scarab Mk IV. Nothing short of artillery could bring one down. Or for that matter, do more than superficial damage.

A panel in her right leg slid aside as she grabbed her pistol. Right now, all she planned to do was watch the scene unfold. And possibly intervene if they decided to abduct Tony.

Of course, this was not because she liked the Ferret. She wanted information from him.

Soren held the phone away from his ear as Don Stracci exploded. He wiped some sweat away from his forehead and took a breath to calm his racing heart. "Last I saw them, they were at the top of North Yungas Road in Bolivia."

He then took another breath. "The two came in with a gang. I was blindsided by one of the fuckers and by the time I was done with him, the two had already vanished. I'm sorry sir, but there was only so much I can do. If it's any consolation, the area is extremely remote. There's a high chance that the natives, the mining conglomerate security forces or just the environment itself will kill them."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 01, 2014, 06:10:57 PM**

As it was, the dropship's target was indeed Tony, as a beam of blue light shot out and snagged him in its light. The beam was an anti-gravity device, being able to lock on to specific objects and start to bring them back up. So it was with the ferret, who began to levitate up into the air towards the Scarab.

The ferret, who was wounded beyond belief, could do nothing to resist, and went limp in the beam as it brought him upwards...

"Well did you at least place a tracker on them?" he snapped. "If you did, I could at least dial into the frequency! While I may have people in far-flung regions, I have nobody in Bolivia, and it would take a few hours to get a team on the ground there. I don't trust random assholes finishing the job for me. NOT with her!" he said insistently.

"What was the name of this little shit, then? I'm gonna attach him to four SUVs and have them rip his limbs off whilst burning his entrails in front of him." he asked Soren again for the name.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 01, 2014, 06:30:55 PM**

Soren smiled. "Rio. His name's Rio. The guy's a nasty little thief. That's all I know of the gang." He knew that he was betraying Axel by placing Rio in Don Stracci's crosshairs but Rio was pretty much expendable to the group. Axel was not. There was also the matter that Rio was a kleptomaniac who would steal everyone's underwear if he could do so.

He then debated whether or not to tell Don Stracci that he didn't get a tracer on them. After a few seconds, he decided to tell him, figuring that honesty was the best policy with the powerful crime boss. "No sir. The cars got worked over by the gang. The fuckers stole everything."

Marion scowled. There went her source of information! She holstered her pistol and the plates on her left arm slid back as she deployed her piton gun. She aimed at a low hanging antenna on the ship and fired.

The cable sped through the air and the soon, the metal tip lodged itself into the dropship's armor. The woman gave the line a tug.

Satisfied it was secure, she reeled the line in and began the slow climb aboard the ship.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 01, 2014, 06:58:43 PM**

"Rio, eh? Should be easy enough to find with a name like that... we'll start in Corona and work outwards. If it was Emilena's group, she's based in Corona, so should be a simple process of elimination." the don stated.

He exhaled heavily upon hearing no trace. "Never mind. We'll figure this out. By the time we get there, they'll be out of Bolivia I'm guessing... but they gotta come back at some point. No sense in wasting effort if it's not needed after all... thanks for the info... " The line abruptly went dead as the don hung up.

As Tony rose into the air, his body seemed to vanish in a flash as he was teleported on board. Once he had been clear of the ground, the teleporter had worked perfectly and "beamed him up."

Varanus had saved Tony at the last second, reaching out with his mind to arrest the ferret's fall to prevent it from being fatal, but leaving him injured enough he'd barely be clinging to life. The Nile monitor normally wouldn't give a shit, but Kalis needed living bodies for Devastation's Inception, and he would get living bodies. Of course, not just any moron would qualify, as Inception required the energy of those who were particularly noteworthy, violent, pure, or otherwise not your average run of the mill jackass off the streets, and Varanus figured the son of Don Anthony Stracci certainly qualified.

"Stabilize him!" Varanus ordered, and nodded at the Scarab's pilot. "Let's get out of here, we've got what we came for."

"Yes, sir!" responded the pilot, who began taking the dropship up and out of the valley. Tony meanwhile was hustled off to the Scarab's med bay, where he would be hooked up to life saving equipment to keep him stable but comatose for the trip to the fleet.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 02:31:17 AM**

Axel stared dully at the back of the seat in front of him as they drove away, the vehicle bouncing and shuddering over the rough dirt road. He tried to imagine how Soren was breaking the news of Tony's death to his father, feeling sick to his stomach at the whole situation. He swore under his breath for what felt like the hundredth time. "*Godammit*..."

Suddenly, his ears picked up a faint, distant rumble, over that of the tyres. Slowly, he looked back in the direction they'd came - and caught a brief glimpse of something dark moving far away, up through the clouds. Axel frowned and wiped the back of his hand against his eyes, blinking away tears. There was nothing. He swallowed. "Did... did you guys see..." Trailing off, Axel shook his head. Whatever it was, he hadn't seen it clearly... it was probably a bird, or a plane. "No... never mind," he sighed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 02, 2014, 05:10:16 AM**

Emilena's gang had finally made their way to the next town, and were crouched behind a large set of ferns.

"All right..." groaned Emilena, finally getting off her feet. "My legs are not interested in hiking any longer. We'll need to rest here for at least ten minutes."

Foley glanced at the unlit houses. "So, which one of us gets to sneak into a house and grab some food for the rest of us?"

Emilena groaned. "Certainly not me. The rest of you draw straws."

Nairda held up a collection of broken branches from the ground. But he did a poor job of hiding the short one so everybody drew around it. His eyes went wide and his lip tremored.

"Rio, go with him and make sure he doesn't knock over a rack of silverware or something," Emilena groaned.

"I don't need Rio!" snapped Nairda. "Stop implying I'm incompetent!"

"I imply nothing," Emilena frowned. "I'm outright saying it. Rio, go with him whether he likes it or not."

Lily took some deep breaths to calm her pounding heart and the pain in her legs. She hoped they would be out of the forest soon.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 06:07:53 AM**

Rio twirled the stick in his hands and smirked at Nairda. "On it. Hurry up, I'm starving." He tossed the stick into the foliage and darted across to the closest house, keeping low. Hopping over a worn down wooden fence, he crept close to the building, shoes sliding soundlessly over the grass growing in patches around the perimeter. He made his way around the side of the house, towards one of the only open windows. It was cracked outwards a little, but a latch on the inside prevented them from opening it any further. The gap was just wide enough for Rio to slip through.

He listened carefully, but there was no sound in the room beyond. "Hang on a second," he whispered back to Nairda as he jumped, reaching for the window-sill and pulling himself up. Silently squeezing through the gap, he unhooked the latch and eased the window open all the way then looked over his shoulder. "Think they have pizza? I could kill for a fucking pizza." Mouth watering at the thought, he turned and dropped through quietly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 02, 2014, 06:23:27 AM**

Nairda scowled. "Why does she always rag on me lie that?" he muttered. "Am I not everpatient with her many quarrelsome attributes? Do I not labor for this team as she does? I note that we're doing her dream of sticking it to the system, but *my dream* of becoming a rapper is, quite literally, still in the gutter..."

He slipped through the window with all the skills of a cat burglar, putting his powerful combat techniques into his unnecessary diving roll.

"I'll show her!" he whispered fiercely to himself, hardly registering Rio's presence. "I'll show them all just what an Augmented hero like myself can do!"

He crept into the kitchen.

"*Here's a little song I wrote...*" cooed a voice from above the door.

Nairda's heart leaped into his throat and his Augmented part of the brain disconnected from the organic part of the brain and he slumped to the floor in shock, eyes blinking the blue screen of death. On the way down he hit a rack of silverware and sent its contents tumbling everywhere.

The motion-activated novelty bass above the kitchen entrance continued flapping its tail to kitschy music. "*Don't worry...*" it informed the twitching prone figure surrounded by spoons. "*Be happy...*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 06:52:44 AM**

Rio had spied an expensive looking gold watch resting on a drawer, and was in the process on pocketing it when he heard Bob Marley's silky tones drifting from the kitchen. He frowned. "The fuck..." Then there was an almighty crash, and Rio leaped a foot in the air. Shooting towards the kitchen and willing his heart to lower back into his chest, he almost went sprawling over the convulsing Nairda. His foot kicked against a fork, sending it skittering over the kitchen floor as the Bass continued crooning. "*Ain't got no cash, ain't got no style...*"

Rio jumped up and tried to knock the Bass to the floor, but he was too short. "*Ain't got no gal to make you smile...*"

"Fuck you!" he hissed, scooping a fork from the floor and flinging it towards the singing fish. The three prongs impaled it right between the eyes, and for a second the singing stopped. Rio started to breath a sigh of relief, but then the Bass shuddered to life again. "*But don't worry, be happy...*" Throwing his arms in the air in frustration, Rio crouched by Nairda and shook him. "Wake the fuck up! We gotta hurry, they..." From the floor above, Rio heard a door opening. Face blanching, Rio straddled the adult's chest and started slapping his face. "Wake up! Wake up!" Between slaps, the bass was now telling them that a frown brings everybody down.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 02, 2014, 06:57:36 AM**

Nairda was out cold and not getting up.

A portly man dressed only in a white wifebeater came sprinting down the stairs from the second floor, holding an AK-47. He quickly scanned the living room for intruders, and then began stomping his way into the kitchen.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 07:15:41 AM**

Rio heard the heavy footsteps thumping their way towards the kitchen and he re-doubled his efforts, pounding his fists ineffectually against Nairda's chest. "Come on..." The footsteps stopped suddenly. Rio looked up slowly, meeting the eyes of the portly man. He tried to smile innocently, still sitting on top of the twitching Nairda, surrounded by scattered cutlery while the novelty Bass sang away happily. "Er... I'm just a little boy..."

The man's grip shifted slightly on the AK-47, and Rio's eyes widened. Scrabbling off Nairda, he scuttled across the kitchen, through the adjacent room and dived through the open window. Landing with a roll, he jumped over the fence and started running up towards the ferns where the others had been hiding.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 02, 2014, 07:32:09 AM**

The man's eyes opened wide and he aimed his rifle at the escaping boy, but he didn't fire. His curiosity was piqued by the semiconscious figure on his floor.

He tiptoed forward and prodded the body with his gun barrel. When nothing happened, he kicked it in the head.

Nairda gave a full body heave and sent the guy stumbling backwards in fright. As Nairda came to, the man began screaming in angry rapid-fire Portuguese and pointing his rifle wildly.

All of a sudden he felt a pistol barrel embed itself in his back. Then a katana pressed ever-so-gently against his neck.

"Stop moving," Emilena demanded firmly. "Drop the rifle, nice and easy now, and you get to keep your appendages."

The man didn't speak English, but he got the gist and let go of the weapon. Now that he wasn't in danger of accidentally shooting Nairda, Emilena pistol-whipped him across the head and let him crumple to the floor.

The lovers looked at each other from across the kitchen. The bass started up again and Emilena bisected it.

"Ummm...I..." Nairda tried to start.

"Check upstairs," Emilena cut him off, as Foley and Flora crept into the house. "See if this gentleman had family. Foley, go get Rio and start preparing us some food. Flora, tie up our host and make sure to gag him. We're resting here for the night."

With that her wounded legs once again sent her tumbling to the ground. Nairda inched towards the stairs to the second floor. He hesitated at the base and opened his mouth to speak. "Quiet!" she hissed exasperatedly. Her hands shivered from drug withdrawal. "You've made more than enough sound for one night..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 02, 2014, 07:45:17 AM**

They reached La Paz about four hours later, and by then the night was well advanced, and Vergil retired without saying much to his comrades. He knew they needed to arrange transportation to Voltaic, but also knew no planes flew out there: there wasn't enough room for aircraft aside from helicopters and dropships to land, and those were strictly prohibited by Judaken, who would blow any such thing out of the sky with Voltaic's formidable defenses. Thus it rested on securing passage on a ship out to the mid-ocean station.

Vergil's sleep was such that it was much disturbed and interrupted. Tossing and turning, he was dreaming of his past. But there was something darker too... deep within the heart of the Unknown Regions... it was reaching out for him, calling him to join it in its mad crusade. It was powerfully seductive, enticing him despite his best efforts to resist... he'd already seen so much death, destruction, and needless sacrifice, and this wasn't helping. It was telling him that could all go away if he helped locate Devastation's Inception...

He awoke with a start and a cry of *"Fuck!"* Breathing heavily, the gecko looked over at the clock, and could see it was just after 5 in the morning... he'd only gotten about five hours of sleep. "Ugh!" he groaned, holding his head in his hands as he closed his eyes, feeling his face drenched in sweat. Running his fingers through his disheveled feathers, Vergil rolled out of bed and headed to the bathroom, both to relieve himself and splash some cold water on his face. A minute or so later the toilet was being flushed, and the gecko began to douse his face in cold water, staring at himself in the mirror. Why was his past coming back with such a vengeance?

A white gecko with large orange eyes stared back at him, and for the first time in a long while, he was starting to not even recognize himself anymore. Who had he been back then? Had he joined Rex in his crazy rebellion willingly? No... NO! That couldn't be true! He wasn't like that! He knew he wasn't! If he was, why did he feel that taking a life was only necessary in self-defense or to protect the weak? Why did he feel that Rex's Rebellion was wrong? Triste had told him he'd been loyal to the Federation even while he was in his deep cover mission of spying on Rex and Kalis. He had to hold on to that... it was all he had... but somewhere deep down, a part of him understood Rex to an extent... not fully of course, but it was there.

Drying his face with the hand towel, the gecko figured he may as well go down to the front desk and see about arranging transportation out to Voltaic Station. Already he was becoming horrified by his own inner musings, and how he'd acted only a few hours ago on the Yungas Road. He'd let his anger consume him, but why? He wasn't like that... there was something wrong with him. He was... changing...

Padding down the stairs of the sleepy Bolivian inn, the gecko picked up some brochures and sat down, trying to clear his mind and pick out a way to get out to the middle of the Atlantic in one of the more remote regions of the ocean.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 08:10:43 AM**

The front door bumped open as Rio followed Foley back into the house. He locked it behind him then joined the others, his glancing cautiously towards the kitchen doorway. "The... the fish..." he started, but then trailed off, nodding in approval when he saw the Bass' body parts strewn on the floor.

There was a creak as Nairda came back down the stairs. "Nobody else." His face lit up. "But there is a *fabulous* karaoke system upstairs..."

Shaking his head, Rio made his way across the kitchen, stepping on the man's unconscious body, and slumped over on a badly stained couch in the adjacent room. "Wake me up when dinner's ready," he mumbled over, angling his face away from a suspiciously crusty white stain.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 02, 2014, 08:31:20 AM**

Foley sighed. "Because we want the neighbors investigating the house because the karaoke is on..."

Flora had dragged the man's body into the bathroom, and now came skipping out in a white shower robe. "Look what I found!" She held out a wide array of over-the-top pills and cough syrups.

"Oh thank god." Emilena swiped the codeine and took a long swig.

"Hey, I want any sleeping pills!" Foley darted forward. "Dibs!"

"No way, I found them!" Flora snapped her stash away and stuck her tongue out. "Blow me!"

"We're all going to need to share the sleeping pills if we're hoping to get any rest before sunup," Emilena interjected. "Let's be cooperative here."

So the three drugged themselves into a lazy stupor. At one point Emilena pegged Nairda with a bottle of Robitussin in an unspoken offer to join them, but he had spent the majority of his time dragging the karaoke machine down two floors and into the basement.

"Guys?" he finally panted, coming into the trashed kitchen. "The basement is soundproof, we could do one of my private concerts? Like old times? I've got some R&B queued up..."

Every one of his teammates was out cold. The pot Foley had put on the stove had completely melted into the stovetop and was giving off smoke. Clicking the stove off, Nairda sadly walked downstairs to karaoke alone but tripped on the Robitussin bottle and bounced all the way downstairs, slipping unconscious for the second time that night.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2014, 08:39:52 AM**

In front of Vergil a brochure suddenly lifted itself up into the air and drifted across, stopping just before the seat next to him. It opened up, and with a shimmer Triste appeared in the seat, flicking through the brochure with disinterest. "These things always make the destination sound ten times better than the crap it usually is," she sighed.

Moments passed. A clock, ticking above the front desk, was the only thing disturbing the silence. Letting the brochure drop beside her, she turned to look at Vergil. "I'd ask if you're feeling better, but... it looks like you didn't exactly get the best night's sleep."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 02, 2014, 08:51:59 AM**

Vergil glanced upwards, noticing the floating brochure, and furrowed his brow until Triste appeared sitting in the seat next to his. Recoiling a bit, he finally relaxed, and sighed. "No..." he confessed here, shaking his head. "I didn't. Nightmares really... about my past." He frowned, and gazed downwards at the floor, as if trying to scrutinize it. "I keep dreaming about... well no I don't keep but I did start to dream about my past with Kalis... and Rex..." he trailed off here, sighing again. "There was something dark... something hidden... deep in the Unknown Regions..." He looked up at her now. "I think Rex and Kalis went to go find it... the 'truth'... behind the Alliance's attack on the Federation. Someone was pulling the strings... manipulating the war for their own benefit... and whatever it was, or whoever it was, Rex and Kalis found it... and it changed them... by the time they got back, they were working for it, trying to find Torment's Cataract and... what I now believe to be the warship's name, Devastation's Inception." he explained, the mere name sending a chill down his spine as he spoke it.

"Triste... I'm sorry... Agent Acyle," he corrected himself, shaking his head. "I didn't... I didn't willingly follow Rex... did I?" he asked, his voice turning hoarse. "I stayed... I stayed loyal to you... to the Federation... up till the moment you assaulted Rex's flagship... right?" he asked, eyes searching her own now for hopeful answers.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 02, 2014, 05:51:34 PM**

As the dropship began to fly off, Marion used her flying frame's engines to push her closer aboard the ship. Once she was aboard (and safely away from the various weapons mountings), she deployed her grappling spikes and latched onto the ship. Her plasma cutter lacked the power to slice through the ship's armored hull but it would pierce a thinner interior bulkhead or door with no problem.

Soren was sitting on the toilet and frowning. The inn the group had chosen was rather dingy with a fine layer of grey dust coating every inch. Judging from the number of armed personnel around, it appeared to be quite popular with the workers from the mining conglomerates.

Right now, he was actually surprised how violent he had become a few hours ago. If Lily hadn't stopped him, he probably would have killed Rio and went after Emilena next.

He sighed and got up; right now there were probably more important things to do.

The pipes creaked and gurgled as he turned on the hot water tap.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 03, 2014, 02:37:09 AM**

"Triste is fine," she said, shifting her position in the chair. She stared down at her hands, keeping quiet as someone in the inn used the taps, the water pipe's groaning reverberating through the building. Finally, it died down and Triste looked up, meeting Vergil's eyes.

"Rex was... a persuasive person," she started. "Charismatic. He had ways of twisting things around, bending the situation so people started flocking to *his* way of thinking. It was a... a gift, I suppose you could call it. When you were working as a double agent for us, we were... Alright, I'll admit it. We were worried he'd get inside your mind, turn you against us. In some of your communications with us, it was something even *you* were concerned about." Her expression darkened for a moment. "It wouldn't have been the first time Rex turned one of our agents."

She reached out and briefly rested a hand on his shoulder. "But Vergil, listen to me. You stayed strong. I can't imagine how hard it must have been... but you didn't turn against the Federation. You didn't let Rex inside your head. Right up to the attack on his ship, you were completely on our side." Triste tilted her head. "Don't doubt yourself. You'd be doing a great agent a disservice."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 03, 2014, 09:49:21 AM**

The dropship accelerated once it had risen out of the valley and began making for the northwest, which wasn't the direction of La Paz, Bolivia's capital being further to the southwest. It was a curious turn, as the only things in this direction were Peru and Ecuador, but whatever the reason was, it seemed they weren't going back into Bolivia's interior. The dropship whined as it started making its way over the mountains and jungle, heading for its so far unknown destination.

Vergil looked up as the pipes could clearly be heard dumping their water through their innards. Jeez... was it always this noisy in the lobby? He briefly wondered if he'd made as much noise simply running his sink and flushing his toilet.

But he diverted his attention back to her as she reassured him he'd been strong, and hadn't fallen under Rex's influence. He'd maintained his loyalty throughout the mission, right up until Triste's team had conducted their infiltration and had killed Rex on the bridge of his flagship.

He relaxed visibly under her touch, and closed his eyes. "I'm... glad to hear that. I'm also glad I woke up before the Purifiers had completely erased my memory." he confessed to her here. He placed his own hand over the one she had on his shoulder, patting it, though whether this was a conscious effort on his part or not wasn't initially clear.

"So I'm thinking of booking us passage on the Bremen II, a replica of an old liner from the 30s that makes regular runs out to Voltaic Station." He held the brochure out for her to look at. "Cruise the oceans in Art Deco luxury, or so the add says. I think... I think Tony would've appreciated it." Vergil said sadly here, taking Triste's hand off his shoulder but keeping it within his own for now. "Think the government would approve of us taking first class?" he asked here, trying to put a light on the situation by offering a weak smirk.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 04, 2014, 04:30:28 AM**

"Honestly, I don't think the government would approve of anything more than third class travel with cabins so small you couldn't turn around without getting a pipe up the ass," Triste muttered as she flicked through the leaflet Vergil had passed her. "But I don't see those tight fisted bastards around to stop us."

We heard that.

She gave a thin smile. The ship *did* look pretty nice... and she figured that they'd earned a little luxury on their journey to the next waypoint. Triste glanced sideways at Vergil... and gave a slight frown as she realised that her hand had sub-consciously clasped Vergil's tightly. Loosening her grip, she dropped the brochure back down on the table and cleared her throat. "So... should we wake the others up soon? Get an early start?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 04, 2014, 08:58:59 PM**

Lily was abruptly roused from a dream of being tortured by shadowy unseen forces. She took a couple deep breaths. Her sleep had not been an easy one, and she was covered in a cold sweat that reminded her unpleasantly of the inhuman body she'd used to have.

She stumbled to the bathroom and took a cold shower. It was supposed to be a warm shower but after thirty minutes the water still hadn't risen above lukewarm.

In the bathroom mirror, she glanced at her bedraggled self. Two life-threatening events later, and she didn't seem any closer to accomplishing her goal. *Ejlert Sulus North, am I any closer to finding you?*

Emilena groggily stirred awake. What time was it?

She groaned as she got up; her legs still hurt like hell. She regarded the dim light the window was casting over the horrifically messy kitchen; looks like she managed to get up at sunrise like she hoped. But then why did she feel so rested?

Foley was still out cold; Flora had her arms wrapped around him in a spooning position, which Emilena suspected was unrequited. She staggered to the sink and splashed her face with tepid metallic water.

As she got a glance outside, she noticed with alarm that the fruit shop across the street was closed. There were no pedestrians, not even early-morning ones. Odd.

She checked on the bathroom. Flora had done a good job on the ropes; their captor was wiggling and screaming into his gag, and his eyes went wide when he saw her. She closed the door behind her.

She found Nairda lying in a crumpled heap at the bottom of the basement stairs. 'Hey, get up..." she nudged him. He didn't budge. She groaned, and fondled him. Annoyingly it was the one way he seemed to respond to stimulus.

"Oh, hey, Emi~" he muttered weakly, eyes opening a crack.

"We need to leave," she told him. She turned to go get the others.

"...Emi?"

She stopped. "What?"

"I'm...I'm sorry about last night. I really screwed up."

"You just did your normal thing," she said crossly. "I should have omitted you from the options to raid the house. I was the one who made the mistake."

"But that's the thing...I don't want to be so useless..." he ears drooped. "You know my dream is to be a rapper, but if I can't accomplish drug running...how am I going to do that?"

"Then get better." Emilena turned to leave again.

"Why can't you be nice to me?" Nairda whined, tears welling in his eyes. "You were nice to Rio last night. Hell, you're nice to the whole gang except me."

"The gang accomplishes what I tell them to." Emilena rubbed her temples in frustration and sat down. "Look. Maybe the problem is that you haven't figured out what you're good at yet.

Maybe experiment and try new things. Or work at getting better at the old things. Just *try* to get better. Then people will respect you."

Nairda hung his head. "Okay..." he said, in a dismissive way she knew meant he wasn't going to do any of that. "Would you...karaoke with me? Just one song?"

She growled in frustration. "Make it quick. *Her Majesty* quick."

Nairda skipped over to the karaoke machine and queued up the R&B still in the track. "Tonight's song is for all those lovely vixens out in the audience today," he crooned in a deep falsetto. "*They been spending most their lives, living in a*--"

"Wait, what do you mean 'tonight'?" interrupted Emilena. She noticed the clock on the karaoke machine read 17:42. They'd all slept until *sundown*, not sunup!

"Everybody up!" she called, dashing up the stairs towards the kitchen. "We need to get out this town stat!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2014, 08:43:58 AM**

Marita stirred from the lumpy bed. she, Rose and Marie had squeezed into one bed, nearly upon arriving at their room. all three of them were exhausted and barely paused to look at the pitiful state of their accommodations before going straight to bed. Marita was still coming to terms with Tony's death, the shock of it was starting to go away, replaced by regret and deep sadness. she took a seat in a chair and looked over the window who looked out ionto the street below. ' how do i keep getting dragged into these situations?' she sighed. She promised herself she would avenge Tony, and if that meant Rio spent his entire life in prison, then so be it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 05, 2014, 11:08:33 AM**

Vergil seemed to become cognizant that he was gripping Triste's hand, so immediately released it when she relaxed her own grip. "Uh... yeah, sure." He smiled now, nodding. "Let's do it. We'll get them started and we'll fly to Rio to board our ship, which fortunately leaves tomorrow. So plenty of time." he informed her, giving her another nod.

Turning, he headed over to the desk to book flights and tickets on the Bremen II and make the final arrangements.

It was a day later when they boarded the sleek looking liner bound for Voltaic Station in the Atlantic. The trip would take three days, so they had some time to unwind before they reached the floating resort/mining station. The cabins aboard the ship were a real delight, a marvel of Art Deco throwback that aimed to be as close to the original as possible. While the ship may have looked like she burned oil, she had a modern engine, as oil was too scarce to be used in massive ships.

She as was close to the original as possible in design, both on the inside and outside, and provided relatively fast transport out to the station, being just one of several ships that made the voyage.

It was the first night out of Rio, and Vergil was standing outside his cabin on one of the promenade decks, taking in the warm evening air and gazing out at the vast, black expanse of the sea. It was calming to him, but he still feared the nightmares he knew were coming. He hadn't slept well last night either, despite being in a relatively nice hotel in Rio.

His dreams, or memories were now the better term, were only getting worse. He wasn't liking what he was seeing, but he had to try and stay calm, and not lose sight of who he really was. But sleeping terrified him now... as much as he wanted to remember, he also didn't want to remember as well.

Sighing, he pushed off from the railing and began slowing walking down the deck, letting his mind wander as the air caressed his face and soothed his nerves. Heading in one specific direction, Vergil turned and entered the interior of the ship, walking down the carpeted hallway, his footsteps echoing a tad as he headed to Triste's cabin. Pausing outside, the gecko rocked back on his heels a bit, rolled forward then rocked back again, forward and back, before he finally knocked upon her door.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 05, 2014, 07:49:55 PM**

Triste sat behind an expensive looking desk. Quiet, regular grating sounds drifted across her cabin as she drew her knife rhythmically against a sharpening stone, the edge of the blade scraping against the instrument. There wasn't really a need for it - her weapon was about as sharp as it was going to get. But she found the action helped her to relax... and right now, Triste needed to clear her head. This was meant to be a simple... or at least, relatively simple mission. Exploit Vergil and use him to reach the warship before Kalis. But things were becoming complicated. She'd known Vergil would be different, but still... something about him threw her, and she wasn't used to that feeling.

The large mirror fixed to the wall in front of the desk reflected her grim expression, and the expanse of her cabin. There could be no mistaking the large room for anything other than first class - huge wardrobe, a plush double-bed behind her, a window that stretched across the length of the cabin and gave a stunning view of the ocean. A round table was positioned before the window, and adjacent to it a drinks cabinet was affixed to the wall. To her left, a large flat-screen TV was hooked up, facing towards the bed. But Triste wasn't paying attention to any of these things. Her eyes were focused on the weapon as it grated against the stone.

Footsteps outside her door. Triste ignored them, but paused at the knock. She glanced up. It didn't sound urgent... After a moment, she sighed and slipped off the chair. She made to leave the knife on the table, then considered and slipped it back into the sheath near her wrist. Crossing the room, Triste unlocked the door and pulled it open, then tilted her head when she saw who was on the other side. "Vergil... Is everything okay?"

The carpeting along the ship's corridor ate away the sounds of Axel and Lily's footsteps as they made their way along the hallways to Marita, Rose and Marie's cabin. He had his arm around Lily's shoulder, and while this was partly a gesture of affection it was also to help keep himself steady as the ship rocked slightly against the waves - as they'd been preparing to go out, Axel had discovered their drinks cabinet. He'd taken perhaps a few too many sips of the whiskey.

"You know, they should really put a warning up about how strong that stuff is," he complained to her as they approached Marita's cabin, his ears drooping slightly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 05, 2014, 08:00:14 PM**

Lily grinned. "Well, considering Vergil's paying for our trip over, I don't think you've had enough," she joked.

Being able to eat in fancy restaurants and enjoy the ocean had done wonders for her psyche. She'd always held a bit of a fascination for the rich life, and this cruise was the closest she'd been to really experiencing it.

But she put on a somber face. "Now, our goal in this dinner is to help Marita and her friends recover from Tony's death," she reminded her drunk husband. "So we need to very respectful for their feelings and memories."

Once they'd reached the cabin, she knocked several times.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2014, 08:12:02 PM**

Marita opened the door after the fourth knock' Lily! Axel! Do come in!" she said warmly. ' The girls had found their room to to be quite easily the most luxurious place they had ever stayed in, with the possible exception of Don Stracci's house. the girls were starting to feel good about themselves. there was a large drinks cabinet, but none of the girls was a heavy drinker, so they had just picked out a bottle of nice wine and took a glass each.' please, have a seat, Maries making up something quick in the microwave" Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 05, 2014, 08:23:03 PM**

Vergil shifted his eyes to look directly at Triste's. "Uh... I wanted to drop by... see how you were doing." he informed her, shuffling his feet, and averting his eyes nervously. "Truth be told Triste... I'm terrified of sleeping. My dreams haven't been the most pleasant as of late... so maybe I'm looking for something to do before I turn in... something to avoid sleeping. Call it fear... call it... superstition, call it whatever you want, I don't know... I just want to talk to you... get my mind off things... stay up as long as I can before I sleep..." He sighed here, closing his eyes and bowing his head. "I hope I'm not intruding."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 05, 2014, 08:30:34 PM**

"Is there time to stop the microwave?" asked Lily, smiling. "I actually reserved a table for five at the *Fancie D'Fare*, this beautiful little restaurant just off port bow. I was thinking we could all eat and watch the sun go down."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2014, 09:02:25 PM**

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sure' Marita nodded and motioned at Marie. ' you can take it out Marie We;re going out to eat tonight." Marie nodded and obliged by stopping the microwave- she had just startedit so nothing was actually cooked- she had put in some hot sandwiches , akin to Hot Pockets. but going out to eat was better than microwave food." what time did you reserve the table for?' Rose asked Lily.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 05, 2014, 09:10:50 PM**

(*Breman II*)

Soren vomited into the toilet between profanities. He had overestimated his tolerance for alcohol by a large margin. If it weren't for the pre-cocktail alcohol metabolic enhancement pill he had taken before his drinking, he'd would have ended up in a coma ó or dead.

After yet another round of vomiting, he got up and flushed the toilet. Spitting a few times in the elegant ceramic sink, he looked at himself in the brushed bronze Art Deco mirror. The mirror was a representation of the sunrise but it had the technological and kinetic edge of Art Deco.

Staring back at him was a bleary eyed and obviously drunk black haired Human. Soren sighed and flopped back onto his plush bed.

Maybe everything will be better in the morning. He looked out at the starry sky that spread over the ocean like an artist's canvas.

(Scarab Dropship)

Marion quickly hauled herself up and out of sight as two guards hustled down the desolate metal hallway. Last night, she had managed to climb aboard and cut through an exterior door. The guard who had caught her in the act was soon swift to find out that her plasma blade was more than capable of slicing through flesh and bone.

Once the footsteps died down, she lowered herself down and retracted the cable and piton she had fired into the ceiling.

She yawned under her helmet; she had gone more than 24 hours without sleep. Nevertheless, she had a job: get Tony and any information.

The Human looked at a plaque on the wall. She sighed; the medical bay was on the floor below.

(OOC - I kind of pictured it the other way around. Synthetic algal oil was used only for heavy vehicles like large cargo ships, trucks and planes because there weren't electric motors powerful enough to move them. Oh well, I can imagine the *Breman II* being at the edge where electric motors are still practical.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 06, 2014, 04:34:30 AM**

Triste blinked. "Oh... Well, of course. Come in." She pulled the door open fully and stepped aside, then closed it behind him after he'd stepped through. Stepping past him, Triste walked across the room and indicated the drinks cabinet and mini-fridge. "Can I get you something to drink? Or eat?"

She was trying to keep her tone neutral, her expression amiable, but her insides were knotting. *It's getting worse... his memories... this is bad...*

Axel swayed slightly as Marie walked over to stop the microwave. "It's, ah..." He raised his wrist and squinted intensely at his watch. "We need to be there in like... ten. Ten minutes." Axel nodded sagely and lowered his arm. "We should hurry, they probably won't like it if we're late." He looked around at the others and blinked, one eyelid slower than the other.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 06, 2014, 07:00:38 AM**

Vergil headed into the cabin, gratefully accepting her offer to come inside. He walked over to the chair she'd been sitting in to sharpen her knife at her desk. The knife of course was no longer there, so he slid into the chair, threading his tail out behind it and clasping his hands in his lap as he rotated the chair around to look at her.

"Yes a uh... drink would be nice, but no thanks on the food... I already ate." he informed her, taking advantage of the free food on board earlier. "Preferably liquor as opposed to beer but... whatever you have." he added quietly.

Tapping his thumbs together, the gecko gazed across to her as she went about the task. "I know I probably received training to deal with stress on missions but... I can't remember much of it." he confessed here with a sigh. "You're pretty hardened to it it seems... wish I had your resolve." he admitted to Triste here, raising his orange eyes a bit to study her face.

The dropship was starting to descend now, having traveled a long distance to the northwest. They had arrived at the Ecuadorian capital of Quito, and were touching down on the fringes of Mariscal Sucre International Airport. In this particular corner of the airport sat a large military cruiser with Kalis's logo emblazoned on the side. In fact, it seemed Kalis's forces owned this part of the airport, judging from several military APCs driving around and other Scarabs sitting on the ground.

Varanus stretched a bit and rose from the chair on the bridge he'd been sitting in. "I'm gonna go aboard the *Falchion* and report. Once I get confirmation we can bring the ferret aboard, we'll do so and blast out of here." the monitor grunted, heading for the exit of the dropship as the ramp slid downward.

"Yes sir!" replied the pilot.

"Order the crew to keep an eye out... Williams failed to report in this morning... he might be drunk on duty, but if he doesn't report in in 20 minutes, go to his bunk, rouse him, and execute him if he's sleeping. I suspect we might have an intruder on board... or a traitor. Conduct a thorough sweep of this ship while I'm gone. Keep in touch."

"Will do, sir." the pilot nodded, clutching the control column to patch into the ship's communications system.

Stalking down the ramp now, the Nile monitor headed for the cruiser sitting on the tarmac, intent on reporting his success to Lord Kalis.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 06, 2014, 12:02:13 PM**

Marie took the food out the microwave, set it on a plate and wrapped it. ' Alright, lets head out guys' She said, as Marita headed towards the door ' What name do you have the reservation under Lily?" Marita asked as she opened the door.' So we know who to tell the person at the front desk.' Rose was the first to leave the room, she turned and waited for the others to join her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 06, 2014, 03:15:58 PM**

Triste couldn't help but give a bitter smile. "You have to learn to deal with it, but... Well, it's not like I'm made of stone," she said as she reached into the cabinet and poured them each a glass of scotch. Her expression darkened slightly as she recalled some of the things her previous assignments had required her to do. "But feelings don't matter. You *can't* let them get in the way," she said softly. "The only thing that can count is the mission."

Shaking her head, she turned and offered him a glass, then walked over and sat at the table by the window. Taking a sip, Triste stared across at Vergil, her eyes meeting his own. There was a soft *thump thump thump* overhead as the ceiling fan rotated. "I know it's been hard on you, Vergil... but you're stronger than you think," she said eventually. "These... nightmares you're having... I can't imagine how terrible they are. The things you must have seen and done whilst acting as a double agent... But you have to remember, that's all they are. Nightmares." She gave the gecko an encouraging look. "And the agent I knew wouldn't let something like that deter him from his mission. Hell, you were such a bastard, the recruits were having nightmares about *you*," Triste added with a small grin.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 06, 2014, 04:35:07 PM**

As they walked to the restaurant, Lily opened her mouth to reply but stumbled and bumped a worker who was vacuuming the carpet.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" she exclaimed. "Are you all right? I didn't mean to--"

The worker looked at her, bewildered, and hastily retreated from the hallway. Lily blinked a few times, confused and offended.

"Sorry about that," stated a maÓtre d' who was passing by the restaurant opening. "Madam, he was part of our Workpaid Immigration Program, and probably didn't speak English."

He explained that any worker with a yellow-bordered name tag was an immigrant paying for their transport across the ocean through working a single voyage along the cruise ship. They are not allowed to speak to passengers unless authorized to do so, and are subject to incredibly restrictive quartering and behavioral rules.

"So do not be offended," he smiled revealing gleaming white teeth. "Can I ask the name your reservation is under?"

"Whent," Lily replied, blushing. As a fugitive, she couldn't exactly go giving her real name around to cruise liners.

"Well, Mrs. Whent, let me upgrade you to an oceanside view on the deck, to make up for that little altercation. Free of additional charge," the man led the party to their table. "A waiter will be with you shortly to take your order."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 06, 2014, 08:58:26 PM**

Vergil took the glass of scotch and swished it around, looking at it before downing the first gulp but deciding to act conservatively for the moment. Taking another swig, he let it burn his mouth for a bit in bittersweet taste before swallowing. He listened to her speak, finding himself comforted by it for some reason, but found himself skeptical of him being a bastard in training. He raised his brow, and gave her a quizzical look.

"Really? I was really that hard on others?" he asked, shaking his head. "I can hardly picture that but... I guess maybe I was, heheh. Still... funny how time can change someone... I'm more unsure of myself than anything else." He swirled the scotch around slowly again. "I've seen death before... but this was different... one of our own is gone... and it just kept reminding me of all the shit I saw in the Scorched Earth War... that was NOT a conflict worth remembering but... there it is." he said, swallowing hard.

"I wish I could be tough as nails like you, but that captivity changed me, I guess. I'm no longer that hard-boiled agent you remember me as. For better or for worse... still, how do you just switch yourself off like you do? You don't seem to get emotionally involved in anything... don't you ever get lonely, living such a life?" he asked sincerely here, and frowning a bit sadly. "I think... I don't think companionship is a weakness. I think we need at least someone to rely on in life... because I feel like I'd collapse under the strain of trying to do everything myself otherwise..." He sighed here, looking over at her. "And it helps knowing someone is out there to catch me if I fall... call me sentimental, but I don't believe we can stand on our own."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 07, 2014, 06:02:18 PM**

"How do I switch myself off?" Triste took a sip. "I guess... I just remember what's at stake if I don't follow my orders. Working for the Ivitz *can* be hard, but they've always got the future in mind. And that's what always gets me through. Knowing that, as difficult as it might seem, the greater good is always the most important thing. More important than getting... emotionally involved." Staring off to the side she smiled, almost sadly. "It's what the Ivitz teaches you. And the Ivitz is... well, it's the only thing I've ever known."

Her eyes lowered to her glass. "Yeah, I guess it can get... lonely," Triste shrugged. "I've never really thought about it before. Getting close to people on your team just makes it harder if something goes... wrong. Back before you went missing, you were the only one who made me feel like maybe I could take the risk," she lied, glancing up at Vergil. "But then... Well, you know what happened next. We all thought you were dead, and..." She shook her head and took another drink. "Sounds pretty pathetic when I say it out loud."

Axel lowered himself gingerly into his chair and looked out at the view the deck offered them. After all that had happened, something this relaxing seemed almost unreal. The rat stretched his legs under the table and sighed contentedly. "I could get used to this..." He glanced at Lily and grinned. "Mrs. Whent! How about we buy a big boat like this? Just for ourselves! We can sail the seven seas! You know, when we're not, ah... trying to stay *un*broke..." He trailed off and looked confused for a moment.

He looked over at Marita and the other two, and remembered why they'd arranged this meeting in the first place. "So... how are you taking it, Marita? We haven't really had time to talk since Tony..." Axel grew quiet, his expression morose.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 09, 2014, 04:01:05 AM**

Lily nodded in agreement. "He was a dear friend, and it was so sudden..." she bowed her head, tears welling in her eyes. "But we couldn't have been hit as hard as you were..."

A jet black wolf walked up to the table, dressed like a waitress and wearing a nametag with a yellow border. "Heya! I was told you all get a free alcoholic drink cause of something that happened. What'll it be?" She whipped out a notepad and pen from between her breasts.

"Just water, please," said Lily politely.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 09, 2014, 06:10:21 AM**

"And?" Vergil asked her here. "I mean... so you're saying companionship and getting close to your team members is just a weakness? That assignments are all just statistics and numbers? That really sounds... like a cold existence." he commented here ruefully. "So I should just... switch off, not care, and only think about the outcome of my actions?" he inquired, looking up at her here as he took another drink.

"If so... what separates me from Rex and Kalis? Rex took his emotions for others out of the equation after awhile... too much death and pain he'd suffered, I guess. He took greater and greater risks, and was willing to kill others as collateral damage if it meant ultimate victory over the Alliance. And that point of view changed him over time... and I don't think it was for the better. Kalis, who was already a hothead, simply played off that the more erratic Rex became; that much I do remember. The mission and victory at any cost... it just doesn't sound... right... or conducive to mental well-being." He sighed here, looking down into his drink as he watched the ice cubes drift in the bottom of the glass.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 09, 2014, 07:16:06 AM**

Soren entered the resturaunt and gave the name that Axel and Lily had made their reservation at. He was dressed in casual clothing. From all appearances, he appeared to be slightly drunk ó thanks to the pills he had taken earlier before his previous overindulgence in alcohol.

"So, how has everyone been?" He took a seat next to Axel. A Vulpine waiter gave him a glass of ice water, which he quickly drank.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 09, 2014, 12:36:36 PM**

"This mission... defeating Kalis... You don't think it's worth any cost? What'll happen to the world if Kalis wins - we *can't* let that happen." Triste put her glass back down on the table. "Vergil, what drives me is always the greater good. Achieving that goal... it can mean some hard choices. *Impossible* choices. But at the end of the day, sometimes those decisions need to be made. Killing ten to save fifty... Logically, don't you see it makes sense?" She shook her head. "That's what separates us from the likes of Kalis and Rex. The sacrifices *they* make are influenced by power. Greed. The need to... dominate others. You saw first-hand what Kalis did back in Lanthae. The slaughter of thousands of innocent lives... for no discernible reason. People like *us* are needed to stop people like *that*."

Triste sighed. "I know it's not easy to hear. Or think about. But sometimes, sacrifices just... they just have to be made. I don't *like* it. And whenever I can avoid it, I do. But sometimes, those choices just need to happen," she repeated, almost to herself. Pausing, she turned her head and looked through the window, out at the darkness of the sea. "Don't think I'm criticizing you, Vergil. I can tell you care about everyone on the team. It's... admirable." She sighed again. "It's just been so long since I've worked with anyone like that."

Axel looked sideways at the person who'd just joined them, and his expression brightened slightly once he recognised the human. "Soren!" he smiled, putting his arm around him and ruffling his hair slightly. "We're just, ah... just trying to feel better about what happened with Tony. Him and Marita were almost... you know..." He stopped and peered closely at him. "Hey, are you... are you drunk?"

The waitress arrived, and Axel regarded her appreciatively. "A free drink? Sweet! I'll have a, uh..." He looked down at the menu, his eyes slightly glazed. "...A Sex On The Beach..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 09, 2014, 01:06:38 PM**

"But that's exactly what Rex was saying!" Vergil came to his feet now. "During the Scorched Earth War he kept saying it was the only way to victory... we sacrifice here so that we gain later. It was for the greater good. It was to defeat the Alliance, who cared nothing for life and nuked every region they could if it stood in their way. They had NO qualms about killing millions! They were little better than animals! Rex wasn't getting the support he needed from the Federation at first, who ordered him NOT to engage... that the Alliance posed no significant threat." Chugging the rest of his drink, he set it down hard upon the table.

"But Rex didn't believe them! The Alliance initiated outright genocide on entire cultures of people! They didn't care! Rex too swore he'd defeat the Alliance at ANY cost... but was the creation of Rex's Rebellion afterwards too high a cost? Look at what the war turned Rex and Kalis into! Rex became the very thing he swore to defeat! Even then the Federation still officially refused to sanction his efforts, despite them seeing with their own eyes the atrocities of the Alliance! He formed a compromise: his supporters would fight as an independent unit under Federation supervision. But what did he do? He began taking 'moral shortcuts' in order to ensure victory. He became just as brutal as the Alliance in order to beat them, because that was the ONLY way to beat them! He knew the Federation had massive reserves he could burn through in order to achieve victory, but he sent hundreds of thousands to their deaths in stopping the Alliance because he knew he could... and because he felt it the only recourse. He placed valuable generals... some your former superiors, in dangerous positions as traps to lure top Alliance fleets into ambushes where he could wipe them out, but at the cost of the bait being sacrificed as well! Is that... is that the kind of warfare you prescribe to?" Vergil asked shakily, his legs wobbling a little here.

"Is that the kind of tactics you believe in in order to achieve victory for the 'greater good?'" he asked, eyes searching her desperately for an answer. "Everything's expendable for the final goal? Is that really all there is to it? Then... then we're no different from Rex! He achieved victory through the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of lives! He'd send out units to get purposely wiped out so they could expose the weak points in the Alliance lines, then he'd capitalize and annihilate the Alliance defenses based on his findings... findings which cost ten Federation soldiers for every one Alliance soldier killed. It wasn't for greed or power back then... no..." Vergil whispered that last bit, shaking his head. "He fought so the Federation wouldn't lose, and he won... sure he won, but he left the Federation a shell of its former self, barely able to hold him off when he turned traitor and started his own offensive. He didn't truly change until after he killed the Alliance's leader in personal combat and defied his orders not to pursue their beaten remnants into the Unknown Regions. He said he wanted to make sure they'd never pose a threat to the world ever again. But by the time he came back... something had changed him for the worse... I don't..."

Vergil paused here, shaking his head as he began backing away from her. Was he really starting to remember all this? It was like his mind had opened up, unlocked a deep part of itself it had forgotten for years. The cob webs were coming off... sure he'd read about the war and Rex plenty of times, and maybe that was it, but there was a clarity to his speech as well... almost as if he was reliving it.

Sinking back down into the chair, he stared ahead, as if dazed before coming back to himself. "How does... how DOES what you just said make you or me any different from him and what he was doing? He was doing it for the greater good too... to stop the genocide and nuclear strikes... but was he any better than his opponents? Huh? Was he?" the gecko almost demanded, and it was evident he was hurt and struggling with his inner feelings.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 09, 2014, 08:22:46 PM**

Marita ordered a glass of Hot Sands Wine, and stared at her water glass ';' Well its slowly starting to sink in' she said finally.' Tony and I were not an official couple, the date we were going to go on was to be our first. still, I was looking forward to it, to see what he was like when he didn't have to bear the legacy of his family. And he would have been the first guy I'd have dated since college, which was , oh about 8 years ago. I've dated Great Danes, Newfoundlands, Bernese Mountain dogs, cats, badgers, and a few other species, and for the most part, they were good guys and girls, but well, there wasn't that 'click' you get when you meet someone who compliments you very well. What hurts the most about Tony, is the lost potential, to learn if there was something there between us. I'll never know now, of course." Marita breathed heavily, as she swirled the water in her glass. "I appreciate you doing this for me Lily and Axel. This is something I needed."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 10, 2014, 01:07:23 AM**

Lily nodded somberly. "But what you have to remember is that you're not alone," Lily smiled at her. "We're here for you. Especially Rose and Marie, your best friends.We can support you and we can remember Tony together." She took a deep breath. In a few minutes she planned to tell the others about Ejlert...

The waitress returned with Axel's and Marita's drinks. She also had a bubbling light green liquid in a can she gave to Soren and two warm cream-colored cocktail glasses for Rose and Marie. "I thought I'd throw these in here. This does wonders for a hangover," she said kindly to Soren, noticing his countenance with an air of understanding. "And for you madams," she smiled at Rose and Marie, "the Hibiscus Extract is our most popular drink. Has a powerful, deep flavor. We just didn't want your friend to drink alone, and don't worry, they're on the house."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 10, 2014, 02:53:37 PM**

He sure does love listening to himself speak… Triste arranged her features into a sympathetic expression, and put on a soft tone. "Kalis and Rex were always monsters. But back then, before they turned traitor…" She crossed her arms in front of her. "I can understand the choices that were made. I already told you that I don't like having to make those kinds of decisions. And if there's a way around them, I'll always try to find another way. But what if that isn't an option? The needs of the many will always outweigh the needs of the few."

She raised her eyes to meet Vergil's, staring at him evenly as he sank into the chair. "We can argue the ethics of how they handled the war before they betrayed us until we're blue in the face, but the fact is that now Kalis is the one threatening the world with genocide, and we're the ones trying to stop it. We can't afford to be weak. If – and I'm saying *if* – there's a difficult choice to be made, and there's no alternative, we have to be prepared to make it. Because otherwise, we lose."

"Right... we've gotta stay together if we're gonna get through this," Axel nodded, sipping his drink contentedly through the little straw he'd been given. As the waitress handed the exotic looking drinks to the others, he looked over at Lily, and saw she seemed slightly anxious... probably about the news she'd told him she was going to break. Axel reached across and touched her hand, giving her an encouraging, if slightly shaky, look. *It's okay.*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 10, 2014, 03:12:08 PM**

"No... I refuse to believe that they were always monsters. There's no way the Federation would've recruited them if they had been. Rex and Kalis were called heroes at one point... they were the best of friends, and remained inseparable, even after their treason. They didn't start out that way... that's where you're wrong." he told her flatly, shaking his head. "And that's what makes me worried the most about the outcome of this mission. If we're willing to compromise our own values to defeat Kalis, there's nothing stopping us from becoming just like him or Rex. Nothing separates us from them..." He stood up again here, crestfallen.

"Those are choices I'm not willing to make. I know what's at stake, and I'm admitting to you right now that I can't see it through if it comes to that... I thought I could rely on at least someone in this group... but it turns out... it turns out I was wrong." he said with dejection, and turned away from her now. "I can't follow ideals that place ones I love below my mission." He began heading for her door now. "Tell Fugate to send me a new team... ones I don't know and won't have time to grow attached to. If you don't, I will. There's no reason for any of you to continue this insane mission any longer. You'll only be liabilities to me, or hindrances, if that's the term you prefer. I need to do this without distractions... and without interference. I'm sorry Triste... but the mission has changed. If I wasn't so involved it'd be fine... but I made a promise to protect you, and others, and I'm not even sure I can keep that promise anymore."

Turning as he reached her door, he glanced back at her sadly. "I wish... I wish I could fight these feelings... suppress them... but I'm not like you... I just can't switch off. Already I'm growing to care about you in a dangerous way... a way that could compromise us... I need to stop it here." he informed her, almost pleadingly. Tears were forming in his eyes, and it was clear he was trying to fight off these new feelings within him, struggling to keep a level head about him. It was clear he wanted desperately to do something else... to not have to put up this wall between himself and her, but his own inner regret was winning out, and this struggle for dominance was faltering on the side of caution.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 11, 2014, 05:35:12 PM**

"Remember the briefing we had with our superiors all that time ago? Do you remember what you were told about Kalis?" Triste asked as Vergil headed for the door. "'His only goal is chaos and destruction'. You don't just become that kind of person. You always are that person," she disagreed, her eyes narrowed. "Monsters can have friends. And the Federation can make mistakes." *You naÔve fool,* she added silently.

As he turned around, Triste's expression flipped back to its concerned and sympathetic faÁade. "If you want to replace the other members of the team, that's your prerogative." Keeping the original members would have been safer in preserving his memories, but if he truly wanted new individuals it was no skin off her back. "I can arrange to have replacement members waiting for us by the time we arrive at our destination. Though I wish you would have considered this sooner. You must have known the danger you'd be placing them in when you requested them." She stood up and took a step towards him. "But I'm going to have to correct you on one thing. You said there's no reason for me to continue this mission? I can think of one reason that's in this room. You. I was put on this mission to protect you, and that's exactly what I intend to do. You have to stay alive for us to succeed. But more than that…" Her fists tightened. "Godammit Vergil, I told you I'm not made of stone. I already lost you once before. *Not again.* I'm going to stay and help keep you safe, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it." Most of this was pure fabrication, of course… but somewhere deep, deep inside, the feeling she was pouring out, the desire to keep him from harm, rang true – and the realisation made Triste hate herself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 11, 2014, 07:35:14 PM**

"But that's the thing... Rex wasn't a monster at the start... and never would've befriended someone who was... I just don't believe it." He shook his head here. "Impulsive and hot-headed maybe... but monster? No. I specifically remember Kalis cautioning Rex ABOUT finding the waypoints, as he feared it would lead to their court martial by the Federation. He strikes me as someone who started off much the same way Rex did... and I believe there might still be a fragment of his old self left within him. Whatever changed Rex out there changed him too... for the worse. I'm just trying to remember what it was... or if I went out there at all with them."

He paused here to listen, his hand falling from the doorknob as she explained a few things. "Well I DID consider it sooner, remember? I made the request in Bolivia, but you overruled me." he pointed out. But there was more. She finally admitted it... she didn't want to lose him again... and it wasn't just because she'd been ordered to keep him safe... there was more there... genuine concern, and the gecko relaxed visibly, his face melting into a softer expression.

A smile began to play on his features here, and he pushed off from the door and walked back towards her. Stopping before her, the gecko's tail swished from his right to his left as he adjusted his weight in the same manner. "Well... I'm glad... I'm glad I'm not just some statistic for you to protect." He smirked here, then, without much warning, he thew his arms out and embraced him, pulling her against him, or himself up against her, as he moved his feet as well. Without waiting for her permission, he closed his eyes and leaned in, going for a kiss. It was abrupt, but he no longer cared. This was how he'd been hoping things would culminate, but only if she wanted it; he hadn't been joking when he'd said he needed something to keep his mind off darker thoughts.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 12, 2014, 09:43:44 AM**

Thank you' Marie said as she took a sip of the drink. it was as the waitress said, a powerful drink, one that had fruit overtones, Marie thought it tasted somewhat like punch. Rose drank from hers , looking over at Marita, who smiled at Lily ' Yes, it is times like this where you find who your real friends are. We must persevere through this. Tony would not have wanted us to leave this mission because of him, and I'm not leaving. We have to find the rest of those things, before that madman does. Otherwise, our world, quite literally, will cease to exist, in any civilized form. We are playing a dangerous game with dangerous enemies, with very high stakes, and in games like that you lose people. We may lose others in our group before the end, its a real possibility. But I, for one, am going to see this through, no matter what."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 12, 2014, 12:09:53 PM**

"True true..." nodded Lily solemnly. "I'm glad you don't want to give up." She took a sip of her water to calm her nerves. Her allies had proven that even the death of a beloved colleague wasn't enough to sway them. They had earned the right to know why Lily was on this mission.

She took a deep breath. "There's something I should tell you all......uhh..." she trailed off for a second. She felt *weird* all of a sudden...

The waitress returned to the kitchens, sliding her notepad back into the top half of her dress.

Nodding once to a cook, she ducked past a walk-in freezer to a large set of wafflers, which were used during breakfast but at the moment were deactivated. Crouched behind them was Emilena, dressed in a security guard's outfit.

"Did you do it?" Emilena whispered expectantly.

Flora grinned. "Yes ma'am." She scratched her scalp; the black dye was giving her a bit of a rash. "Nice dose of powdered biproxytol in each of their drinks, especially Rose's. Had to drug Lily too, sorry."

"Oh, I'm sure!" But Emilena couldn't hide the sneering grin spreading across her countenance. "And Soren?"

Flora nodded perkily. "He got the green stuff! Hallucinogenic blend, right?"

Emilena snorted. "God, this is gonna be hilarious. Too bad we can't be there to see it."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 12, 2014, 01:52:59 PM**

Marita suddenly began convulsing, as the biproxytol began to take effect. ' dear God..' she grunted 'someone spiked our.. drinks..' Rose' was forced to her knees , her body visibly shaking ' Marie's face began working, she had never used biproxytol, even though several of the girls on staff at the Black Sheep had drug habits, she hadnt been one of them. so this packed a special punch for her."What..' she grunted ' stuff did they put in there.'

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 12, 2014, 03:23:22 PM**

Triste gazed back at him as Vergil drew closer to her, as he pulled her up against him. She smirked. "Hey, don't get all high and mighty just because you're not a statistic." *Alright, you've been here before. If this is what it takes to keep him* – Then Vergil leaned in closer, and her thoughts were interrupted as his mouth pressed against hers. She stiffened slightly… and then relaxed a moment later, allowing it to happen.

But it was more than that, more than just acceptance. She was pressing herself against him, firmly, insistently, wanting this to happen. The feeling hit her like a jolt of electricity. Almost as a reflex, her fist shot forwards, hooking under his arms and driving powerfully into his stomach, winding him. Grabbing his shoulders roughly, Triste spun him around and slammed Vergil's back against the wall, trying to take out her frustration, to drive the confused thoughts from her mind. "You lost the last time we tried to get in some *extra training*," Triste growled as she pushed him back and kissed the side of his neck. "Feel like trying to give it another go?"

Axel took another sip of his cocktail, then glanced to the side as Lily trailed off. "What? What's the matter, are you okay hon-" Grunting from across the table made him swivel around, and he blinked as the three women opposite him started shaking. "Marita, come on... What are you talking about? Why would anyone spike our drinks?" He was about to say more, when he realised that the table was too big for them to hear him. How had they been able to talk before? They looked miles away. Axel's eyes widened, turning as big as saucers. The drinks! All their drinks! They were melting, melting into the atmosphere like a rainbow made of honey and dreams! *Wait... What if rainbows ARE honey and dreams?!* The rat nodded solemnly to himself, as he pieced together the puzzle. This was *huge*... fuck, he needed to write it down.

"Lily! Lily, get me something to write with!" Axel stammered as he spun back to her. "I understand it now..." He gaped, sniggered then burst out laughing. "When... when did your... head turn into... into a robot?!" Axel managed to gasp between hysterics, wagging a finger towards her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 12, 2014, 04:11:09 PM**

At a table near the group, a taller man with slicked black hair and a small ponytail watched the ordeal over a glass of water. The other man sitting at his table was there simply for the onlookers and to nod every time he said something, but they weren't having a real conversation. Instead, the first one was reporting back to Kalis's flagship. "So far nothing... no clues as to where the last waypoint is... but... we need two still, don't we?" he asked, getting his confirmation a second later. "Mm... we might need to employ another strategy... didn't we capture one of them earlier?" he asked quietly, getting a subdued nod from the other guy at his table. "Perhaps we could use him... get the information we need. Hold on... something's happening..."

And so something was. "Drinks were spiked" was going around the table, and from the way the group was reacting, it was clear they'd been drugged. Smirking to himself now, he pyramided his fingers and watched with amusement inconspicuously. "You'll never guess what just happened, but it seems our competition continues to give them fits... this'll be interesting..."

Out in Quito, Varanus walked back onto the dropship. "Seems we have a change of plans." He muttered, nodding at the doctor they had on board. "Give him this..." Varanus held up his datapad for the doctor to read, and while the doctor seemed surprised, he nodded wordlessly, and moved to the medical bay, to where Tony was still in his chemically induced coma.

"Too bad we can't just kill him... and the don." Varanus mumbled, shaking his head.

"I figure there'll be time for that soon... I can always inject him with nanomachines that'll stop his heart on our signal." the doctor suggested.

"What's the point? He's the least threatening of their group, and we need to find information on those waypoints. Just inject him with what you've been ordered to, or I'll snap your neck." the monitor threatened.

"Calm down... take it easy..." Pulling out a syringe and loading it into a gun, he placed the gun squarely on the unconscious ferret's head and injected it right into his brain. "There... all set."

"Load him onto the *Falchion*... now." Varanus ordered, and the doctor motioned for two soldiers to start pushing his levitating gurney out towards the ship while the monitor went on ahead, his job done for now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 13, 2014, 07:10:13 PM**

Lily tried to push back with her chair and succeeded only in tumbling heels over head as the chair tipped backwards. Nursing her head, she looked blankly at Axel and tried to reply. "I don't...uhhhh...."

What am I doing? she thought blankly. *No...it's not what I'm doing...It's WHAT I'm doing...What am I doing? Out here...doing this...why am I doing this?*

How do we perceive our own deaths? she thought, and an icy flash of panic shot through her. She could see it...eternity...the endless void of nothingness that awaits us all...the annihilation her real body has already encountered. *When I die, will I finally be one again? Will it finally be over? Even more over than usual when one dies?*

What if I'm already dead? What if I've ALWAYS been dead but just never noticed? What if everyone here is dead...RIGHT NOW.

All this time she was staring glassy-eyed at a seashell nailed on the ceiling beam as part of the decorations. Just staring at the seashell with drool coming out of her mouth.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 14, 2014, 12:51:41 AM**

"Yeah, slightly," Soren replied to Axel's inquiry.

A few seconds later, the Rat suddenly burst out laughing. "What's so funny?" he asked. He looked around. The resturant was subdued and quiet with patrons eating dinner and enjoying cocktails. Several stares went their way.

It was then when Axel started talking about robot heads that he realized something was terribly wrong.

Namely the moment a lithe dark haired woman in fatigues emerged out of the bread basket.

"Carson, what are you doing here?" He seemed totally oblivious to the fact that a Human had emerged from a place that was physically impossible to fit into.

"You're never there for me!" the woman demanded.

"It's not true! I was there to greet you once you returned from your tour as a civilian augment repair tech for the military!"

"Yeah once! You live in your cushy house and do easy jobs while I get shot at amd other such shit! Well this ends now!"

With a snap of fingers as loud as thunderclaps, the landscape began to melt and twist. The elegant resturant had been transformed into a bombed out ruin.

Marion watched the whole scene from behind a tree. Her night vision gear had allowed her to see what had just transpired. She moved closed and ducked behind a landing strut.

Her hear raced. As tough as she was, she was outnumbered by a large margin.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 14, 2014, 12:18:12 PM**

"Dammit, just... hang on..." Triste muttered as Vergil pulled at her shirt. Pulling her knife out she sliced through the buttons, letting the clothing fall to the floor. Moving back to him, she felt a stiffness pressing against her thigh. "Well... at least you're not *totally* useless," she smirked, glancing down and giving him a squeeze. Raising her knife-hand, Triste touched its point against the side of his throat briefly, then drew it down, the blade cutting through his top. Tearing it off Vergil, she pushed up against him, her tail wrapping around his legs. She moved her hands up, exploring his bare chest.

Abruptly, Triste's tail tightened around him and she twisted, knocking Vergil off balance and throwing him to the floor. Dropping the knife and letting it land point-first on the floor next to his head, she straddled him, gripping his wriste and holding his arms down as she bent closer. "Think it still works properly?" she breathed as she leaned in and bit his shoulder, her sharp teeth not quite piercing the skin.

Axel giggled at the robot next to him, then gasped as he realised he was letting too much of his drink melt. Too much! Reaching out, he snatched up the amazing capsule was was somehow able to contain the beautiful colours. Ramming the straw in his mouth, Axel sucked the glass dry then leaned back, sighing contentedly.

This is... this is amazing.... Wait, why did I think that?! Or that?! Or that?! Axel shuddered. *Godammit, why did I shudder? I didn't choose to... Who's telling me to do all this stuff?* Desperately, he turned to Soren and grasped his shoulders. "Soren, I... I don't know how to tell you this, but... but someone's controlling me! I'm... I'm just someone's plaything! Some sick fucker's *puppet*! Look, I'm going to hit you, and *someone's making me do it*!" Axel slapped Soren around the side of the head. Fireworks exploded outwards from the impact. "Ooooh!" He gasped.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 14, 2014, 07:10:06 PM**

Tony was taken aboard the cruiser, which sat there on the tarmac for the moment, though it seemed the crew was making preparations to lift off.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 14, 2014, 07:35:47 PM**

(*Breman II*)

To Soren, the playful slap felt more like a vicious punch. He staggered back and shook his head to clear his mind.

He looked around the battered restaurant. No one was here except him and an Augment Rat trooper. That asshole must have been the one who sucker-punched him!

"The fuck's your problem!?" Soren thundered.

The rest of the patrons filed out of the fancy restaurant as Triste and Vergil began to make out. At least, the patrons who didn't leave when Marita, Marie and Rose began to show the effects of acute biproxytol intoxication.

Of course, there were a few who were hanging around out of morbid curiosity to watch this clusterfuck unfold.

(Unknown Airfield)

Marion felt the landing strut shake slightly as the cruiser prepared to lift off. Deploying her grappling spurs, she dug them into the metal strut and clung to it.

She would wait until the strut began to retract after takeoff, latch onto the ship's hull and get Tony's body.

As the ship shuddered again as the engines warmed up, the Human swallowed. She only had one chance to do this!

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 15, 2014, 05:39:46 PM**

(**ooc -** Vergil and Triste aren't in the restaurant, though now that you mention it, that would have been awesome)

Triste stared deep into Vergil's eyes as she felt his arms tighten against her. Her claws dug into him, an attempt to drive away the feelings of genuine pleasure she was deriving from doing this with... *him*. "You'd better hope it works... or we can chalk up another loss for you," she muttered, her breathing getting heavier as she reached down with one hand. Gripping him tightly, Triste guided him in. Her breath caught as he entered her, and gritting her teeth she started grinding her hips on top of him.

"You... you don't remember any of this... from before?" she grunted between thrusts. "Well I guess... it can't hurt to... try new things..."

For us both...

Axel gasped as Soren's voice roared in his ears. "No, you don't understand! I'm the master of my own destiny now!" He closed his eyes tightly. *Okay, you can do this! I... ah, I mean, Axel stood up and struck a heroic pose, his huge muscles bulging out of his shirt!* Slowly, he opened his eyes and looked down at himself. *Yes! Standing up... check. Heroic pose... check. Bulging muscles... well, two out of three isn't bad. Alright, um... Axel did a star-jump!* He did a star-jump. *This is amazing... I'm in control here! And now, to use my powers for good. Axel flipped across the table like a... a ninja, and helped Marita and the others be happy again.*

He flopped on the table, floundered for a second, then wriggled across to the other side.

Tumbling over the side, Axel approached Rose and shook her by the shoulders. "You look sad! Be happy! *Happy!*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 15, 2014, 07:00:55 PM**

Marita and Rose were now fully aware of the drug they had been exposed to- and damn it all if they didnt have the anti-biproxytol serum on them. Rose had been given some as part of her treatment, but she hadnt brought it with on the trip, as she got very nauseous from using it. that decision was now coming back to bite her. Marie was vomiting loudly, and writhing on the floor in agony. Maritas grunted from a fetal position ' that psychotic bitch.. is going to pay...' she hissed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 15, 2014, 09:22:51 PM**

The *Falchion's* engines suddenly roared into life, and she began to lift off vertically from the tarmac. Her struts began to retract, and it seemed as if the vessel was on her way to who knew where.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 15, 2014, 09:45:00 PM**

(*Breman II*)

Soren watched as the Augment Rat suddenly vanished. And a horde of hideous biomechanical undead emerged from the ground.

Heart racing, he looked around for something to use as a weapon. He kicked one of the monstrosities that tried to grab him as he groped around for something.

The Human felt his hands wrap around a hard metal tube. Seizing the metal tube, he belted one of the zombies across its decaying skull. The impact splattered brain matter as well as bloody wires and other circuitry across the floor.

"Come on you fuckers," he growled, brandishing his weapon.

By now, the restaurant had emptied out as patrons and staff began to call for medical attention.

Two Vulpine waiters rolled Marie on her side so she wouldn't choke on her own vomit. Two burly Augment Humans removed all furniture away from Marie. They didn't bother restraining her because their metallic limbs were likely to cause severe injury.

(Mariscal Sucre International Airport)

Marion remained with *Falchion*'s landing strut until it retracted to the point she could cling onto the hull. Or at least she tried to. She swore upon receiving an electric shock upon contact with the ship's hull. The Human was unharmed by the jolt but her flying frame and associated suit were not electrically insulated.

Deciding to take a different tack, she jumped off the the landing spur moments before it retracted and ignited the flying frame's engine. Thanks to the noise of the ship's engines, she was unheard as she flew at an upward angle.

A quiet *thump* was heard as she landed on the ship's deck. She looked around. No one present.

Good.

She froze as she heard a door open. Ducking behind a cooling stack, she carefully watched as a large Bison lit up a cigarette and took a deep puff.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 16, 2014, 07:28:33 AM**

The maÓtre d was nervously loitering around the area, trying to figure out how best to alleviate this disaster more than it's already been.

A paramedic waved his hand in front of Lily, who had frozen on the floor. "Ma'am? Ma'am?" he quickly alerted a friend. "This one's unresponsive. Get us an oxygen mask and Benzodiazepines."

Sailors began clearing the hallways that connected the restaurant to the infirmary.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 16, 2014, 04:00:14 PM**

Despite herself, Triste felt a grin play across her face. "It's gotten better," she breathed, wincing slightly with each thrust. Her tail darted out suddenly and snaked around his neck, tightening slightly as she drew him up, pulling his head towards her chest. "Flexibility isn't bad either," Triste whispered as she kissed him back, her thighs gripping his waist.

Soon, she started to pick up the pace, pushing back against him insistently. Triste gritted her teeth as she felt her climax building. Her breaths became quicker, urgent as a pressure within her grew. It was almost unbearable... and suddenly, it washed over her - an explosion of feeling, tuning out everything except for the two of them, in this one moment. Unable to help herself, Triste let out a small gasp. Her claws raked across Vergil's side and she sank her teeth into his shoulder as she shuddered on top of him.

Axel shook his head in disbelief as he heard Marita grunt the words 'psychotic bitch'. "Hey, no need for that... I'm just trying to help you understand that you're being con... uh, controlled..." He turned away sadly, his feelings deeply hurt, and saw that a merman dressed as a paramedic was trying to sort out Robot-Lily.

"No, no," he scolded, staggering towards him and putting a fatherly hand on the paramedic's shoulder. "She's a robot. Oxygen and that other thing you said aren't gonna work. We obviously need oil or something. *Stat!*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 16, 2014, 06:30:42 PM**

A lizard paramedic raced over with a can of oil.

"Are you listening to the juiced-up rat?" exclaimed the first paramedic angrily. "Where are my Benzodiazepines?"

"You're not the boss of me!" shouted the lizard angrily, who started doing push-ups to assert his dominance.

"Dammit, without Benzodiazepines we're going to have to get creative," grunted the first paramedic. He pulled out a defibrillator. "We're jumping straight to electrconvulsive therapy. Apply nodes!"

"Applying nodes, sir!" reported a lemur nurse.

"Apply paddles!"

"We're on non-sovereign waters!" cried the lizard. "Your authority is not recognized!"

The first paramedic applied the paddles. "*Clear!*"

Lily's body convulsed as repeated electric shocks blasted through her. With each shock she hiccuped and sent drool flying everywhere.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 16, 2014, 10:09:06 PM**

The *Falchion* began heading east, across South America. It seemed to move slowly, as if the crew were in no rush. While it could jump between gates with the technology it had on board, there was no immediate need to so, apparently.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 17, 2014, 02:38:43 PM**

Several of the paramedics were pondering how to get close to Soren, given the fact that he was in the middle of a hallucination and swinging around a fire extinguisher.

The first paramedic who had tried to help him had been moved to the infirmary after Soren knocked him unconscious with said fire extinguisher.

"I say we tackle him," one of the medics said.

"And end up like Freidson?" a Percheron medic countered. "Every time someone gets close to him, he tries clocking them with the fire extinguisher!"

One of the medics, a lean Common Krait swayed back and forth as he pondered the situation. She then turned to two of her fellow emergency workers. "Grab the net launcher from the security office."

She then turned to a Human medic. "Get the syringe with the azylperidol."

(OOC - Azylperiodol is a fictional analogue of the real life antipsychotic haloperidol. The fictional version is stronger and faster acting than haloperidol but its effects persist for longer. It is also more toxic. In addition, its effects are strongest in Primates and Swine.
It has limited effect in Canines but there are safer medications. It is useless and causes serious toxicity in Bovines. On Equines, it causes agitation instead of sedation.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 18, 2014, 03:10:42 AM**

Triste let out a shaky breath, her eyes closed as she leaned forwards over Vergil. For a moment she didn't say anything. She just lay there, feeling strangely... peaceful, for the first time in a long while. But then, slowly, it dawned on her what had just happened. No, more than that - she'd had sex plenty of times with marks as part of her cover in the past. But this had felt different. *She'd* felt different.

Swallowing, she straightened and looked down at Vergil. "Yeah... yeah, it was..." she said eventually. Reaching down, Triste yanked the knife off the floor from beside him - and for one instant, one crazy instant, was almost tempted to drive it through his eye and into his brain. For getting into her head. For making her feel like this. But instead, she simply tossed it over to the desk, the weapon clattering as it struck the wood, and sighed. Rolling off him, Triste stood up and walked over to the window, still nude. More than anything, she was angry at *herself*, for allowing herself to enjoy it. *What's the matter with you? Have you forgotten who... Well, at least it seems to have settled him down...* "It's been so long, I'd forgotten how it... how it felt with you," she said quietly, looking out into the darkness. Suddenly, she felt like she couldn't stand to be in the same room as him. "Vergil, it's getting late. We should get some rest for tomorrow," Triste muttered, looking over her shoulder.

Axel watched with fascination as the merman paramedic used the paddles on robot Lily, unmindful of the chaos around him as Soren engaged in battle. Robot Lily convulsed with the shocks, and Axel threw his hands up in the air dramatically. "It's alive!" he cried. "How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavored to perform?!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 18, 2014, 05:45:50 AM**

Murcitol" Marita gasped to those helping Marie to not choke on her own vomit' it.. was.. biproxytol.. we.. cough.. need.. an antidote. Now.. Ow" she said, her limbs shaking. while it had been several years since she had taken biproxytol, Marita remembered only too well the symptoms from a large dose. how well you tolerated it depended on your prior use and tolerance of the drug , those who were unused to it, were in serious trouble, as Marie was..Rose , who had been using biproxytol longer than Marita , was panicking, as the very drug she had worked so hard to free herself from had suddenly come back into her life through a spiked drink. and she was not reacting nearly as well as when she was addicted to it. Rose was swaying to and fro, almost like a very drunk person.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 18, 2014, 10:43:20 PM**

"Can I tase him?" asked the lemur nurse, holding her defibrillator at the ready in case Soren struck.

"That's not a taser!" exclaimed the head paramedic. "And no! Wait for the net!"

"Net, sir!" reported an intern, running into the room.

Disappointed, the lemur walked up to Axel and pushed him to the ground. "He's being non-cooperative!" she shouted, "I want it on the record! Tasing!"

She whacked Axel with the defibrillator repeatedly. Behind her, Lily had been placed on a stretcher and was being wheeled to the infirmary.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 19, 2014, 11:06:06 AM**

Vergil pushed himself up, watching the still nude Triste walk over to her window and admiring her backside. It almost sounded like she was dismissing him. "Uh... we're... done?" he asked her here, moving over to get his clothes. "But it was... it was good, right?" he asked, starting to fade a bit as his body wound down. "I was uh... kind of hoping to maybe just stay here for the night... bed's big enough if you'd have me... I mean if you're... if you're concerned about tomorrow, I won't keep you up. I'd just love to spend the night here... that's all." he stated.

"Still... if... there's something wrong... I could go." he added softly, picking up his mostly torn shirt and shaking it out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 19, 2014, 05:24:49 PM**

Triste sighed softly, her breath misting up the window. "It was. It was good," she said quietly, still looking out. "It was *really* good." Turning around, she looked Vergil in the eyes and shook her head. "There's nothing wrong... at least, you've done nothing wrong." Crossing the room, Triste gently stroked his cheek, then kissed him on the lips. "I promise. It's just... you've been missing for so long. And I'd just gotten used to the idea that you wouldn't *be here* anymore. But now... now you're back. And I guess I just... after what we just did, it really, finally hit me," she lied. "You're really here. You're alive."

Triste gave a small, sad smile. "I just need to be alone. To think." Lowering her arm, she clasped Vergil's hand. "We can talk about this tomorrow. I'll be *ready* to talk about it tomorrow. Okay?"

Axel yelled as the Lemur began her vicious, nefarious attack. "Non-cooperative?! I'll show you non-cooperative!" he cried between blows. He started mustering his strength to begin the long process of climbing to his feet. "I warned you! *Ninja-Axel leaped to his feet, eager to do battle-* "

Then the lemur clocked him heavily on the side of the head, and Axel settled back down on the deck, suddenly feeling very sleepy as he watched pretty stars dance in front of his eyes.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 20, 2014, 06:05:17 PM**

He kissed her back, but mostly let her do the work on this one as she explained that it had finally hit home for her that he was still alive. "All right... I understand. We'll... talk tomorrow... then." he stated, and still clasped her arms, but slowly let her go now, releasing her from his affectionate grip, and turned to depart. "I'll uh... yeah... speak to you tomorrow." he stated, giving her a small wave, and departed her cabin, moving quickly to his own as his clothes were kind of barely on thanks to how she'd slashed them up.

Getting into his room, he pushed the door shut with his back and smiled a bit, thinking on what had just happened. It was odd... he couldn't remember ever sleeping with her before... no rushing memories, nothing flooding back... but it was a great sensation all the same... one he wanted to repeat and repeat if he could.

Heading over to his bed, he glanced briefly out the window at the black sea, then proceeded to stretch out and clasp his hands on his stomach, closing his eyes and regulating his breathing to attempt to fall asleep, though his mind was still full of thoughts of what he'd just experienced.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 20, 2014, 10:54:33 PM**

(*Breman II*)

The intern with the net launcher took aim at Soren and fired. A large carbon-fiber net flew out and expanded to its full ten foot diameter.

Soren saw the net and tried to dive out of the way but he tripped over a dead zombie (really his own foot).

Upon impact, the net wrapped itself around him, completely entangling him. He swore profusely as he tried to free himself.

The medic with the syringe ran up and jabbed Soren in the thigh with it. Soon, the thrashing Human became still. He motioned over four more medics who removed the net from him and strapped him down to a gurney.

He too was wheeled off to the infirmary.

(Mariscal Sucre International Airport)

Marion waited until the Bison had finished his cigarette. As soon as the red light of the cigarette went out, she made her move.

The door to the ship's interior locked shut with a dull clank after the crewman had passed through. It was no obstacle to Marion though.

A pale pink glow radiated from the plasma cutter hidden in her right forearm extended. She plunged the blade into the metal door, sparks flew and molten metal dripped as she quickly sliced through the door.

Retracting her cutter, she lifted the cut apart door and carefully leaned it against the bulkhead.

She stepped through the threshold, revealing an austere stainless steel hallway with two doors labeled "closet" flanking a stairwell heading downwards.

Marion shrugged, removed the pistol from her right leg's internal compartment and headed down the stairwell.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 21, 2014, 02:16:51 AM**

Triste smiled at Vergil as he left - and it quickly vanished once the door had clicked shut behind him. Her expression darkened as his footsteps faded, and once she couldn't hear them anymore Triste turned and stalked across the room, grinding her teeth as she sat down heavily at the desk again. She stared at her reflection in the mirror opposite, eyes narrowed as she regarded herself with something approaching disgust - and suddenly her teeth bared as she felt a hot burst of anger run through her.

"*Son of a bitch!*" she hissed in frustration, her fist darting out and slamming into the front of the desk, the impact rattling the mirror. There was a sharp pain in her hand, and Triste glanced down to see blood welling from where the skin had split open. "*Fuck,*" she spat. Putting her elbows up onto the top of the desk, Triste slouched forwards and rested her head in her hands as she let out a heavy, bitter sigh.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 21, 2014, 10:42:07 AM**

In the infirmary, the ship captain sorrowfully shook his head. "Looks like I picked the wrong day to stop smoking," he observed solemnly.

The paramedics sedated Marie, Marita, and Rose, as they were the worst cases.

"Once we reach our destination we can get them to a proper hospital," reported an underling. "We don't really have the proper equipment on board to really deal with a breakout of this nature."

"Sir," a security guard snapped off a salute. "We've completely shut down the restaurant, and will be investigating the food to find the source of the drug, and whether any other customers were harmed."

"Very good, ensign Foley," the captain nodded. "I look forward to seeing the security footage."

"We've already got the most important part," Foley handed him a printout of the waitress. "This appears to be our culprit, a black fox. She's not on the roster of any staff, but security footage shows her leave the restaurant before the lockdown and return to Cabin 213. We're sending men there now."

"Dammit, we're not apprehending her without me!" the captain snapped. "On the double!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 22, 2014, 07:07:12 PM**

Axel gurgled on the stretcher he was stretched out on, waving his arms in front of his face and muttering something unintelligible. The side of his head was starting to swell impressively from where the lemur had put the defibrillator to good use. Snickering to himself, Axel rolled over onto his stomach, and as his foot twitched he lapsed into what was either a deep sleep or a mild coma.

Outside in the hallway, as the Captain rushed from the infirmary, he bumped into a small boy, dressed immaculately as one of the cruise ship's attendants, who was balancing a large bottle of champagne and two glasses on a metal tray. A small sticky note was pasted to the bottle with *Cabin 159* written on it. The boy staggered from the impact, the champagne bottle wobbling precariously. "I'm very sorry sir! So sorry!" he stammered in a voice that wouldn't melt butter, bowing profusely as he backed away. The Captain hurried away, and as he turned out of sight the boy stopped bowing and glowered after him. "You fucking prick."

Turning, Rio flicked his head back to straighten the little cap that was placed over his neatly combed hair then continued up the corridor, turning right and eventually stopping outside a door with the number 159 on it. He started to raise his fist to wrap on the door... then stopped, eying the alcohol. Blinking, Rio looked up and down the corridor. Nobody. "Fuck it," he said, shrugging, then made his way further up to a door marked *Storage Closet*. Nudging it open, Rio heaved the champagne off and tossed the tray in. Peeling the foil from the top of the bottle, he stepped through and started to pull the cork out as the door swung shut behind him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 24, 2014, 01:21:08 PM**

"This isn't how I trained you, Nairda!" the special agent reprimanded harshly.

"But-but...Kojurro I don't..." The young ensign shivered in the drafty midnight wind of a desolate canyon two miles out from boot camp.

"Remember what I taught you." The agent threw a shovel at him. "I chopped her up, now you have to bury her. Your parents would be so disappointed if they knew you never learned how to be a team player!"

"oh god, oh god oh god....." Nairda stammered--

Abruptly Nairda was awakened from his stuporous dreams by a pounding in his head and on the cabin door.

Where was he? As he slowly came to, he answered his own question: the cabin Emilena rented for him. Specifically, laying on the bed reeking of paint.

"Open this door up right now!" someone yelled. "In ten seconds we're kicking it down!"

Nairda stumbled to his feet. His tongue burnt with an acrid aftertaste he recognized as biproxytol. Emilena must have drugged him. But why?

As he opened the door, abnormal air movement between his legs and a heaviness on his chest informed him that he was dressed in women's clothes with a stuffed bra. In any other situation, this might have aroused him somewhat, but the captain busting in, shaking him by the collar, and shouting "WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO YOU SON OF A BITCH?" dampened his loins somewhat.

"I...er...huh?" Nairda stared blankly.

"You heard me asshole," glared the captain. "What in the world inspired you to go wreck one of our finest establishments with your little prank. Who the hell are you anyway?"

Lieutenant Foley wrinkled his nose as he entered the cabin. "Yikes! I don't know if he's higher on paint fumes or drugs."

"Do you know what that stint cost us?" the captain shouted, shaking Nairda like a Cornish game hen. "Answer me you bastard!"

Nairda stammered the first thing that popped into his head. "Oh god oh god oh god oh god..."

Foley searched the room and came up with docking credentials. "Nairda Kibagami. Part of the Workpaid Immigration Program. Looks to be homeless with no assets. You know the type."

"You worthless bitch!" snapped the captain at the crumpled figure still clasp in his iron grip. "You're not even worth suing! How the hell did you get past our vetting process?"

"I--I--I..." Nairda stammered, wide-eyed. "I--I--I..."

"You what?" muttered the captain through gritted teeth, and stopped shaking him long enough to hear a reply.

"I--I'd just wanted to give her a tip..."

"I don't think you're getting anything intelligent from him," Foley remarked, as Nairda began hyperventilating. "Shall I escort him to the brig?"

The captain glared at him, wild-eyed. "You think *the brig* is good enough for this...this *dog?* NO. I'm wiping his worthless carcass off the face of this Earth!" With that he began dragging Nairda down the hall towards the deck. Foley followed, quickly sounding objections, and the security team followed excitedly.

After a few minutes of silence, Flora peeked out from under the bed. Crawling her nude body over to the door, she flipped it shut and then crept to the shower to wash the black paint off her upper body and legs.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 26, 2014, 09:47:20 AM**

The next day, the *Bremen II* approached Voltaic Station. Vergil knew security was insanely tight here. Everyone getting off the ship was subjected to thorough screenings and checkpoints were set up to prevent infiltration to any of the more sensitive areas of the station. There was no way they could even think about going underwater right off the bat, as the defenses down there were formidable enough to repel an outright military attack on the valuable mining facilities. Judaken kept a tight watch over its mining operation, and jealously guarded it with what some said was the most sophisticated security system on the planet, second only to the security at Judaken's corporate headquarters.

He hadn't yet heard about what had happened to his comrades last night, nor was that his priority this morning either. Already, announcements were being made throughout the ship about proper security procedures for disembarkation. Knowing he'd have to surrender his weapons upon entering the resort, the gecko tried to remember how deep the ocean was here. He googled Air France Flight 447 on his smartphone, noting the depth of its debris field to be at over 13,000 feet down... so over two miles. Lacking such deep sea equipment necessary to reach those depths, he figured there was only one way to get down there. What he didn't know was that security was extra tight today, as the ship had reported last night's incident to the station.

Exiting his room with his rolling bag and donning a pair of shades, the gecko headed for Triste's cabin. The sooner he got off this ship, the better. In order for his plan to work, he'd have to execute it swiftly. A quick get-in, get the waypoint, and get out. Thanks to a government search executed by Fugate last night at his request, the gecko now knew something about the station that no one else did, or at least, something that anyone who wasn't on Judaken's payroll would know. It was key to his plan: a real trump card, so to speak for accessing the waypoint.

Stopping outside the spider gecko's room, visions of last night flashed before his eyes as he rapped on her door.

Unfortunately for Marion, the security systems on the *Falchion* were more in-depth than they were on the dropship. As the cruiser needed to maintain pressurization throughout its flight, an alarm immediately alerted the bridge that someone had cut through an outer bulkhead door and was now present inside the ship. "We've got an intruder!" the ship's captain announced. "Airlock 18! Detachment 19, report to that sector immediately and secure her!"

"Who's the unfortunate imbecile who decided to infiltrate my ship?" Varanus asked, striding forward here.

"Unknown currently, sir, but we'll find out soon enough." the captain assured him.

Varanus grinned. He was looking forward to torturing whoever this was and finding out who she was before he killed her. Detachment 19, a special security force on board the ship, began making their way towards Airlock 18 as the captain lowered a secondary bulkhead door in place to secure the breach and maintain pressurized flight.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 27, 2014, 03:45:07 AM**

Triste jerked awake at a sharp knocking noise. Sitting up, she groggily realised she'd fallen asleep slumped over the desk, the side of her head aching from where it had been pressing into the wood. Glancing to the side, she blinked in the sunlight pouring through the window and saw the ship was approaching Voltaic.

Cursing quietly, Triste pushed herself to her feet and headed for the en-suite bathroom, quickly splashing water over her face. "I'll be right there, just... just give me a moment," she called out, drying herself off with a towel. Leaving the bathroom, she hurriedly pulled on some new clothes, purposefully avoiding looking at her torn shirt. Crossing the room, Triste tugged the door open, blinking when she saw Vergil standing on the other side.

"Oh... Vergil. Hi," she said, forcing a smile on her face. "Sorry, I just... Ah, I didn't get a lot of sleep last night. Just give me a few minutes to pack, and I'll be ready." Backing away, she gestured as she headed for the wardrobe. "You can wait in here if there's something you wanted to talk about," Triste said over her shoulder.

Axel groaned, stirring on the stretcher. Sitting up slowly, his face turned an alarming shade of green at the sick sensation in his belly, his stomach feeling as though it was doing back flips. Blinking and wiping drool from the corner of his mouth, he looked around and tried to understand where he was. What *was* this? Some kind of... infirmary? What *happened* last night? He could remember drinking, drinking... and drinking some more, then heading out to the restaurant with the others. After that, the only thing he could recall was a strange mixture of happiness and shame.

His attempts at recollection ended abruptly when his bleary eyes settled on the other shapes in the room. Grunting, Axel rolled off the stretcher and staggered across unsteadily to where Soren and Lily lay. "Eugh... Soren? Honey?" he tried, gently shaking their shoulders. "I think... I think we ate something bad last night..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 27, 2014, 09:54:42 AM**

"Hm." Vergil chuckled lightly, accepting her offer to step inside. "Too busy thinking of last night?" he asked, joking. "But no, there's nothing I really wanted to discuss. I've got my plan for getting to the waypoint thanks to a report Fugate sent me last night. It should be fairly straight-forward, and far less risky than trying to just go in there and crashing the party. Their defenses are far too formidable for that. So I've got a simple yet perhaps elegant solution to our problems." the white gecko stated.

"Anyway, I want to debark as soon as possible. Sorry if I caught you at a bad time." he apologized, noting her rushing about. "I thought you'd be up by now in all honesty. But it's all right. Remember... we can't take any weapons in so... best store them now, as they'll only be confiscated on the way in." he reminded her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 27, 2014, 10:38:57 AM**

(Voltaic Station Infirmary)

Soren groaned as he heard Axel's voice coming though his drug fueled haze. As his vision cleared, he found himself in a room smelling of disinfectant.

"Motherfucking hell, what happened?" he asked. He tried to move his arms, only to find that they were strapped to the bed. That immediately cleared his mind. "The fuck is this!?"

At his shout, a Fruit Bat nurse ran into the room. "Mr. Almaya," he said. "Please calm down."

Soren bit his lip to keep from screaming at the man. He took a breath and slowly exhaled. "Okay," he said. "But I want to know why I am strapped to a bed and in the fucking hospital!"

The nurse was unfazed. "You were suffering acute psychosis from an overdose of fenazomide hydrochloride. Luckily, your body seems to have cleared the drug from your system."

"All I had was some green cocktail to drink."

The nurse nodded. "That cocktail tested positive for fenazomide hydrochloride."

Soren's eye twitched. "Can I leave now? I came to Voltaic Station for a vacation, not a hospital stay."

The nurse brought up the Human's medical chart. "Everything checks out. I'll go get Doctor LeBlanc." The nurse then exited the room.

Soren then turned to Axel. "I have a feeling this goes beyond a case of bad food poisoning. And right now, I want some answers, namely who spiked our drinks."

(OOC - fenazomide hydrochloride is the name of the hallucinogen that Emilena spiked their drinks with. It's normally used as an anesthetic for Avians and Reptiles but it causes serious hallucinations in mammals.)

(*Falchion*)

Marion swore as a secondary bulkhead closed off the area that she had cut through. They knew she was aboard! And she had no desire to meet up with the armed guards.

Sheathing her plasma cutter, she took a few steps and her feet morphed into their hoofed "running configuration" as she bolted down the stainless steel hallways.

Heart racing, she eventually came to a y-junction. The sign to the left read "Reactor Silo". A stairwell heading up was the right fork. A sign next to the stairwell read "Crew Quarters".

She made her decision, she began to rapidly climb the stairs. Whereupon she ran into one of the reactor technicians. Time seemed to slow down as she tried to finagle her way out of this situation. Unfortunately for her, there was no way she could do so. The man's hand was on the collar of his uniform, so she assumed he was speaking into a lapel mike. Left with no other option, Marion slammed her metal fist into the man's head. Flesh and bone proved no match for solid metal driven by powerful electroactive memory metal muscles. The man's head practically exploded under the powerful impact.

"That was close," she muttered as she wiped the gore off her augments. She looked down; there was some blood on her flying frame and suit but she could clean that up later.

Leaving the nearly headless corpse in the stairwell, she continued upstairs.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2014, 12:02:02 AM**

"They threw him overboard?" exclaimed Emilena. She and the other gang members were having one last meeting before the time came to disembark.

Foley nodded. "Like a sack of potatoes. Captain even registered it in the official log; it turns out that those papers we signed gives the cruise liner pretty healthy leeway to do as they please with problematic members of the Workpaid program."

Flora fidgeted. "That could have been me sleeping with the fishes if the plan hadn't worked perfectly..."

Emilena thought. "For all his faults, Nairda has a strong survival sense. Once we dock, we should find our way down to the shores and try to rent passage out."

"'Strong survival sense?'" interjected Foley. "He was thrown into the middle of the ocean! While high on biproxytol! That's beyond 'survival sense'!"

"Yeah, if his survival sense was that good he would have stopped hanging around us long ago," noted Flora.

She was interrupted by a knocking on the door. "Are you almost packed?" an irate cleaner snapped. "I need to be done with this hallway in under ten minutes!"

Lily slowly awoke feeling incredibly nauseous. "Urgghhh..." As her head slowly cleared, she remembered the past night and the drug-induced existential crisis it had wreaked on her.

A nurse came running. "Don't get up just yet," she cautioned. "You've got some pretty potent cocktails running through your IV right now, you'll throw up everywhere."

Lily groaned and relaxed her muscles. "Where are my friends?" she asked.

"The boys are giving the doctors a hard time in their own room. Both should be fine. The girls were hit far worse than y'all, and have been sent to the Voltaic ER immediately for rehab. Hope they got some nice medical insurance," she remarked wryly.

"Medical...oh god, we have to pay for this, don't we?" Lily shut her eyes, cheeks burning. "What's the penalty for failure to pay Medical bills in this country?"

"You don't wanna do that," the nurse added hastily. "Just warning ya. Also, you've been perscribed these." she handed her a small white box. "Cessation patches. You're gonna be feeling some severe biproxytol withdrawal for...could be the rest of your life to be honest, and these really take the sting off. They're a bit pricy but I suspect you'll soon find it worth it."

Lily groaned again. Her mouth felt like parchment. How could this get any worse?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 28, 2014, 11:02:54 AM**

"Fenazomide Hydrochloride?" Axel frowned slightly. "I don't know… the aftertaste seems more like 2,5-dimethoxy-4-bromophenethylamine to me. Ah... don't ask how I know that," he added shiftily. "And who'd want to spike our drinks?" Axel considered, running through the list of potential enemies they'd made. "Who on this ship right now would want to spike our drinks?" After a moment, he shrugged and held a hand down to Soren. "Well… we're not gonna figure it out down here. Let's see if we can find the others."

The nurse quietly re-entered the room and cleared her throat. "I almost forgot, here're your medical bills."

Axel took the slip of paper she handed across, and blinked down at the number printed on it. "Ah, I… I can pay by card, right?" he rasped, his throat suddenly dry. "I just, ah…" Axel patted the side of his jeans. His pockets felt alarmingly empty. "No… no, come on…"

"Are you looking for your wallet?" the nurse asked. "Sorry to tell you this but up on the way here, you started struggling and… well, your wallet kind of flew out. It fell overboard. There was nothing we could do."

"Son of a bitch!"

She smiled helpfully and turned to leave again. "Well, I'll let you two get on."

"We'll be out in a minute!" Rio barked. His voice was slightly garbled from the cigar clamped between his teeth which he'd found whilst relaxing in the storage closet last night. "Take a hike, fucktard!"

"… *You're* a fucktard," came a despondent reply from behind the door.

Inhaling, Rio plucked out the cigar with two fingers and puffed out a cloud of smoke. “If only we’d put some kind of tracker, or bug on him,” he noted, tapping off the end and kicking the ash away from him. Looking up at Foley, Rio grinned. “It’s a pity they didn’t throw your fat ass overboard. You could’ve floated in, no problem.”

There was another knock on the door. “Rio! Room 159 never got their champagne, they’re making a complaint! What the hell did you do with it?!” a different voice called through. “And I gave you money to get me something from the vending machine, where’s my *Nutrageous* bar?”

Blanching, Rio stubbed out the cigar and quickly zipped up his bag, hoisting it over a shoulder. “See you guys up on deck,” he told the others as he pushed open the small port-hole window and wriggled through, climbing up and out of sight.

“Well, there’s nothing wrong with your ego,” Triste said over her shoulder as she threw her belongings into her bag. Zipping it closed, she turned and heaved it from the bed then reached for her knife. “Don’t worry, I'll stash this away before we go in.” Taking one last look around the cabin to make sure she hadn’t forgotten anything, Triste nodded to herself and crossed to the door, pulling her bag behind her.

“So, there’s a plan this time,” she said, standing aside so Vergil could step out and closing the door behind them. As they walked down the corridor, she glanced out one of the windows, taking in the heavy security outside. “Looks like we’ll need it… having these guys come down on us wouldn’t be too fun.”

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 28, 2014, 04:18:04 PM**

Vergil noted too the heavy security at all the gangways. Voltaic Station was a massive mining station/floating hotel. Passengers got off the ship nowhere near the industrial side of things. The hotel itself was a modern marvel, as all the suites were underwater, the hotel itself partly submerged and moored to the ocean floor via giant pylons. Above the Atlantic's surface rose 15 stories of restaurants, shopping plazas, offices, and entertainment centers. For the truly adventurous, a water slide ran from the roof all the way down to the ocean, twisting around and dropping multiple times before it deposited its rider with a splash into the sea.

While guests could move relatively freely about the hotel, the mining station was another story. Security checkpoints at every conceivable entrance had been set up, and if your DNA wasn't recognized passing through one such place, there'd be little left to identify you as a living person afterward. Of course, ample signs were posted to warn guests not to enter these areas, and the hotel was designed in such a way that no real access could be gained to the mining station except via a few corridors, all heavily monitored.

As Vergil got in line, no less than six scanners had been set up for this gangway of the ship, and the gecko was able to move up rapidly enough. "No fun at all..." Vergil agreed with Triste softly. As he was waved forward to a scanner, the security officer presented him with the usual question. "Reservation please." Digging around in his pocket, the gecko pulled out his confirmation number and held it out for the officer to scan.

"I'm afraid there's a problem with my reservation." Vergil said simply as he stepped into the scanner with his bag, which immediately detected his energy blade. Opening the zipper up and tugging out his weapon, he held it out for confiscation. Holding his arms above his head as the scan continued, the officer gave him a quizzical look. "See it turns out I'd like to cancel my stay here... or at the very least, shorten it. I'm changing my plans. As a matter of fact, I came here to help you out with your sub-aquatic problem." Stepping out of the scanner now and taking his bag with him, the officer seemed beyond puzzled.

"Huh? What problem?"

"You wouldn't even know about it... you don't handle that division. Contact your chief of security. Tell him I'd like to speak to him. Tell him I'm here to clear up the issue the station's been having; he'll know what I'm talking about." Vergil said simply, as if it were the most normal thing in the world to discuss.

"What in god's name are you..."

"Are you going to contact him, or should I?" Vergil asked, looking directly at the officer from behind his shades. "Just tell him exactly what I told you. Well go on." the gecko pressed.

Shaking his head and turning sideways to him, the officer radioed in. "Uhh yeah we got a crazy down here asking to see the chief. Claims he can solve the station's 'sub-aquatic issue', whatever the hell that means." A pause, then a look over to Vergil. "You have credentials?"

Vergil pushed his sunglasses down a bit and gave him a "Really?" look. "This isn't exactly the type of job you have credentials for." he responded sarcastically.

"He says it's not that kind of job. He insists the chief will know what he's talking about. All right... hold on." He informed Vergil, waving Triste to move into the scanner. As the process started, the guard seemed surprised by something, and he looked over at Vergil now. "Turns out you just got an appointment with the chief. Drop your shit in your room and we'll escort you to him."

A smile began to spread across Vergil's features. "Thank you." he responded simply.

"She's heading up towards the crew quarters." the ship's captain reported. "Seal off the area! Ensure she can't escape!"

The countermeasures were put in place, with heavy bulkhead doors starting to slam shut throughout the crew quarters' areas. "Heading up, eh? Well why don't I start heading down to meet her?" Varanus asked. He still didn't feel as if he could vigorously enter into combat, but what could a pathetic augment do against the likes of him?

Turning from the bridge, he moved rapidly to one of the lifts, cramming himself inside and hitting the button to descend to the crew deck.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2014, 04:50:20 PM**

"Just be careful about what you've got on you!" Emilena hissed hurriedly as Rio disappeared. "They check *everything* at the security doors!"

"Yeah, how we sneaking past those?" asked Foley, grumbling slightly as he regarded his excessive amounts of fat. "I was hoping to butter up the captain so he let me skip those, but I wasn't buttery enough. Somehow."

"Hard to believe!" giggled Flora, missing Foley's self-deprecation completely. "You know, cause you're so fat!"

"That was the--" Foley started, but Emilena silenced them both by opening the door to the hallway. "Sorry for the delay," she said dismissively to the cleaner, and led the way off the boat.

Lily tried to get to her feet again. she did indeed feel a burning desire for what she could only guess is more drugs, but it wasn't as bad as the nurse claimed. Perhaps her psionic self-healing is alleviating that. Well, thank god.

"I'd like to go see my husband," she stated firmly, staggering to the door and ignoring a proffered wheelchair. "Will you take me or must I find him myself?"

At the security checkpoint, every member of the Workpaid program was aggressively patted down.

"What's this?" one guard asked Flora gruffly, roughly grasping her crotch.

Flora moaned huskily and blushed. "Mmmm. I call it my 'Venus Flytrap'..."

Suspiciously, the guard took her in the back rooms and it was almost an hour before they let her out again.

"For god's sake, what happened back there?" asked Emilena, as Flora finally emerged into the post-security waiting area, clothing rumpled and with a satisfied smile plastered on her face.

"Wouldn't you like to know," she stuck her tongue out.

"Hrmmm. I'm going to go try and find Rio." Emilena marched away to customs.

Flora and Foley sat quietly for a few moments.

"...so really, what happened back there?" asked Foley.

Flora shrugged. "Strip and full-body cavity search. Then they had a bunch of questions about how I look like I do."

"Oh." Foley paused, hoping she'd elaborate. "...So, how *did* you come to look like that, anyway?"

Flora smiled. "Wouldn't you like to know..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 30, 2014, 12:29:00 AM**

(*Falchion*)

Marion swore as bulkheads began to seal the area off. She looked at them; they appeared to be too thick to cut with her plasma cutter.

She then looked at the ceiling. It was good ten feet off the ground but it was too narrow in this area for her to fly. Not to mention, there was a high risk she could end up severing a fuel line ó and with the hot plasma in close proximity, a fire was sure to result.

"Well shit," she muttered. She sprinted towards the other door only for a bulkhead to seal it off.

She shook her head. "Fuck this!" Her left arm's piton gun deployed and she shot the metal spike into the ceiling. Reeling herself up, Marion deployed her grappling spikes and clung to the ceiling.

(Voltaic Station Infirmary)

Doctor LeBlanc, a dour-looking Sand Viper, slithered into the medical bay with his tablet tucked under his arm. He bought up Axel's medical chart and nodded.

"Well, Mr. Whent, it seems that the hallucinogen has been removed and you no longer show symptoms. Now if you'll please read and sign these forms, we can get you released." Doctor LeBlanc slithered up onto a nearby chair to hand the Rat the tablet so he could read and sign the discharge form.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 30, 2014, 03:23:20 PM**

Ashen faced, Axel took the tablet and scanned the writing on it numbly. The information leaked straight out of his brain as soon as it went in, his mind per-occupied with trying to process the streak of bad luck he'd been having. Ears drooping, he signed his name and handed it back to LeBlanc with a disheartened "Thanks."

"The others who were brought in with us... they're around here, aren't they?" Axel asked as he started to make his way towards the door. "I need to see Lily... Ah, I mean my wife." Turning around, he locked eyes with Soren as he started backing through the doorway into the corridor beyond. "I'll see you outside?" Axel said, assuming Soren would be good to go as well.

Stepping up to the scanner, Triste pulled out her knife and held it out handle-first for one of the officers. "Make sure you don't lose it," she said drily as a thick, beefy man took it from her, the corner of his mouth seeming to tighten as lights overhead gleamed on the razor sharp edge. As she raised her arms, the scanner making a faint hum as it set to work, she caught the story Vergil was spinning.

Keeping her expression neutral, she stepped forwards as the scan was completed, hefting her bag behind her. Taking position beside Vergil, she gave a brisk nod at the officer he'd spoken too. "I'm his aide," she said, seeing a smile stretch over his face in the corner of her eye.

At customs, Rio was standing before a smaller scanning machine, through which his bag had just passed. An tall officer sitting just to the side frowned as the scan revealed something, then leaned forwards and snatched Rio's bag off the rack. "And what is this?" he demanded in a thick Russian accent, unzipping the side and drawing out a small, pink teddy-bear.

"Mr. Snuggleshoes, my best friend," Rio said as the guard shook the toy in front of his face, little arms and legs flailing.

"There is something inside of this... Mr. Snuggleshoes," the man sneered.

Rio blinked. "Er... love and dreams, and all that shi... I mean, stuff?" he tried as the officer turned the bear over in his hands and plucked a Swiss Army knife from his pocket.

"No, I think not, little boy," the officer said, flicking out the blade attachment. His fingers brushed against a small button on the bear's foot. "*I love you!*" the bear warbled in a sickly sweet voice. The knife darted down, cruelly ending the bear's crooning as it sliced up across the chest, fluffy white stuffing spilling out. Rio gaped, appalled. Then, all of a sudden, something brown poked out, and the officer whistled enthusiastically. "Aha... as I thought." He plucked out the cigar that had been shoved inside. "I do not know how you got this, little boy, or why you try to smuggle in. But this is very dangerous. Hazard of fire. Hmn... and very expensive." He held it up, and sniffed it. "And *good*." Looking around, the officer tucked it into his shirt pocket. "I take as... evidence." He tossed the butchered remains on the bear onto of the bag and jerked his thumb. "Now go!"

"Hey, that's not -"

The officer squinted. "Where is mommy?"

"Ah, she's..." Turning, Rio gave a small start when he saw Emilena heading through the crowd. "There, she's... she's over there." He swung back, quickly picking up his bag as he pointed out the vulpine. "I'm adopted."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 30, 2014, 05:20:23 PM**

marita came to slowly, finding herself strapped to a bed. She felt like a weight was pressed on her chest and her mouth fe;t like iot had been stuffed with cottopn balls.. ' ah'' she muttered as a girafee nurse came in' good you're awake Miss Jones, Miss Rose and and Miss Marie are still not fully conscious yet. the three of you were exposed to very concentrated doses of biproxytol, fortunately thanks to our treatments your bodies have now flushed them out. our tests showed that your had some resistance to the drug..
-
I used biproxytol when i was younger.. its.. not something I'm proud of "Marita admitted. " Well it saved your life, as that level of dose would have been fatal for someone who wasnt used to it. marie over there is lucky we got her the antidote in time. she was redlining.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 30, 2014, 05:31:06 PM**

The process was repeated with Soren. Fuming, he signed the discharge form.

He got out of bed and headed out to the entrance of the infirmary. Pouring himself some water from a water cooler, he sat down and slowly sipped it to calm his churning stomach.

He then turned to Axel. "I don't know about you but I want some fucking answers."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 30, 2014, 08:16:17 PM**

Vergil headed to his room... or more correctly, *their* room, since Vergil had booked himself and Triste into the same room, both on a whim and to maintain their cover. The suite was sumptuous, with an upper loft and a lower level with a kitchen, sofas, big-screen TV, and lounge area that looked out onto the expansive window that offered a stunning view of life under the sea. While all hotel rooms were under the water, not all had views of the ocean of course.

Their bed was up in the loft, which was accessed via a small spiral staircase that led up; it too looked out to the majestic vista. Fish of all kinds swam by the blue waters, which were made bluer by lighting along the hotel's sides.

Propping his suitcase up on one of those hotel holders, Vergil unzipped it and retrieved his credentials, stowing them away in a pocket as he nodded at the view. "Lovely suite, isn't it darling?" he asked Triste, as if they were a vacationing or honeymooning couple. They were listed under false names of course, making their stay here rather anonymous. Still... their stay wouldn't be that long, if Vergil could help it. Perhaps just one night, and that would be all.

Outside their door, a security officer waited patiently. "Ahem." He cleared his throat. "I'm Jenkins... one of the senior security staff here at Voltaic. I'll be taking you to Chief Grierson's office. You'll need special steps to pass through security though. You'll be vaporized by our sensors if you pass through them without your DNA being put into the system, so... if you don't mind..." he held out a small needle now to take a sample from each of them.

"Not at all." Vergil replied, spinning around now. "Darling that thing you can do with your skin... is that embedded in?" he asked curiously he held out his finger for Jenkins to prick, which he promptly did so, the gecko's hand recoiling a bit from the sensation.

"Sorry... should've warned you it stings a little." Jenkins apologized.

The lift carrying Varanus reached the level Marion was on, and the big monitor stepped out, beginning to stomp purposefully through the corridors. "Fee, fi, fo, fum! I smell the blood of a bloomin' coward!" he crowed. "Come out, come out... wherever you are... I know you're on this level..." With a loud hum, his blade was activated, and he began stalking towards her position, which was currently around the corner from where he was. "You may as well give yourself up now! If you talk... I'll make your death painless! Of that, I promise you!" he declared, snarling as he began rounding the corner...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 30, 2014, 11:17:14 PM**

Lily noticed Axel in the hallway with relief. "Axel!" she ran up and hugged him. "Are you all right?" She glanced at him. He had bloodshot eyes as well. "You were drugged too...how are you feeling now? Where's the girls?" she asked.

She noticed Soren too. "Are you all right, Soren? Do you have any idea who did this to us?"

"Rio, what have you gotten yourself into now?" sighed Emilena. "He's with me, sir," she hastily told the officer.

"This is your son, then?" he inquired.

"He..." Emilena paused. "...yes. My son."

"Why is he not with you?" the guard asked, handing the disemboweled bear back to Rio.

"He must have gone back for his sister's teddy bear! Which we'll have to buy a new one...but that's okay," Emilena added hastily.

"He said it was *his* teddy bear..." the guard added suspiciously.

Emilena smothered Rio in kisses. "I was so worried when I couldn't find you at customs!" she cried tearlessly. "I was afraid you'd been...raped or sold for your kidneys! I can't thank you so much for finding my darling boy safely!" she exclaimed at the guard, palming him a hundred credits. "Take this and my eternal thanks!"

She hustled Rio away. "You never tell anybody what just happened," she warned under her voice as they approached Foley and Flora.

"Rio!" Flora came in for a hug. "Where were you? What happened?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 31, 2014, 06:37:40 PM**

His legs still feeling a little shaky, Axel staggered slightly as Lily hugged him. "Hey... I'm alright. Just don't ask me to do the limbo anytime soon," he said, smiling a little queasily as he wrapped an arm around her. "I was worried... I'm glad you're okay too," he added, not mentioning that she didn't look like a million dollars either. At her question, he shook his head. "I... I've got no idea where they are. I was hoping you'd know, they put me and Soren in our own room."

Sighing, Axel glanced between Lily and Soren and shrugged his shoulders. "Alright, ah...well... Look, I say the first thing we should do is find the girls, and Vergil and Triste, wherever they are. Whoever drugged us was on the boat, so they're probably somewhere around here. And if they were trying to, ah... harm us, we'll be safer in a group. Once we do that, at least we'll be in a better position to think what to do next." Axel blinked and looked around. "Agreed?"

Rio squirmed uncomfortably in Flora's embrace, trying to keep away from her lower half. "Nowhere, just by the machine... things. Some cockmunch stopped me." He slipped from her grasp and scurried next to Foley. "Good job my mom was there." Rio glanced at Emilena, smirking at how uncomfortable it had made her. "Thanks for that, by the way. Next time I make a score, I'll pay you back."

Looking around, he saw they were still a man short. "Still no Naird... There's gotta be something we can do, right? Some way to find him?" Now that he'd found a group of people who seemed like they might actually *care* about him, Rio was determined to do what he could to help.

"Yes, sweetie," Triste said, nodding as Jenkins withdrew the device from Vergil and moved towards her. "Fairly deeply, actually." She looked at the officer and gave a shrug as she held out her hand. "Just a small party trick." The needle sank into her flesh, and she winced slightly at the jolt of pain.

After a moment, the procedure was completed and the needle was lifted away. "Mr... Jenkins, is it?" Triste said, glancing down at the drop of blood welling on her finger. "I must say, I'm *extremely* impressed with the security at Voltaic. Most places would be satisfied with the use of armed guards. But these DNA sensors..." She flashed a small smile at Jenkins. "I wonder if you have any other tricks up your sleeve."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 31, 2014, 06:54:51 PM**

Soren nodded as he looked around. "Good idea, but I'm unarmed right now. I left my weapons in the luggage since we can't bring them on the resort."

He then turned to Lily. "I'm not sure. I don't recall hearing any other cases except our group so that rules out a malicious prank. And kind of doubt Vergil and Triste want to poison their allies."

He then watched as a Dhole with her two pups in two passed by them. The Human then rubbed his forehead. "And furthermore, why a hallucinogen instead of a poison?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 31, 2014, 09:54:30 PM**

"Plenty, miss, but they're all proprietary, of course." Jenkins chuckled here, leading the way as Vergil locked the door behind him with his card. "And well, we take security here very seriously, considering what we're mining about two miles down. It's some of the rarest element on the planet, and our competitors would love to get their hands on it... so we're very well protected from external and internal attack."

"Good to know your parlor trick is good to go." Vergil stated as he walked alongside Triste here. "And yes, the facilities here have so far been very impressive."

"You should see Judaken's headquarters. It's the most secure building on the planet, even more so than some of the government buildings in Corona. But you know what they say about money... you pay a man enough, and he'll walk barefoot into hell. It makes the impossible, possible." Jenkins commented as he led them down a service corridor. "No wing is without cameras, no... ah but I couldn't say more even if I wanted to." he chuckled here as they rounded a corner to a scanner. "Just step on through like so..." Jenkins demonstrated. "And you should be good to go. I uploaded your data to the computers while we were walking... so hopefully everything goes as planned, right?" He asked here, laughing at the two of them as Vergil hesitated.

"Oh come on! I'm mostly joking! You should be fine."

"Didn't Don Stracci employ something like this around the perimeter of his house?" Vergil asked uneasily. Gulping, he nodded at Triste. "I'll go first..." He stepped forward before she could protest, and closed his eyes, but nothing happened.

"See? It's accurate, it is! Nothing to worry about!" Jenkins chuckled again.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 31, 2014, 10:20:28 PM**

Marion ignored Varanus. She held her pistol steady with her free hand as her helmet took in the surroundings.

Once she had a shot at his head, she would take it. All she had to do was wait.

"Come on, round the corner!" she muttered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 01, 2014, 08:21:42 PM**

"I guess they didn't want us dead," murmured Lily. "Only distracted..."

She snapped her head up. "Have any of us seen Vergil and Triste since the drugging? They didn't even come to visit us in the hospital! We need to check and make sure they're okay!"

Flora's eyes lit up. "You're Emi's *son*? I should have guessed!"

"No no no...for god's sake," Emilena cut her off. "To answer Rio's much more intelligent question, we are going to make our way to the beaches and rent a boat. Then we'll see what we can do on the deep blue sea. Foley, you're in charge of navigation, do you think you could map out the currents and wind directions to figure out where Nairda most likely washed ashore?"

Foley's mouth went agape. "...*No?* Why in the nine levels of hell would you think I could do that?"

Emilena waited silently for the punchline.

"...but I bet if I asked my buddies online we could find someone who can," he concluded.

"Great. That's what I want to hear." Emilena led the way towards the non-checkpoint exits. "Any questions?"

"Do you think you ever actually could be a mother?" Flora asked excitedly. "Have some cute little cubs with a dashing gentleman...or equipment-compatible gentlewoman?"

Emilena wrinkled her nose. "I assure you I'm as infertile as they come. Thank god."

She glanced at Rio and almost added, "No offense, Rio," but figured he knew what she meant. Truth be told, he was significantly more likeable than she thought any child ever could be.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 02, 2014, 01:23:19 PM**

Rose stirred in her hospital bed, and soon realized she was strapped down. ' Where.. am .. I?' she said in a tired and strained voice. "In the medical wing at Voltaic Center' the Giraffe nurse said " Good to see you are awake Miss Rose.." My drink.. was spiked ' Rose muttered ' Yes,with a very high dose of Biproxytol. your body had some Resistance to the drug, indicating past use ' yes I was heavily addicted to the stuff, but had been sober for the past several months.. why do you think someone spiked the drinks?' Rose asked the nurse. " well, whoever did it either knew a lot about you, or knew that biproxytol is one of the worlds most addicting drugs- its lethal in high doses to those who have not used it before- and wanted to get even for something, who knows."
Marie stirred a few minutes later and moaned' gods , i feel like i was walking barefoot over a course full of red hot coals. " the nurse turned to her ' ah good, you're awake Miss Marie. the toxin is out of your system and you should be free to go in an hour or so.' Marie sighed as she sett;ed back against the pillow.
The Nurse then went over and unstrapped Marita allowing her to get out of the bed and get to her feet.' Thank you' Marita said ' just have a seat and be quiet for a bit, while i tend to your friends ;' the nurse said as she went over towards Rose and Maries beds.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 03, 2014, 03:30:51 PM**

Axel's eyes widened as he took in what Lily said. "Son of a bitch..." What if she was right, if whoever had drugged them had done it in an attempt to get them out of the way to isolate Vergil? *Are Kalis' guys behind this?* From what he'd seen of them, it was more likely his men would put a bullet through their skull while they slept... but it was the best explanation they had so far.

"Shit... alright, well, if they *are* okay - if nothing's wrong - they'll probably be in their room, getting ready for when we look for the..." Axel looked around nervously, making sure nobody else walking through the corridor could hear them. "Well, you know." He nodded at Lily and Soren, his tail flicking anxiously. "We should try heading down to the rooms, look for them there."

Rio caught the quick glance Emilena gave him and he looked down at his feet, almost smiling. He kept quiet as they passed the exits and walked up to the artificial beach. As they emerged, Rio squinted his eyes against the glare thrown up from the sun reflecting off the golden sand. Before them, people were stretched out sunbathing, swimming in the ocean or playing in the sand with their friends.

The relaxed, familial atmosphere made Rio feel intensely uncomfortable.

Clenching his hands, he scanned the beach and saw a small dock just up ahead where guests could rent out boats. Hoisting his bag further up his shoulder, he turned to the others and pointed towards the small line of people waiting their turn. "Hey, looks like that's what we need." There was a light impact against the back of his leg, and he turned to see a yellow beach ball rolling to a halt near his foot. A short way away, a young child was running towards them. From his excited expression, he clearly expected the ball to be passed back to him. Gathering his strength, Rio kicked the ball as hard as he could, causing it to soar far over the kid's head, fly across the beach and splash down in the sea a fair distance away where it quickly started to float away. The child looked shocked then started to cry, turning and running back to his parents who hadn't seen anything.

Triste clenched her jaw as Vergil stepped forward through the scanner... but he didn't melt into a puddle of gecko goo. She let her breath out slowly, her fist itching to break Jenkins' nose at his chuckle.

Shaking her head, she took a tentative step forwards - and ended up standing next to Vergil, also unharmed. Breathing a sigh of relief, she glanced at Vergil. "Alright, well... it looks like they *are*accurate." Still, she wasn't exactly looking forward to any other scanners they'd have to pass.

Glancing up the corridor, Triste gestured then turned and met Jenkins' eyes. "Shall we?" She was keeping a neutral expression, but inside she was uneasy. In such an enclosed environment - and without their weapons - any potential attacks would leave them especially vulnerable.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 03, 2014, 06:00:25 PM**

"Of course..." Jenkins responded, smirking as he led them onward towards the facility. They were in more like a tunnel now it seemed, as it ran from the hotel into the mining facility. As they entered into the station, a faint hum could be heard from deep within, and the dirty and grimy corridors were a stark contrast to the cleanliness of the resort they'd just come from. Red lights cast sickly glows on the walls, and before long, Jenkins led them into what appeared to be a break area or conference room. This whole area reminded Vergil of old WWII ships' interiors he'd seen pictures of. Spartan and militaristic.

"Have a seat." Jenkins indicated. Vergil sat down, clasping his hands together on the table as a large monitor blinked into life. An older man with a thick gray mustache appeared, staring at them.

"So... these are the two who claim they can fix the problem?" This must be Grierson, the station's head of security. "I hope for both your sakes, you're not full of shit."

"Ahem... as a matter of fact... we aren't." Vergil stated flatly, looking at Grierson as best he could. "We know you've been having problems with your mining operation beneath the waves... seems the entire ocean is turning out to attack your deep-sea mining..." Grierson twitched a tad at this.

"There's no way you'd know that... how did you find out?"

"I have my sources... just like you." Vergil responded simply, narrowing his eyes. "Anyway I figure we can cut a deal." the gecko stated.

"A deal? What kind of deal?" Grierson asked suspiciously.

"We handle your little problem, and in return, we get access to something you're sitting on top of down there. It has no value to you, or anyone in your organization. We get full access to it, and the use of one of your deep-sea submersibles to assist in getting down there. We clear up your problem, it's ours, deal?" Vergil asked.

Grierson narrowed his eyes. "What exactly is it?"

"Not as valuable as what you're mining, take my word for it. It's a map..."

"Pfft... like what a treasure map?" Grierson asked sarcastically.

"Something like that... but I get to access it... and your defenses don't blow us out of the water."

"You realize there's sensitive equipment down there, right? Proprietary mining equipment registered solely to Judaken Industries."

"Sure I know." Vergil answered. "I'm not interested in any of it. I'm just interested in the map." he assured him.

"It's suicide heading down there... three of our teams have already been taken out, and the machinery itself is being threatened." Grierson explained.

"Well then you got nothing to worry about. Still... I know you're on the verge of total collapse... so you either take your chances with us, or you risk your entire operation." Vergil put it simply.

"You know way more than I'm comfortable with about our situation..."

"Perks of what I do." Vergil responded plainly. "I'm here to solve your issue... so you either go with us or you get shut down. What's it gonna be?"

Grierson hesitated a moment here, eyes narrowing again. He sighed. "So you need a submersible?"

"Preferably one capable of defending itself. Deep sea suits would be nice too. We might need to get out." Vergil explained.

"Heh... fine. You're welcome to this stuff. You get whatever it is you're after, and in return, you fix our problem."

"Deal." Vergil stated, smiling here.

"Heheh... cocky little lizard, aren't you? You won't be so cocky when you get down there... anyway, Jenkins will provide you with the equipment you need... I hope the rest of your stay on Voltaic Station will be... superb and relaxing." Grierson commented, his voice dripping with sarcasm, and he cut the video feed.

"Wait here... I'll be back with your permits." Jenkins stated icily, and left the conference room. Vergil grinned at Triste.

"Well that worked. We get access to the waypoint, and see what we can do about solving their problem." he stated. "Pretty brilliant, eh? Oh and if you're concerned they're listening in, don't be. There aren't any microphones in this room." he told her simply, though he showed no visible signs of having scanned the room beforehand.

Varanus rounded the corner, not concerned in the slightest if his quarry had set a trap for him or not. He wasn't Lord Kalis's heir for nothing, after all... fixing her with his beady eyes, he began stomping towards her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 04, 2014, 01:34:48 PM**

Lily led the way to the receptionist. "Hello, we'd like to know what room our friends are staying in," she smiled warmly.

Receptionist didn't look up. "We don't give out room numbers."

"Can you at least call Vergil Speicher or Triste..." Lily realized she'd never learned Triste's last name. "Just Vergil Speicher, see if he accepts our call."

The receptionist held the phone up, dialing four digits. Lily noticed that Soren was standing in such a way that he should have been able to see what numbers were dialed. "Nope," said the receptionist, hanging up.

"You didn't even say anything!" protested Lily.

"He's not in his room at the moment."

Lily stepped away. "Something weird is going on here..." she murmured. "Axel, could you call the girls and see if they're okay? Soren, did you see what number the receptionist typed in?"

(OOC: The receptionist typed four numbers because in most hotel phones, the first digit is either Pound or Star to indicate an internal call)

Emilena's team zipped out of the docks on a speedy two-person love yacht named the *Microcosm*.

"Why did we pay for a boat anyway?" asked Foley, who was getting the satellite computer below decks working. "We never pay for, like, anything!"

"We rented it, we didn't buy it!" shouted Emilena over the sputtering engine. *Plus when Nairda bitches about having been framed, drugged and thrown overboard, I can use the fact that I paid for a search boat as proof that I still love him,* she thought to herself. "How are you on navigation?"

"Good, I got a guy on instant message walking me through this!" The computer had a little map of the ocean that was constantly updating with their location. "With online local weather readings, this thing can calculate our direction and position to within 5 degrees!"

Emilena wasn't stupid; she knew that five degrees off was pretty bad when it came to cartographic navigation. "You know the boat came with this telescope thing that keeps track of direction, right?" Emilena pointed her thumb at the glove compartment.

"Yeah, but that would involve looking outside, and it's a full moon right now..."

"What are you talking about? It's the middle of the--" Emilena looked out the windscreen and instantly averted her eyes. "Ohhh...." On the front deck, Flora had taken all her clothes off and was leaning her head over the front bow, panting happily as wind and surf sprayed across her face.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 04, 2014, 08:09:18 PM**

(Voltaic Station)

Soren nodded. He looked around to make sure the receptionist was away. He leaned over to Lily. "She typed in the numbers four-one-five-nine," he whispered.

He then backed off from Lily and looked at Axel. The Human wrung his hands. "Axel, aren't you concerned that whoever poisoned us earlier aboard the ship might try to finish us off?"

(*Falchion*)

A gunshot ripped through the air as Marion fired her pistol the moment she saw Varanus's head peek out from behind the corner. It was a shot nearly impossible for a Baseline Human to make, as Marion was practically standing on the sheer steel wall.

She detached her piton and fired another shot further down the hallway, swinging into position near some exposed armored electrical conduits. She activated her grappling spikes and clung to the pillar, concealing herself from her attacker.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 05, 2014, 03:08:49 AM**

Axel pressed a hand against his left pocket, and was relieved to feel that his cell phone was still there. Fishing it out, he scanned the area around them, searching for anybody who looked suspicious. He couldn't see anyone who looked out of the ordinary, only crowds of relaxed guests milling around, enjoying their vacation. That didn't exactly mean much, though... knowing who was after them, it wasn't as if they'd make it obvious.

Chewing his lip, Axel turned his head in Soren's direction. "Yeah," he murmured quietly, flicking through speed-dial until he reached Marita's number. "That's one of the reasons why I think regrouping as soon as we can wouldn't be a bad idea. I mean, right now we've got no way of defending ourselves, but at least Vergil's got his... you know..." He waggled his fingers. "*Mind stuff*." Axel found what he was looking for and hit the dial button. "Just... keep your eyes open," he whispered as he raised the phone, the dialing tone humming in his ear. "If whoever tried to get us is here... which they probably *are*... it could be any one of these guys."

Someone on the other end picked up. "Marita! It's Axel," he said quickly, his ears perking up. "Me, Lily and Soren are at the reception... look, we can't find Vergil or Triste. Something... something *bad* might've happened. Just... get Marie and Rose, and get here as quick as you can, okay? We don't think we're safe."

Rio held on tightly to one of the seats as the small boat raced over the waves, the motion throwing him around uncomfortably. He heard the commotion and leaned forward to see what they were talking about. "What? Why are..." He caught a glimpse of Flora's not-so-lady parts and flinched back, shuddering. "Aw, fucking hell..."

Gritting his teeth, he slid forwards, popped the glove compartment and pulled out the telescope. Standing up unsteadily, Rio clamped a hand onto Foley's shoulder and peered through the device as he scanned the sea's horizon before them. "I... I don't see anything," he muttered, frustrated. Suddenly, a zoomed in image of Flora's business end appeared in his scope. Rio let out a distraught cry.

Triste nodded at Vergil. "Not a bad plan," she admitted, standing up and looked around the room. The dark, claustrophobic area really *was* a stark difference to the luxury of the hotel. "Although... Vergil, do you have any idea how many of those things're down there?" she asked, turning around. "Fighting these things underwater... it sounds like we'll be at a big disadvantage here."

She shrugged, leaning back against the wall and listening out for Jenkins' returning footsteps. "If we can manage to get access to the waypoint without drawing attention, might be safer to just leave. Do we really need to go out of our way to help these people?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 05, 2014, 09:02:07 AM**

"I was thinking no... we don't." Vergil shook his head here. "I'm not interested in finding out the reason they're having problems down below. As far as I'm concerned, they're probably causing it anyway. Looking at the Federation's reports, Judaken started a new mining technique last month, and I'm willing to bet it's causing the ocean to go crazy. They're using new sound waves to blast into the ocean floor... the frequency of which may in fact be causing everything in the ocean to attack the mining facilities. They're either too stupid to see it... or they're leading us into a trap; I'm willing to bet it's the former, for what can be gained from trapping us? They don't even know who we are." he commented.

"As for fighting at a disadvantage... what choice do we have? The waypoint is down there after all, and we need all five to locate Torment's Cataract. Hopefully their submarines at least have decent armament, and once we get down there, I'm making straight for the waypoint... unless of course you think we should shut down their machines and see if that quiets the ocean any, giving us a clear run to the waypoint? Naturally that'd most likely turn Judaken against us, but then it's a choice of fighting their mercs or fighting the ocean itself. We fight the ocean we don't have to worry about our extraction after we're done... we fight their mercs our return to the station might not as peaceful. What do you think?" he asked her here, getting up as well and resting his hand on the back of the chair.

Varanus was ready, his lightning reflexes causing his reaction to be perfectly timed. He sliced through Marion's bullet with his blade as if it were nothing, and began charging down the hall now even as she withdrew. "You aren't getting out of this alive!" he called out after her. "But if it's a game you want to play, so be it!" he yelled, now switching over to hunting mode as made for the pillar.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 05, 2014, 01:15:41 PM**

Lily looked at the people around her, spooked by Axel's warning. She tried to read their minds or something, but her psychic powers were orders of magnitude below Vergil's; the only thing she managed to sense was that the man who limped past them on crutches had a pained leg.

"All right," she said softly. "We need to go check on Vergil as soon as possible." She led the way to the room number Soren indicated as fast as possible. As she walked, her imagination ran wild with worry, until she finally reached the door gripped with paranoia.

"Vergil!" she shouted, banging on the door. "Are you all right? Please answer!"

"No, you've got to turn it on," Foley tried to explain how to use the telescope. "There's that button on the left that starts the....uhh, oh let me do it."

He clicked the telescope on and turned a dial while scanning the horizon. "Okay, computer was a bit off on direction, compensating. Oh hey, thing can even locate upcoming atmospheric phenomenon, check this out."

He plugged the telescope's USB10 into the computer, which begin refreshing. After a few seconds of whirring:

(https://lovesicksilverfish.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/infrared1.png)

"*Flora*!" Emilena shouted out the window angrily, making the folf jump. "Get your ass out of the damn way of the--!"

"--Hold it..." interrupted Foley. His face had taken an ashen pallor. "That's not Flora. That's a tropical storm. And it's coming right at us."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 05, 2014, 01:59:02 PM**

Marita felt her phone ring and flipped the screen open, noticing the number was Axels " Hi Axel.we're recuperating in the medical wing . We'll be out in a couple minutes. We .. well we

were lucky. that dose of biproxytol would have been fatal in minutes to anyone not accustomed to the drug. Marie's only alive because the docs got the antidote into her in time. I don't know where Vergil or Trieste are, but if I had to guess they're somewhere on this ship trying to get access to the waypoint."
- Rose was unstrapped by the nurse and got out of bed. she took a few deep breaths, she still had a strong aftertaste in her mouth, but once she got moving, that would hopefully dissipate. Marie was the last to be unstrapped and got out of bed. Marita paused in responding to Axel to slide the nurse a credits card for their bill. ' the credits passed muster and the nurse nodded ' Alright, you three are free to go. I've got two Bison and a Leopard coming in here. food poisoning, bad shellfish , I think.' Rose and Marie hobbled over to Marita. ' Axel, we're on our way. we should be there in about five minutes. Marita Out.' Marita hung up the phone and headed out of the room.
' Who do you think put the stuff in our drinks?' Rose asked as the girls began headed down the hallway. ' well, I'm not sure entirely, but if I had to guess, I'd say Emilena. She blackmailed me in Lanthae into assisting in her little investigation, not something you do to a friend. She knew that you and I had been in a relationship and had both used biproxytol, and used you to get me to do her bidding." That little bitch' Roses eyes narrowed.' So you think she knew what dose of the stuff is harmful and slipped us some?" Her , or her associates.' Marita said.' You're not 100% sure though' Marie said, she was leaning on Rose for support, as she walked down the hallway. the trio turned and reached a more crowded hallway. a sign pointed to the receiption area, which was on their left, two hallways down.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 06, 2014, 07:00:39 PM**

(Voltaic Station)

The hair on the back of Soren's neck curled as his heart raced. A lean Krait holding a spray bottle of cleaner and wiping down an ornate mirror. A young Human woman clad in a bathing suit and chatting on her cell phone and with a cocktail in hand as she loped down the carpeted hallway.

Ever since the incident aboard the *Breman II*, everything began to look like a threat.

He had offered to wait in the reception area for Marita, Rose and Marie while Axel and Lily went to get Vergil. As soon as he made that offer, he began to feel nauseous. What if the duo had walked into a trap. He took a breath to calm himself down and munched on a roll procured from the buffet (the chance of ingesting drugged food from a buffet where literally hundreds of people ate was almost nil. At least, if they were trying to target him specifically.)

"Marita! Marie! Over here!" he exclaimed, waving his hand in the air.

(*Falchion*)

Marion swore as Varanus approached. His hyperfast reflexes meant that shooting him was impossible ó unless he was distracted. Luckily, her exoskeleton and prosthetic limbs granted her reflexes that were well above the Human baseline.

The Human withdrew an spherical object from her flying frame's integrated backpack. A stickyfoam grenade. Upon detonation, it would spew out a liquid adhesive that reacted with air to form a hard, glassy substance. She pressed the trigger mechanism and lobbed it in Varanus's direction (thanks to her helmet's enhanced hearing picking up his footsteps). The second the grenade touched the ground, a large burst of viscous clear liquid exploded forth.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 07, 2014, 04:28:58 AM**

Triste chewed her lip for a second, mulling it over. Finally, she looked across at Vergil. "Keeping a low profile *would* be the best option... We don't exactly want a shootout in a place like this." She shrugged. "Alright, how about we assume that we're following your plan. That we find the waypoint *and* deal with whatever's down there."

"But," she held up a finger, "If it looks like the situation's too risky, we abandon helping Judaken and just focus on getting those coordinates. If it comes to it, I'd rather fight an enemy when I can stand on dry land." She smiled drily. "And I really, *really* don't want to die at the bottom of the sea."

Axel stood back as Lily pounded on the door, his stomach twisting when nobody answered. "Nothing? Hang on, let me try." Sliding up beside her, he rapped sharply on the door. "Vergil? Triste? Come on, if you guys are there you've gotta answer!" Silence.

Grimacing, he turned to lily. "*Shit*... I don't know how long it's been since we arrived, but it can't have been too long, can it? So why... I mean, if nothing was wrong, wouldn't they have tried to find us?" Visions of Vergil and Triste shot, stabbed and bludgeoned, lying sprawled in the room beyond started to flash through his mind. "Goddammit..." Axel looked up and down the long hallway they were standing in. A fair distance away, a laughing couple fumbled at their door then fell through - and then Axel and Lily were alone in the corridor. Cameras could be a problem though...

Gesturing for Lily to lean closer, he pressed himself up against the electronic lock through which a card had to be slid to unlock the door, obscuring it from the CCTV. "We need to take a look inside. For all we know, they could be hurt, or..." He swallowed. "We just go inside for a few seconds, just to make sure they're not in there, needing our help, then we leave. At least then we'll know, right?" Axel nodded at her, then surreptitiously gripped the protruding lock and flipped his vision. "Keep an eye out... make sure nobody sees us." Grunting, he twisted the lock and eventually managed to wrench it to the side, exposing the wiring beneath. Staring down at the electricity coursing through the small cables, he made a judgement as to the correct path it should take, and snapping a green and red wire he joined the exposed ends together. There was a small *click*. Gingerly, Axel tried the handle and to his relief the door started to open inwards.

Glancing at Lily, he gave a shaky smile. "Okay... that wasn't too bad. Let's just get in, check things out, and leave before anyone knows we were there."

In the security room, a small alarm started to buzz.

Rio blinked. "That's... that's bad, right?" Already, the sea surrounding them had started to get rougher. His gut tightened, the loud voice that was his sense of self-preservation screaming at him to *get the hell out of there, now*. But if Nairda was close by...

"How long do we have?!" Rio squawked, standing up and desperately renewing his efforts of scanning the sea to spot a floating, doped up figure bobbing around.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2014, 07:56:11 AM**

"Call Soren and get him and the girls up here fast!" whispered Lily, who wasn't even sure why she was whispering. She tiptoed into the room. "Vergil?" she called out. "Are you in here?"

Nothing. Her heart leaped into her throat. "We need to find clues on where they've gone!" She began searching the stuff. "I want us all to be back together before....more of us start disappearing...."

"We don't have time!" Foley snapped. "We have to turn around!"

Emilena hesitated. Outside, the winds picked up, and Flora clutched onto the railings with a yelp to keep from slipping overboard. "No!" Emilena snapped resolutely. "We have to find Nairda! We keep looking!"

Foley pointed his finger incredulously outside. "Look through *that*?" The sky had grown dark with clouds and rain was now pelting the windshield. "Emi, if we turn around *right now* I can't guarantee we'll get back in time! Not to mention we lost our internet connection, so if we do anything but turn around we're lost!"

When the boat lurched over a broiling swell, Flora slid down the deck and hit the windshield. Crawling meekly into the cabin, she groaned and proceeded to shake rain out of her fur and coat the others in a fine mist.

"Just...five more minutes!" Emilena pleaded with Foley and the storm. "We can find him! We have to!"

A bolt of lightning struck the ship. Their antenna burst into flames, but almost as quickly evaporated into drenched ash and collapsed the roof on their heads.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 07, 2014, 08:41:27 AM**

Marita heard Soren call her namre and made her way over towards him ' " Ah Soren. good to see a friendly face. Axel called me just a couple minutes ago, where did he go?' She asked noticing he and Lily were not there.
_ hi Soren " Rose said with a smile ' so i take it we wrent the only ones who drank the spiked drinks huh . good to see you pulled through.
_ Mariota thinks Emilena or her allies were behind that stunt; Marie said. " first we get everyone together then we go look for that pyscho and pay her and her friends back for nearly killing us.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 07, 2014, 09:09:52 AM**

"There is... something we could try..." Vergil said here thoughtfully now, narrowing his eyes as he folded his arms across his chest and stared at the table. "It'd put a lot of strain on me and might not even work but... I could try and hold off the creatures with my mind... keep them at bay while you piloted the sub and took us right to the waypoint. You'd also have to man the sub's weapons in case I can't hold them all off and some start approaching us. Once we're close to the waypoint, I doubt they'd follow, since if my hypothesis is correct, it's the mining equipment that's driving them insane in the first place."

Looking across at her, he softened. "This way, we get the coordinates, and head back to the surface with a cover story that we found the cause of the problem, but we're going to need more time to fix it. Then we get the hell out of here on the next boat and get on our way." He stated. "What do you think? Shall we try it? Cause I'm with you... we aren't dying underwater."

The security team was pretty swift in responding, as they took theft of personal property very seriously, as they did any intrusion of the security of the station. A few were dispatched with high-powered rifles and riot gear down the hallway, and headed for the room registered to "Mr. and Mrs. Dorrien." As the two searched the room, the security forced headed their way, less than five minutes from the room.

Varanus managed to leap backwards out of the way of the grenade in time, though he wasn't able to catch it with his mind and hurl it back at her. Letting it explode in front of him, he began attacking the barrier and slicing through it with his blade, shattering it on impact. "Buying yourself some time is only prolonging the inevitable!" he shouted at her, hacking his way through as he continued down the hallway.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2014, 10:02:00 AM**

As the guards did nothing to mask the sound of their footsteps, Lily heard them coming. "We can't let them take us like they did Vergil and Triste!" she gasped. Grabbing the metal bedside cupboard, she placed it in front of the window and then laid the knife sharpener from the kitchen on the cupboard. "Help me!"

Taking the sofa together, she and Axel rammed it into the knife sharpener, putting all the force of a battering ram onto a single point of the glass.

It was at that moment, as she dizzily regarded the scattered furniture around her prone form, that reality finally clicked and she realized that the window she'd just damaged overlooked the great blue ocean itself. "Uh oh..."

When the security arrived, they were treated to the sight of a spindly web of cracks, and two clearly drugged individuals lying under a window looking more and more like a spider web every second. An instant later, the window shattered, sending an explosion of water and broken glass flowing into the hallway.

The tiny boat was thrashed in the torrential rain and battering waves of the tropical storm.

"We just lost left engine!" cried Foley, whose face could not be more pale white. The water in the boat reached to their ankles.

Emilena knew that any hope of finding Nairda was all but gone. "All right, get us back to the station!" she finally conceded.

"Hate to break it to you, but I've been trying to do that for the last ten minutes!" Foley wrestled with the yoke.

With a crash, lightning struck the boat a second time. sparks flew everywhere.

"And that was our other engine!" Foley threw up his hands in defeat. "We're out of control!"

"We're still moving!" Flora pointed out optimistically. The storm was slowly developing into one large wave, and they were nestled securely in the curl.

Trapped in the vengeful grasp of Poseidon, the helpless boat unknowingly hurtled towards the very station it had hoped to reach...

(EDIT: Edited!)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 07, 2014, 10:13:50 AM**

Quote from: Pterano,Jul 30 2014 on 11:16 PM

> Vergil headed to his room... or more correctly, *their* room, since Vergil had booked himself and Triste into the same room, both on a whim and to maintain their cover. The suite was sumptuous, with an upper loft and a lower level with a kitchen,

> sofas, big-screen TV, and lounge area that looked out onto the expansive window that offered a stunning view of life under the sea. While all hotel rooms were under the water, not all had views of the ocean of course.

(Hate to have you edit your post and tell you that's not possible but... it's not possible. Good effort all the same though. Would've been totally awesome had the hotel rooms NOT been underwater. :p As it stands, that window's heavily reinforced to prevent the sea from actually entering the room, so yeah)

(Second Edit: Awesome! :DD)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 07, 2014, 10:56:22 AM**

(Done with permission!)

It was an incredibly stupid move on Lily's part, and it quickly showed as the entire room was flooded, which risked the destruction of the entire station. Normally such a thing would've been impossible, but somehow, they'd pulled it off. But the water rushing in was quickly sealed off, as the station had backups and bulkheads to keep it safe. What might've been a catastrophic flood was quickly contained, and the two culprits were swept out into the hall as the room Vergil and Triste were staying in was sealed off.

Pounding the butts of their shotguns into the flanks of Lily and Axel, the two quickly found themselves cuffed and dragged to their feet. "The hell you two DOING? You realize how many millions' worth of damage you just caused?" the chief of the squad shouted. "Sir we've got potential saboteurs in custody, taking them to lock down now."

Shoving the two roughly out in front of them, the squad began marching them off to the high-security facility deep within the hotel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 07, 2014, 11:28:45 AM**

(Voltaic Station)

"Axel and Lily went to room four-one-five-nine. They were looking for Vergil," he said.

He then looked around. "Right now, I'm a bit worried that Emilena or her goons got a hold of them. It's been what, twenty minutes since they went down there."

The Human then finished off his roll and handed his dish to a Peregrine Falcon waiter. to be washed. "Anyways, shall we go down to look for them?"

(*Falchion*)

Marion swore as her sticky grenade failed. She looked up and noticed that the ceiling was thinne than the bulkheads.

Igniting her plasma blade, she plunged it into the ceiling and swiftly cut a small opening. Boiling coolant hissed out as she pierced a coolant line. Thanks to her helmet's air filtration system and far IR lights, she was unaffected by the cloud of hot vapor. Smirking, she also sliced through the power conduits, throwing off a massive shower of sparks in the process.

Soon, she had cut an opening to the room above and hauled herself up through the hole.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 07, 2014, 12:18:17 PM**

Better Go look for them then'; Marita said in reply. the girls would eat later , once they felt up to it, for now the more important task was reuniting with everyone.' just hope they didnt get into too much trouble..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 07, 2014, 04:12:31 PM**

Axel gasped as the guards shoved them along the corridor, his side throbbing. Blood dripped from his nose where one of the squad had disagreed with his face, and the cuffs pinning his arms back were causing his shoulders to twist uncomfortably. As he staggered, Axel's fingers brushed against his pocket.... and he realised his phone was still in there.

Axel bit his lip. These guys acted and *looked* like security... but were they? Even if they were, maybe Kalis had them in his pocket. There'd been nothing in Vergil's room to show that it had been used in any way, and their whereabouts were still mystery. He couldn't help but notice that there were no guests around where they were heading. Being taken to lock down... or led away from any potential witnesses so they could be disposed of quietly?

Praying that the phone still worked, Axel slowly slipped his hand into his pocket and felt by touch to speed dial Soren's number. After a moment, to his relief he heard the very, very faint sound of a dialing tone.

As soon as he heard it end, indicating someone had picked up, Axel halted and spun around, glaring at the guard behind him. "Hey, where... where are you taking us?" he demanded loudly. "You've got us in handcuffs... you've got fucking *guns*... Where the hell is this *lock up*?!"

Triste nodded hesitantly. "That *does* sound like it could work. I can pilot a sub okay, and the weapons shouldn't be a problem. Your psionics should be strong enough too, but..." Vergil's mentioning of the strain his abilities would put on him made her uneasy. She knew the toll psionics could take on the body.

"If you start feeling weak... like your body can't handle it, then you let me know straight away, alright?" She stepped closer to him then tilted her head, frowning. "I don't want you getting hurt." *That could completely compromise the mission.*

As the wave propelled the boat forwards, Rio held on to the flimsy railing for dear life. He was getting soaked through and his ears were ringing, the roaring of the wave that was engulfing them deafening him. The boat started to pitch to the side, and Rio felt his legs skid across the floor.

There was a crunch. Horrified, Rio jerked his head up and saw the railing start to buckle from his weight... and then tear free from the side of the boat. Rio yelled as his feet left the floor and he tumbled across. Just as he was about to fly overboard, his flailing arms caught a hold of Flora. He held on to her, vice-like, not caring what he was brushing up against as long as it saved him from drowning.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 07, 2014, 05:36:27 PM**

"Where do you think, jackass? You just FLOODED a guest's room! Caused millions of dollars worth of damage! You're going to answer for this crime with the Judaken way. Since we make the laws out here... guess what? I'd say unless you can pay us back IMMEDIATELY, well... you just let us worry about the rest." The guard roughly shoved Axel as if he intended for him to fall to the ground, since he'd chosen to spin around and face the security contingent. "Now shut up and get moving!"

Vergil looked at her as she mentioned she didn't want him getting hurt. "Thanks for the concern but... we both know you wouldn't be able to hold them off even if I did start to fail. Our only real alternative would be to blow ballast and rapidly surface. I'm gonna hold on as long as I can. I'll let you know if we need to pull out, though. While I've found out I can even influence the mind of sentients in limited forms, animals should be no problem for me."

He paused as he heard Jenkins coming back. "Ahem." the security officer emerged from around the door. "It seems we've had a minor terrorist attack. Security's even tighter than usual now. Funny because it seems your room was involved in the attack."

"Our room?" Vergil asked, brows raising here.

"Yes... your belongings I'm afraid are probably completely destroyed. We'll move you to another room of course, and salvage what we can... I just find it funny that terrorists decided to break into your room... it might be coincidence, but we won't know until we interrogate them." Jenkins stated calmly.

"I... see." Vergil said slowly. "Well it's of little consequence. My clothes are replaceable."

"Rest assured, we will get to the bottom of this. Mr. Judaken does not tolerate this type of thing on his station. Anyway... your submarine has been secured, as have your deep sea suits. You won't get much time in them though, as you need a special oxygen mixture for being that deep so... choose your minutes wisely." Jenkins informed them.

"Not a problem. Mrs. Dorrien will be piloting the sub." Vergil looked to her now.

"Very good... this way, please." Vergil pulled out his tracker, with the GPS coordinates programmed into them as they were shown the way to the submersible. It was bright yellow, as if it belonged to some deep sea salvage agency, and was sitting in a cradle that would release them into the water once they were inside. "Well you've got your standard torpedoes, but only four of them, coupled with a laser cannon, mines, and side lasers. If you even POINT those weapons in the direction of the mining station, we'll blow you out of the water, got it?" Jenkins asked.

"Loud and clear." Vergil responded, and climbed down into the submersible now, jumping down off the ladder and looking around at the cramped confines. "All right... take the controls... you DO know how to pilot one of these things, right?" he asked hopefully.

Varanus frowned as his quarry escaped through the roof. "Seal off the deck above me." He ordered. "Get strike teams up there. I'm starting to lose my patience." He ordered the ship's captain. Stomping over to the hole she'd cut in the ceiling, he glanced up at it, then hurled himself upwards, using his telekinesis to propel himself through the hole, gritting his teeth as the sparks from the arcing wires burned him slightly. Landing on the deck above, he looked around, wondering where she'd gotten off to.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 08, 2014, 05:42:32 PM**

Lily was unconscious from getting hit with a veritable ton of water. The guards were having to drag her to wherever they were going.

Flora grabbed Rio and hugged him tight as the sound of splintering wood competed with the lightning crashing around them. They were up to their waists in water, the wave's momentum was literally the only thing keeping the boat from sinking.

The buckled floor had trapped Foley in the navigator's seat. He screamed and tried to free himself even as a horrible gravity-shifting plummet indicated that the wave has crested. With a final scream, Emilena saw only bubbles and foam as the ship tore apart in a watery collision between the wave and the sea.

Several confused seconds later, her head had cleared enough to determine that she was underwater amidst splinters and boards. Glancing to the light, she swam to the surface with powerful dolphin kicks and emerged, gasping for air.

To the left, roughly half of the boat bobbed sadly in a spreading pool of wreckage. She didn't see any of her companions, but her mind realized that the half missing contained the cockpit, where Foley had been. *Where Foley had been trapped...*

Taking a deep breath, she dove back underwater. Squinting to see, she made out the rapidly sinking dark shape that could only be the other half of the boat. Kicking until her legs burnt, she grasped the railing and hoisted herself into the cabin.

Foley was still trapped in the navigation's seat, unconscious with blood and bubbles emanating from his mouth. Drawing the katana from her belt, she hacked angrily at the chair, but could only dent it. It appeared the vibrating function had been disabled in the crash somehow.

Crossing to the ship's locker, she pulled it open and came away with a kit of basic survival gear, most notably an oxygen tank. She quickly chomped into the nozzle and took a few deep breaths herself, before slipping it onto Foley's head. His body naturally inhaled and his eyes flew open. *Alright Emilena,* she thought to herself, *you saved him from drowning, now you better be able to save him for real, or else this was the cruelest thing you've ever done...*

She reached into the survival kit and grabbed the flare. Removing the lighting cap, she hesitated. She had a plan for freeing Foley, but this flare could be used so much more efficiently to signal help...

Well, too bad. Using the pocket of air trapped in the corner of the cabin, she struck the flare against removable cap. As it contained magnesium and an internal oxidizer, it could continue to burn even underwater.

For the few seconds her flare worked, she pressed it against the base of the chair and superheated the metal. This weakened it enough for her to warp it away from the wall with a few powerful smashes. Wrenching the oxygen from Foley and taking a few deep breaths, she pried Foley out of his chair and towards the door.

She pulled him out of the cabin and pushed back into the ocean, keeping the survival kit dangling from her shoulder. With every dolphin kick, her vision grew darker. The water seemed endless, her lungs were burning from the abuse, and she felt her muscles one-by-one give up and slowly go limp. There was no way she'd get this fat ass back to the surface...

All of a sudden fuchsia arms appeared, grasping her and helping her paddle. Seconds later she broke the surface of the water a second time and gasped painfully.

Flora steered them to the wrecked half of the boat and helped Emilena grab on to something. "I found you!" she beamed. "And you found Foley!"

"Where's...Rio...?" choked Emilena, swallowing salt water as she tried to take another deep breath.

"He's here," Flora added hastily. "I pushed him onto the top part of the wreck before going after you."

Emilena coughed and spluttered for a few more minutes. It was difficult to catch her breath when she had to keep Foley above water at the same time. Foley was moaning haggardly and the large cut on his forehead was still leaking blood into the water.

"We have to...get him out of the water..." Emilena panted.

Flora nodded. "Rio! We're gonna push, you pull! Try to get Foley onto what's left of the deck!"

Working together, the three of them eventually managed to get Foley out of the water. Most of the boat's individual pieces were long gone, the light plastic chassis being the only real reason what they had left was still floating.

Using absolutely all of the gauze from her small survival kit, Emilena bandaged Foley's head. "The skull isn't broken, it's just a really bad cut," she explained to Foley, who didn't seem capable of speech. "You should be able to heal even without Medical attention."

"What about you?" asked Flora.

"Me? What are you..?" Emilena glanced at herself. Only now did she notice a long gash running the length of her entire left leg. "Oh. Yikes..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 09, 2014, 09:11:53 AM**

(*Falchion*)

Thanks to her helmet's built-in radar system, Marion was still able to see Varanus through the thick veil of boiling coolant. She raised her pistol and fired off a burst at his shape.

She then sprinted off down the hallway.

(Voltaic Station)

Soren picked up his smartphone and scowled. The number he received was from Axel. He tapped the green phone icon on the touch screen as he held it to his ear.

What he heard made his jaw drop.

"Hey, where... where are you taking us? You've got us in handcuffs... you've got fucking guns... Where the hell is this lock up?!"

It was Axel's voice, muffled but it was his. He looked around and disconnected.

He turned to Marita, Marie and Rose, his face stony. "We need to talk about this somewhere...not here." He gestured with his head to the throngs of vacationers present. "It's about Axel. He's been in...an 'accident'."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 09, 2014, 09:51:30 AM**

' alright. lets try and find a food court or something. We havent gotten anything to eat in a long time. we'll be able to talk there. I'm guessing they went to find Vergil and did something they went supposed to do. Nothings gone right for this little trip, I swear.' Marita sighed as she began walking down the hallway, and mingled in with the crowd.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 09, 2014, 01:23:00 PM**

Emilena ripped off her shirt and quickly fashioned a tourniquet. "Urrggghhh..." she grunted in pain as she tightened it.

Flora hovered nervously nearby. "Does it hurt?"

"YES it bloody well hurts!" snapped Emilena angrily. "Rio, keep that gauze applied firmly to Foley's forehead!"

Foley wasn't looking too good. He shivered weakly in the corner.

"Foley...?" asked Flora nervously. "How are you?"

"I'm...cold..." he admitted, looking alarmed at the prospect.

"Flora, I'm going to need your help," Emilena informed. Tucking into the survival kit, she found nothing resembling a sewing kit or needle. Sighing, she kicked off her boots and all but flung them at Flora with her feet. "Unlace them!"

As Flora did so, Emilena cast her eyes around for any sort of sharp object to use as a needle. Her eyes settled on the mess of splintered wood surrounding the boat. Her eyes twitched as she realized just how painful this was going to be. "We need to stitch the wound. Do you know how to sew?"

"A...a little..." Flora hesitated. "Is that what..?"

Emilena grabbed the first bootlace Flora had released. Snapping a particularly long and thin point of wood off of the remainder of their boat, Emilena handed it to Flora. "Now, what you're going to have to do is...in the flaps of my skin, you'll make to...make holes with the wood...and then push my shoelace through."

Flora's eyes went wide.

"*And*," Emilena added hastily. "No matter *what*, keep going. Any noises I make, any movements, you've got to finish. Make it as tight as you can!"

Flora nodded speechlessly.

"Well? Go!" Emilena closed her eyes and gritted her teeth.

Grabbing the skin nearest the ankle, Flora readied the sharp wood. Looking slightly sick, she stabbed into it.

"AAAAAUUGHHH!" Emilena cried, arching her back.

"I'm sorry! It didn't break through..." Flora tried again. The wood slipped in the blood. Emilena screamed again.

Breathing heavily, Emilena's head lolled to one side and she suddenly noticed her katana. Feeling stupid for having missed it before, she passed it over. "Be *fucking* careful though, you could cut my leg off!" *Which will probably have to happen anyway...*

Flora prodded the skin with the katana and it slipped through like butter. Suddenly feeling sick, Flora staggered over to the edge of the boat and vomited.

"Flora...? Flora! Goddammit..." Emilena glanced at Rio. "Kid, get your ass over here. Stitch me up."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 09, 2014, 06:01:48 PM**

Triste lowered herself into the sub after Vergil and closed the hatch behind her, eyes narrowing as she took in the interior of the craft. "Cosy..." Her voice echoed tinnily amongst the claustrophobic mass of levers, wheels and buttons.

Glancing around, she made her way over to the uncomfortable pilot's seat and buckled herself in. At Vergil's question, she looked over and smiled sardonically. "Oh, sure. Though I *did* skip out on most of the classes. Which one's the brake again?" Checking to make sure she knew where all the controls were, she nodded. "Alright... now or never. You ready?" Waiting until Vergil had secured himself, Triste raised a hand and threw back the lever that kept them suspended in the cradle. Triste felt a brief rush, her heart rushing up into her throat as the submersible dropped down, then a jolt as the craft hit the surface of the water.

External light rapidly began to fade as the sub sank deeper into the sea, further from the docking point. As darkness started to settle over them, Triste hit the lights and the interior was illuminated in a bright, artificial glow. Swallowing, she turned to look at Vergil. "Alright, let's go." In front of her, through the window, the craft's headlight beams cut through the inky blackness, two insignificant cones of light in the gloom.

Rio looked over his shoulder and nodded at Emilena. "Coming!" He was crouched in front of Foley, pressing the strip of gauze against the man's head as firmly as he could. He wasn't exactly a doctor, but even he could tell from Foley's pale skin and shivering that he wasn't doing so hot. Gently taking his hand, Rio pushed it up against the gauze and took his own away slowly. "I've gotta go for a second, but you have to keep the pressure on it, okay? And whatever you do, don't fall asleep asleep, or I'll kick your ass." Waiting for a moment to make sure Foley's hand didn't fall away, Rio pushed himself up and quickly hopped over to Emilena.

Drawing close, the boy grimaced as he saw the large section of flesh flapped back across her leg. "Aw... *shit*. Alright, I'm... I'll do it." He could feel himself getting light-headed as he stared at the raw, exposed flesh, but he bit his tongue, forcing himself back into the moment. *You can't afford to be a fucking pussy now!*

Bending, he picked up the shoelace and looked at it. The plastic part at the end would make it easier to poke through, and luckily the material wasn't *too* thick. It wouldn't exactly be a walk in the park though. Letting out a breath, Rio looked Emilena in the eyes. "I'll try and be quick..." Taking up the katana, he angled the point towards the skin adjacent from where Flora had already cut. It poked through with no resistance, and as Emilena howled in pain he gritted his teeth, fighting back the bile in his throat. Putting the weapon back down, he held the shoelace tightly between trembling fingers and tried to carefully push the lace through the cuts. He missed, and the hard plastic point scraped against the pink meat beneath her bloodstained fur. This time, Emilena wretched, and jerked her leg back instinctively.

"I'm sorry! I'm really sorry!" Rio cried out, his voice cracking. He held on tightly to her limb so it wouldn't move anymore. "I'll get it this time, I swear!" Trying to steady his shaking fingers, he prodded the lace forwards again, and this time it poked through the hole with only a little resistance. Ignoring Emilena's screaming and squealing, he determinedly kept working, pushing the next flap of skin. The whole procedure took several minutes, of stabbing through her flesh, and drawing the lace through. By the end, Rio was covered in a film of sweat, and his ears were ringing from the screams. Finally, he wrenched the shoelace through the last hole and pulled it tightly, fastening the sliced skin flap firmly against her leg. He sat back, exhausted, his hands coated in her blood. "I... I think it's done. Is it done?" From the state of her limb, he couldn't tell by sight if he'd helped or just made things worse.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 10, 2014, 01:31:16 PM**

As the submarine sank into the depths, Vergil calmed himself, trying his best to focus and clear his mind. He let the sea relax him... it was all muted blues down here, which gradually got blacker and blacker... all light was lost save for the floodlights on the sub as they descended.

"We're gonna see wreckage down there... most of Air France Flight 447 wasn't removed from the seabed... so keep that in mind. It might be a little eerie... but initiate scans for something like a cave or formation of rocks that could hide the waypoint... it's not obviously in the wreckage, since it would've been found in the investigation." Vergil pointed out now. "Once we get down there... I'm going to need to focus solely on keeping those creatures at bay. So it's more likely than not going to be up to you to locate the waypoint. If they built it down here, it can obviously function underwater, so look for faint energy signatures. The mining equipment will be giving off energy readings of course, but if you can isolate a solitary signal... that'll be it." he stated.

He regulated his breathing... and already, he could sense insanity. That's the only way he could describe it as: pure insanity. Creatures everywhere far below them losing their minds. Exhaling slowly, he took in a deep breath, and exhaled again. "It's pretty crazy down there. I can already sense it." he stated. "This isn't going to be easy... but then again what's been easy since starting this quest?" he asked, smiling a little to himself.

Varanus moved aside slightly, the bullet missing him by inches. By now however, numerous security squads were closing in on Marion. The entire deck was locked down and the marines were converging in the hallway. They were creating choke points and kill zones, and with Varanus charging after her, things were looking slimmer and slimmer for her the longer she stayed aboard the ship. "Give it up! How much longer do you intend on wasting my time?" Varanus asked. "You're a pathetic augmented human facing the most powerful warrior on this planet! I can guarantee you you won't last longer than I will!" he declared. Up ahead of her, a squad had set up around the corner, ready to shoot her the minute she appeared. Behind her stomped Varanus, driving her towards them.

He produced a grenade off his belt, levitating it into the air before pulling the pin out and hurling it her way...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 10, 2014, 03:02:25 PM**

(Voltaic Station)

The food court was an open air bazaar selling all sorts of food. Mostly seafood but farmed vegetables and fruit were also available.

Soren looked around. The noise from a calypso band and the crowd provided enough cover for the conversation.

A few minutes later, he returned with three plates, each with some fries and a seal-meat burger. Pouring ketchup on the burger, he spoke. "Axel's been captured. Most likely by Voltaic Station's security forces. Without him and the others, we can't get to that waypoint."

(*Falchion*)

Marion saw a coolant pipe in the corner. She drew her pistol and shot several holes in it, causing the boiling vapor to fill the hallway in a dense choking white cloud.

Luckily, the hallway was just barely tall and wide enough for her to fly. She propelled herself into the air and took off into the dense white cloud just as the grenade detonated behind her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 10, 2014, 03:41:55 PM**

Emilena's teeth were clenched so tight that she'd chipped several of them, and her skin was chalk-white under her matted fur. Throughout the operation she'd tried but been unable to keep herself from crying, wincing, and hyperventilating. Her long history of abuse was the only reason she managed to withstand this without passing out.

When Rio mentioned being done, she cracked her eyes open and reviewed her mangled leg. Like she'd commanded, he kept the laces incredibly tight, and as long as she didn't bend her leg it'll hold for a time. "That's...god...if we survive this I'm putting you through medical school, you're a natural."

Foley had slipped unconscious. Emilena pegged him with the survival kit and he cried out in protest. "Stay awake! I'll be with you in a second!" She glanced at Flora, who was still looking over the side of the boat. "You interested in helping? Cause I know you were just a bit out of your comfort zone, but you're one of the only healthy people on this boat--"

"It's...it's not that," Flora stammered. She continued staring unblinkingly into the water. "We have company..."

Around the boat, darkened shapes circled, smelling the blood left behind by Foley and Emilena. There were no dorsal fins sticking out of the water, but it was pretty obvious who their new arrivals were.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 10, 2014, 04:31:20 PM**

Thats a big problem then ' Marita said as she began munching on her fries ' we'd need to find some way of freeing them and finding vergil and Trieste, and given that they have them in custody and in cuffs we;ll have to make up either an airtight alibi, or we're going to have to come clean about why we are here and hope they buy it. the second option isnt something i relish doing either.'
- rose munched on her burger, which she found was delicious. " so we've been split up. great just great. we cant get down there without the others particularly Vergil.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 11, 2014, 05:00:49 AM**

"At least we don't need to worry about getting bored," Triste muttered over her shoulder as she angled the sub down, guiding them deeper into the thick, oppressive darkness. After a while, pieces of the wreckage of Flight 447 started to loom out of the black, illuminated by the lights. A broken wing, a torn section of the main body... the worn parts serving as a ghostly reminder of the lives that had been lost in the crash. As the craft moved past a part of the plane's tail, Triste thought she caught a glimpse of something shrinking away from the light. In spite of herself, she felt a shiver run up her spine.

She flicked on the sub's scanning system, and after a moment, information on the screen in front told her there *was* something ahead - a large cavernous space just off from the site of the wreck. It was at an even greater depth, maybe in some kind of crevice in the ocean floor. "Alright... I think we have something," she called across to Vergil. Turning the sub and accelerating down to where the cave was located, she looked back and cocked an eye at him. "I haven't seen anything out there. Maybe our luck' starting to -" A bleep from the radar system cut her off. Spinning around, she looked at the small screen, and saw with a sinking feeling that something was approaching from behind. "Goddammit, we've got company!" Triste swore, pushing the sub to go even faster.

Axel stumbled as the guard shoved him, almost tripping over his feet and spawling backwards. At the last second, he managed to catch himself, and he turned without saying anything else. As they were led down the corridors towards lock up, and towards whatever awaited them, he could only hope that Soren had understood that they were in trouble.

Rio looked to see what Flora was pointing out, and his eyes widened at the sight of the shapes moving below the surface, heading for their wreckage. "Oh, *come on...*" Gritting his teeth, he crawled across the floor to a section of the railing that had almost been snapped free. Straining, he pulled at it and managed to wrench it off completely. One end of it hadn't been broken cleanly, and the metal ended in a sharp, dangerous point.

Rio moved slowly to the edge of the boat and peered over, raising his makeshift spear, matted strands of his hair plastered across his face. One of the sharks started to drift closer, and he jabbed the metal down with a yell. He missed, the point splashing down in the water harmlessly, but the shape jerked away. "Help Foley!" he called over his shoulder, scanning the water for any more of them - but the sea was dark, and it was hard to pick them out. "I'll try to keep them back!" There was a thud on the underside of the small, fragile wreckage that was their only hope of survival, and Rio jabbed the 'spear' down again. He still didn't hit anything. "Crap!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 11, 2014, 09:17:41 AM**

Vergil's orange eyes widened as he saw the wreckage of the Airbus... landing gear stuck up before them, and he could only imagine what it must've been like that night on the aircraft; terrifying didn't come close to describing it. Looking around them, Vergil nodded once as Triste said she picked up a cave or crevasse in the ocean floor beyond the wreckage.

"OK... head towards that. That might be it. Perfect place to hide it, after all, given what we've seen so far of them." Vergil commented, but his muted jubilation was short-lived, as all of a sudden, their radar picked up incoming targets. "Greeeat." the gecko responded. More than two miles below the surface and they were under attack.

"OK I just... need to focus." he said. "You just get us to that waypoint safely..." He closed his eyes, sensing everything from fish to sharks to whales headed their way. But there was something else too... something he didn't recognize, and it was big. Furrowing his brow, he projected an invisible wall outward, trying to calm them... trying to stop them. It was bizarre... he could enter their minds, but it was mostly just instincts he felt... and something driving them as well; something so insane, he could feel it clawing at his mind.

A great white suddenly appeared ahead of them, emerging from the murk into their light, but it stopped a good 25 feet away as Vergil managed to arrest it. Vergil's lips pursed, a frown creasing his face as he continued concentrating...

The group was eventually led to lockup, in the middle of the facility. Their possessions were taken, and they were placed in two separate holding cells behind barriers of an extremely durable and clear material. They had a wall-mounted cot and a stainless steel toilet with sink, and that was the extent of their amenities.

"All right... we can do this the easy way, or the hard way." the lead security officer stated. "You can tell us exactly why you tried to sink this station, damage a room, cost us millions, and otherwise initiated an act of sabotage... or we'll extract it from you via other means." He pulled up a chair outside the cell, and looked at Axel. If he didn't say anything useful, there were various methods to be employed to make him talk of course.

Varanus had to give her credit: she was resourceful... at running at that is. But she was heading right into one of his squads, who promptly opened fire on her the closer she got. They aimed for wings and body, attempting to bring her down either dead or alive. Varanus charged through the steam cloud and this time, reached out with his mind, ripping a part the ceiling off directly over her, hoping to bring it down right on top of her and trap her. He was now losing his patience with this coward...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 11, 2014, 12:40:00 PM**

(Voltaic Station)

Soren swallowed his bite of seal-burger as a waiter passed by them. He smiled. "We don't need an alibi if we're staff.

He looked around. "Here's what we do. We all go to my room and call for room service saying that we need new towels or something. We then jump the staff member and steal their clothes. Depending if the worker's male or female, one of us will then get into the locker room and swipe additional uniforms. Sound like an idea."

(*Falchion*)

Marion's exoskeleton was immune to small arms fire but her flying frame's wings were shredded by them; luckily, the engines were small and shielded and she can fly ó albeit with reduced manueverability even with the loss of the frame's wings. Her HUD warned about the falling ceiling and automatically boosted her away from the falling ceiling slab.

She smiled as she saw numerous cables and pipes. Mindful that Varanus was approaching, Marion quickly sliced through all the pipes and cables, hoping that at least one of them was vital.

She then descended and ducked behind a corner. When one of the troopers rounded the corner, she stabbed him with her plasma blade and took his rifle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 11, 2014, 04:01:55 PM**

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theres only one problem with that, security. these guys dont mess around with security' Marita said. ' so this had better work. ' we can pass ourselves off as new on the job.'Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 11, 2014, 04:13:38 PM**

Emilena furrowed her brow. "We can use the sharks to our advantage," she said. "Give me my katana back."

Dragging herself to the edge of the boat, she waited until a shark attempted to ram the bottom, and sliced it open. "Everybody hang near the middle!" she yelled, realizing she should have said that sooner.

As the wounded shark spilled black blood into the water, the other sharks went into a frenzy. The sea turned pink with bloody froth as the sharks tore apart their comrade. Flora, who hadn't reacted to Emilena's command fast enough, splashed facefirst into the water with a shriek.

Emilena reacted with lightning-fast reflexes. "Rio!" Grabbing Flora by the tail, she pulled at her to get her back on the boat. Rio, luckily, reacted almost as quickly and together they dragged Flora back on the boat.

Flora returned, spluttering and shell-shocked, and only appeared to have skin-deep wounds. But the action had unbalanced the boat, and with a cry the whole thing threatened to tip over.

"Balance yourself! Lie flat!" ordered Emilena. Their best hope was to spread their weight around the boat. *If it tips, we're all done for...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 12, 2014, 02:29:55 PM**

"Son of a bitch!" Triste swore as the great white suddenly appeared in the spotlights. She didn't quite flinch, although her hands tightened on the controls. To her relief, it stopped before it got close to them and she sped past it, ignoring it's black eyes which seemed to follow them malevolently as they passed. She glanced across, and seeing Vergil's face creased in concentration, realised he must be holding it back somehow. Many more dots had sprung up on the radar by now, and although they were following they didn't seem to be getting any closer either. "Alright, keep it up!" she called to the gecko, her voice a little harder than she'd intended. "We're almost there, just keep them back a little longer!"

The ocean floor began to slope down steeply, and Triste pushed the sub hard to follow it along as quickly as the could. The scanning system indicated that the space it had reported was getting closer... closer... The spotlights illuminated crowds of smaller marine life scattering in terror as they followed the floor's surface... when suddenly their light vanished, swallowed by the absolute darkness of the yawning chasm that stretched before them. Triste was taken aback for a moment, the huge opening of the cave reminding her of the mouth of a huge creature, inviting them to come in... before snapping shut.

Shaking her head to get rid of the unwelcome image, she shouted back to Vergil. "We're here! I'm taking us in..." Gritting her teeth, Triste accelerated the tiny craft forwards, through the entrance to the cave and to whatever awaited them inside.

Axel stared back through the clear barrier at the man who'd just taken a seat outside the cell. They weren't dead, so it looked like these guys really *were* the security force. A relieved flutter ran through his chest, although given their current situation relief probably wasn't the right emotion to feel. That being said... it was possible someone here *was* involved with Kalis somehow, and the only thing keeping them safe at the moment was that they didn't know why he was here. Telling this guy everything wasn't a good idea - it could put Lily, himself and the others in danger.

"Look," Axel started, his shoe squelching as he took a step forwards. "I'm sorry about the damage we both caused. We didn't mean to cost you money, and... and believe me, we *didn't* want to sink the station."

He swallowed then continued. "Me and the other woman you brought in were both poisoned during the trip over here. Someone spiked us with some kind of drug, and it was serious enough for us to be taken to the infirmary when we arrived. You can check some kind of record for that can't you?" Axel shook his head. "When they released us, I, ah... I guess the symptoms hadn't worn off yet and then one thing led to another and... well, you saw what happened." He could hear how feeble it sounded, and spread his arms as if to say *honest mistake, buddy.* "Look, it's… blame me for this, not her. I can't remember why, but… I thought it'd be a good idea at the time. I made her do it." Then he had another thought. *Can't hurt to* *try...* "Actually, could you let me know if the gecko staying in that room is still around? I'd like to, you know.. apoligise for ruining his vacation."

Rio did as Emilena commanded, his hands still full of fur that he'd yanked from Flora while pulling her back onto the wreckage. He pressed his cheek against the floor, trying to keep as still as he could while the injured shark was torn apart by his buddies. The frenzy caused the boat wreckage to rock, and Rio's fists clenched down on the person lying next to him - his eyes were squeezed shut so he couldn't tell who it was.

He felt a cold sensation running along one foot where he'd lost his shoe, and with mounting horror he realised it was the sea lapping around his ankles. Their wreckage was beginning to take on water. "Oh fuck... we're dead. We're dead!" he cried out, his mouth suddenly feeling as dry as sandpaper.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 12, 2014, 03:32:49 PM**

The boat was indeed sinking due to the increased choppiness of the water. Emilena knew that two things had to be done very quickly; they needed to distance themselves from the shark frenzy, and they needed additional flotation devices.

She mentally cataloged their inventory; other than the outfits worn by Rio, Foley, and herself, they had only a very basic survival kit and her katana. Foley's outfit needed to stay relatively intact in order to keep him as warm as possible, and Emilena's shirt and pants were already occupied preventing her leg from bleeding out. That means...

"I'm sorry Rio, I'm going to need your shirt and pants. Fast as you can!"

The winds were picking up, but the red skies indicated to Emilena that it was merely a windstorm, and not a continuation of the tropical storm that had almost sank them before.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 12, 2014, 08:23:00 PM**

Vergil finally relaxed with an exhale as they entered the cave. "That took more out of me than I care to admit." he stated, rolling his shoulders now as he flexed his arms. "There's something bigger out there... it doesn't feel like anything I've ever read about. I'm not sure what it is... it can't fit in here thankfully but... I'm worried about it on our way out. While blowing ballast isn't exactly advisable, since we'd have to make our way back to the station on the surface, but... still let's just get the waypoint... speaking of which." He nodded ahead of him. Out of the blackness of the cave could be seen the pale blue glow of the waypoint's console. "That's it. Let's hope this one's easy... considering it is by far the hardest of the waypoints so far to reach." he mumbled.

"OK, set us down close by... I'm gonna go suit up... remember, we can't mess around out here. We probably have about 12 minutes of oxygen with the mixture they use at depths like this, so we need to move fast." He reminded her.

Pulling out the bulky diving suit, Vergil began sliding into it, pulling up the sleeves and beginning to zip up.

"That's none of your concern where he is... we suspect you were targeting him... or something on this station, given he wasn't in his room. And since I just would LOVE to believe your stupid story but can't, due to the fact they wouldn't release druggies from the infirmary, you're down one strike. And since you also stupidly tipped your hand about what's most precious to you, I think I'll start with the woman you seem so keen to protect." He went over to Lily's cell, opened the door, and dragged her by the hair to a unique looking chair out in the main room.

Throwing her roughly into the device, leg and wrist restraints soon snapped into place automatically with smooth hisses. "So here's how this works... you pay us back NOW... and yes we accept bank accounts, houses, cars, whatever you have... OR..." Without warning, he jammed a knife into Lily's left arm, hoping to wake her up. The knife collided with her bone, and he slowly, very slowly, began to peel her muscle from her bone, an extremely excruciating process by any stretch of the imagination as he glanced over at Axel with a wicked grin.

But as Marion rounded the corner and killed the trooper, she was facing thirty others, all with their guns trained on her. "End of the road." One said. "Drop the gun... kick off that goddamn frame, and you don't get pumped full of holes, got it?"

By now Varanus was coming up fast behind her too, having thrown himself down the corridor at great velocity till he landed a few feet behind her. "Oh well this was predictable." the big monitor stated with a yawn as he stood behind her. She'd been slicing through conduits that powered lights to various rooms off the hallway, but nothing serious. "You finally ready to stop this silly nonsense?" he asked her.

At Pelvanida, Kojuuro waited in the tree outside the factory. The city was in ruins around him, reduced to ashes by Kalis's fleet but he was ready with his sniper rifle. He kept it trained on the entrance to the factory. His friends were coming here... his bugs had told him so after all. He was hella ready... hella ready... hella ready...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 13, 2014, 09:41:54 AM**

Triste spotted the console in the distance, and she brought the sub in closer to the ghostly blue glow. "Something big?" she muttered over her shoulder as Vergil started to pull his suit on. "Let's step it up then... the quicker we're out of here, the better." If whatever was out there really was too big to fit into the cave, then she really didn't like the idea of sticking around to meet it. *This is why I hate the ocean...* she thought to herself bitterly.

Bringing the sub up close to the console so they'd only have a short distance to reach it, Triste let go of the controls and sat up, moving across the cramped vehicle to reach her own diving suit. Pulling it off the rack, she spotted a small supply of spear guns lined up beside it, and tossed one across to Vergil. "Just in case," she shrugged. Tugging the suit on, Triste almost felt comforted by the heavy material. Sealing it closed, she threw the strap of her own spear gun over one shoulder and started checking her equipment. Light on her helmet... it worked. Her suit... didn't have any tears or breaches that she could see. Oxygen tank...

Triste blinked at it then swore. "Son of a bitch..." Flipping the meter over, she held it out so Vergil could see. It showed she only had seven minutes of air left. "Whoever's in charge of maintaining the equipment should have their neck broken," she muttered, shaking her head. "I'll do as much as I can to help you out there. Maybe if we're lucky, this one'll just give us the coordinates straight away."

Axel felt his mouth start to twist, his hands start to clench into fists as the guard sank the knife into Lily's arm... but then he forced himself to relax. This bastard enjoyed his work,that much was obvious, and if he showed how much pain it was causing him, Axel was willing to bet he wouldn't stop straight away.

"You're making a mistake," he said lowly, keeping his voice even. "We *weren't* targeting anyone, and we *were* just released. Check her... her other arm. That's a cessation patch. If you're going to blame anyone for what happened, blame your *fucking* staff for letting us out too early." His voice cracked slightly when the guard twisted the knife, and at the soft squelch of tearing muscle he couldn't prevent a slight wince from creasing the corner of his eye. *She can heal... she can heal...* he kept telling himself, desperately trying to ignore the enraged buzzing in his head, a sensation he hadn't felt since at the Purifier base six months ago. *If you're gonna help us Soren... you've gotta hurry the hell up...*

Terrified, his face pressed against the wreckage, Rio took a second to take in Emilena's words. Nodding, he gingerly sat up, trying not to roll over the side of the rocking boat into a watery, toothy grave. The fancy shirt and pants that he'd been wearing while on the cruise ship weren't looking good, but as he pulled them off he could see they weren't torn enough to prevent them from being useful.

"Here..." he said, holding them out to Emilena with a shaking arm - soaked to the bone and with the wind starting to pick up, he was really starting to feel the cold. Shivering, he lay back down and crawled over to the edge. "If you need me to tie anything to the... to the side of the boat, I'll do it," he called back through teeth that were starting to chatter.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 13, 2014, 09:53:40 AM**

Lily was abruptly awoken by an incredible burning sensation in her arm. Dizzily she tried to pull her arm away from whatever was doing it, only to have the source hold her back.

"Aaaugh!!!" she screamed, when she opened her eyes and realized what was happening. "What the hell are you doing!? *Why!?*" Her eyes went wide and she shuddered uncontrollably.

As soon as Emilena had Rio's clothing, She splashed the pants in the water, thoroughly soaking them, and then tied the legs shut. Waving them through the air, she trapped a pocket of air in the pants, making a rudimentary flotation device. This she stuffed into a pocked of wood on the broken half of the boat, temporarily stopping the steady sinking.

Next, she used her katana to slice the shirt lengthwise, doubling its width. Then she sat up, holding the shirt out against the wind. Had to be the worst sail ever used in the history of maritime voyages, but slowly the wind gave them a direction. Within a few minutes, her whole upper body felt clammy and her fists and back were burning with cramps, but soon the frothy red circle of frenzied sharks was behind them, instead of around them.

Panting heavily, Emilena dropped the sail. She felt like she could barely stay awake. "How...is...everyone?" she gasped. "Rio, can you refill the flotation device?" Already it was deflating.

Foley's eyes were still wide awake, and it appeared that the rollicking boat and pungent smell of blood had done the job of keeping him awake. Flora was still on her stomach, crying and clutching her front.

"Flora, it's okay," Emilena was slightly concerned at Flora's overreaction to what appeared to hve been superficial injuries. But then again, the poor girl wasn't used to life-threatening situations... "We're out. Come on, get up. "

"No..." the folf whimpered, tears streaming from her eyes. "They bit my..."

Emilena sighed and crawled. "You looked fine. Come on, roll over, let me check. Is your tail dislocated or something?" She forcefully pushed Flora onto her back.

As Emilena had noticed before, Flora looked to have suffered a number of minor-to-deep scrapes on her chest, abdomen, and legs. None looked like bite marks, Emilena suspected they were due to scraping against shark skin, which was composed of rows of sharp denticles. Then, she noticed Flora's penis. The top half was completely missing.

"...my flytrap..." Flora sobbed. She curled in the fetal position, clutching her crotch.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 13, 2014, 09:57:19 AM**

Vergil caught the gun, checking it out as he nodded at her. Best be prepared for any contingency, after all. As she began to suit up and tested out her equipment, she held the gauge out to him after she swore, noting it was showing a depleted level of oxygen mixture. "Mmmm..." he said softly, sinking into thought as he stared at it. She mentioned supporting him as best she could but... he shook his head, and started to unzip his suit. "Why don't we switch? This way you have plenty of oxygen, can focus on covering us, and I have more incentive to work fast to secure the coordinates." he suggested.

Certainly there was a degree of altruism here, but he didn't want to admit it. He was more concerned about her than he was himself, so he quickly invented the solution as a viable suggestion. Whether she'd take it or not... that was on her.

The security officer was trained to detect these subtle shifts in emotion from his victims, and could see that while the rat was trying to suppress it, he was clearly affected by this. It was just the ever so slightly detectable twitches he made, the small tells that told him he was accomplishing his objective. "Oooh this is going to be unpleasant... I can already smell the blood and tissue as I start peeling it back..." He continued slicing the muscle from the arm, severing the tendons slowly one by one. "She's not going to be able to move her arm pretty soon." He responded with a smirk.

"Trying to blame us for your sabotage? Nice try... but it doesn't work that way. now once again... what was your objective?" he asked, slicing through another tendon, and angling it it towards the rat so he could take a nice look. It was then his other victim finally woke up, and he grinned sickly at her.

"Hurts, doesn't it? But then again... anytime you cross Judaken... this is what you get. Who are you working for? What was your goal?" he asked again, turning back to the rat.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 14, 2014, 11:31:01 AM**

Triste shook her head, gently putting her hand over Vergil's to stop him from removing his own suit. "No, it's too risky. If I start running out of air, I can just get back in. But we need you out there to open up the waypoint - you'll need the oxygen more than me. Besides, I'm a big girl... I can hold my breath." Taking her hand away, she gave him a small smile which was partially genuine. "Thanks for the concern."

Sealing her suit up to the top, she turned and made her way to the airlock at the back of the sub. "You ready? The sooner we get this done and get back on dry land, the sooner I can relax." She considered. "Within reason, of course."

Axel bit the inside of his cheek to stop himself from shouting out as the officer sliced even deeper into Lily. "Goal? *Objective*?!" he said eventually, his voice sounding oddly quiet against the ringing in his ears. His legs felt shaky, and he was having to force them not to tremble. "We just came here. To have. A holiday... That's the truth. I swear it." *You fucking psycho...*

Lily's screaming tore itself into Axel's brain, and for a moment he nearly lost control, almost flew at the clear barrier in a futile effort to kick, punch, *force* his way through, to wrap his hands around the officer's throat and squeeze. Anything to stop him from hurting Lily.

Still shivering, Rio nodded and moved over to where the pants serving as a flotation device had been stuffed. Pulling them up, he pulled open the end a little and waved them through the air, the movement making him feel as though ice was being rubbed against his skin. With the pants filled with a little more air, Rio leaned over and started to stuff them into the broken section of the boat, his hands brushing against the surface of the sea.

He heard the commotion behind him, and as he worked he looked over his shoulder to see what Flora was crying about. It didn't look like she was *too* badly hurt... Then he saw what state her penis was in, and his stomach started to churn. Gulping, Rio turned to throw up... just in time to see the sea explode in front on him, and the ugly, predatory head of a shark lunge from the depths. Shrieking, Rio tried to scramble back, but before he could yank his hands free, the shark bit down on his right arm, the teeth tearing through skin and shredding muscle like they were paper. He screamed, kicking his legs as he fought to pull free.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 14, 2014, 11:48:20 AM**

Soren, Marita, Marie and Rose were now inside Soren's room. The room itself was very lavsh with replicas of Art Deco paintings hanging on the wall. Most of the furniture had the streamlined bronze and metallic features that were the hallmark of Art Deco style.

Soren sat on a chair and templed his hands. "All right, first things first: we need to look in this room for anything we can use as a weapon," he said. "We'll need all the advantages if we hope to subdue someone."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2014, 12:25:24 PM**

Lily screamed again at the feeling of the burning pain in her arm. For once, most of the pain in the room was hers.

...*most*. She quickly became aware that the third-most pained individual was Axel, emotionally traumatized at witnessing what was happening to her. But even as she screamed again, she felt her inquisitive side take over. Why was the guard who was torturing her feeling more pain than Axel?

Concentrating on his mind, she used the knife as a bond that connected the two of them. As she searched his psyche, she settled on the problem. This guard had felt chronic and unrelenting chest pains since he was eleven.

"Oh dear..." she muttered, suddenly feeling a pang of sorrow for the man with the knife. Honestly, living a life where every waking moment one's chest would suddenly ignite sounds even worse than her current situation. No wonder he took a job torturing others. He was going to die young, and Lily sensed that he knew and resented it.

Glaring at the guard, Lily took a deep breath and concentrated. Slowly, the next moment his chest panged with a deep aching, she absorbed it. And the next one. Slowly, the guard's failing heart repaired itself, until he got to experience the first five minutes of his life with a painless circulatory system.

"You aren't going to die at thirty now," she said, her voice quavering but eyes locked unwaveringly on his. "And occupational scruples aside, you'll be able to sleep well tonight." She coughed violently, an uncontrollable croup the guard should recognize all too well.

Flora was sobbing into the deck.

"Flora..." Emilena dragged her broken body over to comfort the folf. "Look, it's not the end of the world."

"No...no..." Flora pushed her away with her elbow; her hands still hadn't stopped clutching her crotch.

"I'm serious! Flora, listen to me." Emilena grabbed her head and forced her to focus on her eyes. "Penises grow back. I swear."

Flora sniffed. "They...they do?"

Emilena smiled hollowly. "Of course they do. Like a lizard's tail. Trust me, you'll heal."

Suddenly behind them, she heard a whirlwind of commotion. Swearing, she dove forward and grabbed Rio before the shark could drag him to a watery grave. The shark lurched dangerously, threatening to tip the whole boat over. Gritting her teeth, Emilena punched it right in the nose, where the majority of its sensory organs are. Suddenly the shark spasmed wildly, and Emilena shouted at Flora, "My sword!"

Flora, to her credit, responded quickly, and Emilena embedded it in the shark's head. "Help me get it on the boat!" she yelled at both Rio and Flora. She didn't want to lose their first source of food.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2014, 08:37:40 PM**

Marita was going through the drawers looking for anything that might be useful as a weapon. ' you find anything we might be able to use. because All i see is this book about a man called Gideon..' she sighed slamming the drawer shut.' a books arent going to get the job done..' she said, staring at a painting hanging on the wall that showed a neon lighthouse..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 14, 2014, 08:46:59 PM**

Soren looked at the complementary bar. He sighed. "Great and I was hoping to have a drink to relax."

He then opened the bar and found that the only things servicable as a weapon were two glass beer bottles. "I've got two beer bottles in the hotel bar." He looked at the bottles. "Expensive ones too. Since there's four of us, two of us are either going to be brawling or using other weapons."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 14, 2014, 10:22:30 PM**

He stopped himself from fully undressing, and pulled his suit back on. "Right... well... I suppose you're right. Anyway... just keep me covered while I access the waypoint and get the coordinates." Placing the helmet over his head, it was a bad fit. His snout was too long, so he had to angle his head downward to cram into it.

"Mmph... let's do this..." He said, entering the airlock now as he sealed the door behind them and began to flood the chamber. The water entered the sub, seeping around their ankles and beginning to build up now. It rose past their knees, over their chests, and soon, they were submerged within a minute. Pressing the button to allow them egress, the lock slid open and Vergil led the way, the water pressure out here immense and making it next to impossible to move. Exhaling heavily thanks to the exertion, Vergil watched some bubbles ascend from his suit as he turned with difficulty towards the waypoint. Fortunately, these suits were mechanically reinforced, but that didn't mean much at a depth of over two miles.

"Wish I was a fish..." he muttered, stomping heavily and laboriously towards the console. "Amazing this damn thing hasn't been crushed under here. They really knew what they were doing..."

Exerting himself to move forward, it took much longer than he wanted to actually approach the console. "Should've backed up to it instead of faced it..." He commented, as it would've made the walk far less grueling, but at least he'd made it. "OK... let's see..." Reaching out, he activated the console, which sprang to life, throwing the cavern into an eerie blue light. A beam of light shot out towards his head, and he waited for the scan to take place.

"Greetings traveler... the path to power lies within. Hold please for confirmation."

"So uh... China or Egypt?" Vergil asked her, trying to look behind him.

"I don't think so. You ruined a guest's room and tried to sink the station... so let's try this..." Suddenly though, he felt his irritation gone, and he glanced at Lily now, and at her strange words. And then she coughed just like him. "What?" he asked here, raising a brow and suddenly confused.

Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he suddenly slapped her roughly across her face in a violent backhand motion. "What are you playing at?" he snapped. "You one of those freaks from the Scorched Earth War or the Rebellion? That explains some things!" he harshly said, his voice grating as he wiped his mouth again from the spittle.

"Look... I want answers NOW!" shouted, backhanding her again. Snarling, he grabbed the defibrillator from the medical pod and charged it up, tearing it towards her. He put the electrodes onto her thigh, shocking it and setting her pants on fire. He then proceeded to violently beat the flames out. "Well? What's your objective? Vacation my ass! You're here on sabotage! But you don't tell me now... you'll be telling someone much worse than me, got it? Someone who's a freak like you!" he snarled, whirling around to Axel now as a small flame still burned on Lily's pants. He either didn't notice or didn't care.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 14, 2014, 11:13:52 PM**

Triste struggled to follow behind Vergil - she wasn't weak, but even for her movement at this depth was uncomfortably restrictive. The sound of her breathing was tinny and unnervingly lifeless in the closed confined of her helmet. Clutching the speargun tightly, her eyes scanned the darkness all around, the flashlight on the side of her helmet doing little to alleviate it.

Reaching Vergil, Triste clutched onto the side of the console with one hand and scrutinised the waypoint. "How about Egypt? Could give you another chance to tan," she said drily, awkwardly twisting around to look around them. Still clear. Turning back, she glanced down at her oxygen meter and with a feeling of relief saw she had a good amount of air left.

Axel stared through the barrier, horrified, as Lily's legs went up in flames. He saw her pants burning, the blood dripping from her arm... and finally they settled on her own, taking in her pained expression as she stared back at him. Axel blinked.

Suddenly, he ran forward and slammed his fist against the clear barrier. "Just stop it, you fucking prick! Stop hurting her!" he screamed, his voice breaking. "I'm telling you the truth! I... I promise!"

As Emilena stabbed the shark in the head, Rio lay on the floor and looked at his injured arm, at the torn, mangled skin hanging loosely from his forearm, and moaned. Vaguely, from somewhere far away, he heard her telling him to help lift the shark onto the boat, and he turned painfully to look at her. "Arrggh!" he informed her.

Still, he leaned over the side with his good arm, and with Flora doing most of the work they started pulling the dead shark up. "Bastard! *Asshole*!" he shrieked, dealing the corpse a might kick in the side of the head.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2014, 11:35:47 PM**

"I...just *healed you!*" Lily gasped in outrage. "Your chest pains are *gone*, I've lengthened your lifespan! And *this* is how you reply?"

She took a deep breath. "You've been given a new lease on life, and I want to hear you acknowledge that. You have lived with anger and resentment in your heart, and have reacted by living an existence dedicated to hurting others. Well, I've removed the source of your inner pain, so let me know what you're going to do about that." She spat blood on the ground, but continued glaring at the guard. "The only type of person I hold no remorse for is one given a miracle but who refuses to take advantage of it."

Emilena took several ragged breaths. "God dammit. I'm sorry kid." Grabbing his shirt, she quickly wrapped the arm up as best as she could. The shirt soon became soaked with blood, but if she held it there long enough, it should soon coagulate. "I think you're okay. It looks bad, but you just used it fully while dragging that bitch onto the boat, so you haven't lost any function." *Unlike me...* she thought wistfully, as her leg slowly and concernedly grew numb.

Slicing a chunk of meat off, she tossed it to Flora. "Keep that on Flora jr. It'll reduce the swelling." Likewise, she stuck a chunk of meat on Foley's forehead. "Hey there, tecchie..." she said softly. "You still with us?"

Foley nodded. His mouth appeared too dry to speak.

"Emi?" asked Flora in a tiny voice. "...are we going to die?"

"No!" Emilena snapped viciously. "We're all still alive, and dammit I'm gonna keep it that way! We just need to find land, there's got to be islands around here!"

Foley made a sound.

"What's that champ?" asked Emilena. He was whispering something, so she stuck her ear near his mouth.

"...No...land...hundreds...mile...radius..."

"What's he saying?" asked Flora.

"He says there were several dotted islands north of here," Emilena spoke up hastily. "The wind is on our side. Let's just drift and make as much distance as we can from the shark frenzy. If anyone's hungry, we got shark."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 15, 2014, 03:14:01 PM**

Vergil waited patiently for the machine to complete its scans, and finally, the map appeared, which fortunately for him required no fighting or interacting with questions or anything like that. Perhaps his neural pattern had been recognized... he did vaguely remember this after all.

Waiting as the projection rotated around, Vergil touched the one in Egypt, letting the coordinates pop up as he committed them to memory, murmuring them a few times to get them down. "OK... let's get outta here..." He said, turning now as he tried to battle the current that threatened to push them back into the cave. "Certainly one of the least hospitable locations... though I think Egypt will be just as bad..." Grunting, he grasped hold of the sub and began to haul himself along the side rails, tugging himself through what felt like glue as he inched his way towards the airlock.

Finally nearing the door, he looked behind him. "You doing OK?" he asked, pausing at the entrance. "We should get out of here as soon as possible." he informed her, sensing something else up above... though it was very far away...

The interrogator glared down at her as she responded, Axel beating his fist against the barrier rather uselessly. "A second lease on life? That's fantastic!" he responded with mock enthusiasm. "I also get paid exceedingly well to do what I do... you think gratitude is going to change me? I didn't ask for your help... if you even helped me!" He stated. He noticed the fire burning on her pants now, and he grinned, letting it burn.

"You don't realize who you crossed... but you soon will. Even if if this was just some BIG mistake as you claim... you owe us millions... so how you figure on repaying that, huh?" he asked, going over to retrieve a probe from the wall. "So... you want to give us your bank accounts? Homes? Cars? We can start with those to consider settling the debt. Or if you like... you can sign up for work with us... for probably the rest of your lives... with next to no compensation aside from room and board... choice is yours!" He then jammed the probe into the back of Lily's neck, penetrating her spine as he set the voltage to deliver painful shocks throughout her nervous system... which of course would wreak havoc with it even in short bursts.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 16, 2014, 12:42:45 AM**

Lily screamed as electric charges wracked her body, but even then she thought, *You...shouldn't...have...touched me...*

Using the probe to form a mental connection, she concentrated on the cells in his brain and quickly caused them to overgrow. Simultaneously she accelerated what problems remained with his weakened heart, and expanded specific muscles in order to pinch shut the nerve tracts connecting his brain and spinal column to the rest of his body. In milliseconds, he was a quadriplegic experiencing lethal brain cancer, a heart attack, and multiple strokes at the same time. She made sure to shut down his nervous system first, so he wouldn't feel any pain.

<Axel,> she thought hurriedly, trusting the bond they shared as husband and wife, *<I need you to spit on the other guards. All of them. Fast!*!>

The other guards were still standing outside the bars of the jail. In seconds, the interrogator would show the signs of what Lily had done to him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 16, 2014, 12:44:35 AM**

Triste nodded. It was starting to become slightly, just *slightly* hard to breath so it seemed as though they'd timed it pretty well. "Yeah... yeah, I'm fine." Pulling herself along behind Vergil, Triste grasped the edge of the airlock, dragged herself through. Activating the system, the turned to him as the water drained out of the compartment. "No arguments from me there," she muttered. For some reason, this place more than the others truly made her feel like they didn't belong there, and if they could get out quick, so much the better.

Opening the hatch to the interior of the sub, Triste glanced back, and saw Vergil seemed... unnerved. "What is it? What's wrong?" Without waiting for an answer, she hurried across to the controls and started up the engines. If something was making him nervous, it could only mean bad news - and she didn't fancy around to find out how bad it was.

As the officer slumped to the floor, Axel's jaw tightened, his teeth clenching together. If this didn't work... Hearing Lily's quiet voice in his head, he hurried across to one corner of the cell's barrier two guards were standing around, chatting... but the noise the officer had made caused them to start turning around. They looked close enough... he hoped they were, at least. Mustering his strength, and drawing as much spit in his mouth as he could, Axel pressed his face against one of the slots in the barrier, and spat as hard as he could at them.

Flinching back, the guards both turned to look at Axel in disgust. "What the fu-" Suddenly, they both seized up... and after a second, they both crumpled to the floor like a puppet with it's strings cut. Breathing heavily, his heart hammering against his chest, Axel fell to his knees and tried to reach his hand through one of the small slots in the bottom. He just managed to get his fingers around the belt of the guard closest to him, and with a grunt he pulled him slowly closer.

Patting him down, Axel felt his head grow light. He couldn't find anything.. no keys... "Dammit, *come on!*" He felt his fingers close around a clear strip of plastic in the guard's pocket. Pulling it out, he could see it was some kind of key card. Axel quickly stood up and pressed his face against the barrier, scanning the sides of the cell for a slot. *There!* To the right of his cell, he could see a reader for the card. Forcing his hand through, he awkwardly rotated his wrist and after several attempts, he managed to draw the card through. For a second nothing happened, and his stomach plummeted. Then there was a small *beep*, and the clear barrier rose up slowly.

Feelinghis legs start to shake, Axel rushed out and hurried over to Lily. "Oh god... oh god, are you okay?! Are you..." Bending down, he clutched one of the mechanical straps binding her wrists and pulled against it as hard as he could, but it was too strong. Nothing budged. "*Son of a bitch!*" Gritting his teeth, Axel rushed around the chair, looking for some kind of release mechanism. Nothing... nothing... Then his eyes grew wide as he saw a small switch down low on one of the legs, covered in dried blood. Axel quickly flipped it, and the restraints on Lily's wrists and ankles slid back. Putting his arm around her to support her as best as he could, he gently pulled her out of the seat. "It's alright, I got you." He shuddered, nerves in tatters. "Holy crap..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 16, 2014, 12:58:52 AM**

"I'll be fine..." Lily panted, getting on her own two feet. Already she felt her body healing. Unlike most people, she could push her wounded body to the limit without fear of permanent injury. "You were so brave," she hugged him, then left several large kisses on his face in relief. "I love you so much!"

Her bond with Axel was stronger than she thought; he had just proved capable of serving as a conduit for her powers. Even to the limited extent of his saliva, if he could touch someone, she could affect them.

"Oh God, Axel..." Her glance caught one of the men she'd murdered in probably the worst way possible. "I'd always wondered whether my healing powers could be reversed...I mean, it made sense...but I never wanted to actually *do it* to someone...such a horrible death..."

She let Axel lead the way down the hallway. "We need to get back to the residential area; that's where Soren and the others will be looking for us. Were you conscious when they brought us here? Can you get us back there?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 16, 2014, 09:12:49 AM**

But just as Vergil was about to explain they needed to get back to the surface NOW... the feeling passed. The pain was resolved, and he sensed a resolution to the problem. "Never mind... it's worked itself out." He commented. That made things extremely easier on him now. But little did he know, another hammer blow was about to fall...

"Let's just get to the surface. We'll feed them a story that we need more time. We found the source, but it's a tricky solution, so we're going to have to plan this out... then we get out of here on the next boat and don't look back. There's no way they'd agree for us to shut down their operations anyway. We'll let them figure that out on their own." he stated, shaking his head.

Proceeding to remove his suit, he scurried over to his phone and tapped out the coordinates into a note, to ensure he wouldn't have to remember them. He still muttered the numbers over and over again even as he tapped away on the screen. "OK! Got the next set of coordinates! We're good to go!" he informed her. He braced himself, as he knew what was coming next...

In Corona, the sun shone brightly down on the white buildings and created the dazzling effect the city was so well-known for. The government building that housed the secret headquarters of the Federation's Special Forces was as non-descript as they came. It resembled a library, or some other office building. It didn't seem like an important place at all, but important it was.

But someone had talked... or more rather... someone had been *made* to talk. A pale looking gargoyle gecko wrapped in a red cloak stood on the path leading to the building. He couldn't smirk, thanks to the partial mask covering the lower half of his face, but his eyes blazed in determination and triumph. He had finally found them... and he was going to send a message...

Beginning to walk forward now, the red-garbed gecko strode towards the building, looking for all the world as if he belonged there...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 16, 2014, 08:15:37 PM**

I could use a drink' Rose said, spaking up from searching in the closet, which was full of clothes. ' got any ginger ale? nothing in here but clothes. and ghitting someone with a shirt isnt going to get the job done..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 16, 2014, 08:29:44 PM**

Soren went to the hotel bar and tossed Rose a can of ginger ale.

"What about the bathroom?" he asked.

He then looked around the room and whistled. "Right, so how do we want to do this? Call room service and then beat the shit out of the staff who arrive?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 16, 2014, 09:39:05 PM**

Marita smirked as she helped herself to a couple root beers. she tossed one of them to Marie as she went inside the bathrooms and looked for anything in the cabinet that might prove useful. ' well theres shaving cream in here"she said pulling out a can of it. ' a blast of this in the eyes should blind them temporarily.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 17, 2014, 12:37:21 AM**

"Alright... let's just hope they buy it," Triste muttered, angling the sub away from the waypoint, drifting further away from it's almost comforting blue glow and closer to the cave's opening. Turning her head, she was about to tell Vergil to hold on, but it looked like he already had that covered. Giving a quick smile, she looked back at the controls and pushed a lever.

The ballast tanks fitted to the sub started to fill with air, pushing them back up to the surface. *Not fast enough...* Triste pushed the lever down even more, and the two of them were pressed back against their seats as the craft sped through the cave opening and started to clear the plane wreckage.

Axel grunted, holding a hand against his side where the guard had hit him earlier. "Yeah, I was... it's, uh..." They stopped as the corridor branched into two paths, one to the left and the other stretching off to the right. "It's..." he gritted his teeth. "*Crap*". His ears pricked up as he heard several voices coming from the path that led to the right, getting louder. "Left! Definitely left!" Axel said quickly, making for the left route. He was aware of how their footsteps were echoing fairly loudly against the thick walls and floor, making it easy for anyone who was following to track them. He gulped and made an effort to tread more softly.

Slipping a hand into his pocket, he pulled out a phone that he'd found on one of the dead guards. Flipping it open, he pushed Soren's number into the keypad and hit call. "Soren!" he whispered when he heard someone answer. "Me and Lily got caught by security... the guys here are *crazy*... but we got out. We need help!"

Rio slumped back against the floor, his arm starting to go numb. He'd managed to pick up what Foley had said, and it wiped what little strength he had left in him. His eyes drifting across the horizon, he could see how alone they were. At this point, it'd take a miracle to save them - and he didn't hold too much faith in those.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 17, 2014, 09:15:08 AM**

"Yeah... well it's all we can do." he commented as she began to fill the ballast tanks with air. They were rising slowly now, the wreckage of Flight 447 becoming visible as they began to rise to the surface. Triste increased their ascent though, causing him to be forced back against his seat.

But as they started to rise and he focused on holding everything back, a sharp pain knifed into his chest, and he clutched it as his eyes widened. "Oh my god..." he whispered, frantically shifting his orange eyes from left to right as he tried to get a fix on what he was experiencing. It broke his concentration, and suddenly, a shadow began pursuing them now...

"There's a problem back at headquarters!" he said, turning to her with concern flooding his features. "A lot of death... destruction... something's happened..." He didn't seem to be aware that he'd lost focus, as this new input was demanding his attention.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2014, 08:11:12 PM**

Lily waited anxiously for Soren to reply. Looking nervously down both sides of the corridor, she reflected gratefully that they haven't seem to have been discovered yet.

She noticed a partially-open door that showed rows of towels on racks. If worse came to worse, they could slip in there, maybe even find housekeeper uniforms.

Flora whimpered, still curled in the fetal position. Foley wasn't much better; his breathing had become haggard and unreliable. Rio's arm was in bad shape and even as the boy fought to keep a strong face, he was losing blood quickly because his arm wasn't sewed up.

Emilena had to admit they weren't in the greatest position right now. Even as the flotation device she'd constructed out of a pair of pants deflated and the boat began sinking again, she couldn't will her exhausted body to slide over and fix it.

Maybe this it it, she thought. *Maybe it's finally my time to see why everyone fusses so much about death.*

It just feels so...anti-climactic. All of it. But then, perhaps everyone thinks that in the end.

Her body shuddered of its own accord. This particular symptom she recognized; she was going into drug withdrawl. As she slowly slipped closer and closer to unconsciousness, she embraced the feeling. It was something she could understand, it was familiar. In her last moments of life, familiarity was a luxury she could accept.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2014, 09:13:07 PM**

marita pulled out her phone and called room service ' yes i'd like to order two large pizzas, one pepperoni, the other deluxe' she said. she waited for the operators to take the order and ask hoew she intended to pay i'll pay in credits. thank you' Marita smiled and hung up the phone ' The Delivery boys will be here in ten minutes" She said to Soren,. ' be ready.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2014, 09:38:56 PM**

Soren nodded. "I'll be outside." He then opened the door and stood across from their room.

Everyone who passed by him saw a Human chattering away on his cellphone. Eventually, after twelve minutes of chatting to a nonexistant friend, the two delivery people were ready with hot steaming pizzas.

"Hey, we uh, got a delivery here for a Ms. Marita Jones," the first man said. He was a rather muscular looking Human of South Asian descent. The two paid no heed to Soren, taking him to be another tourist. The second was a dour looking female Dhole.

Come on, just a little longer, Soren thought.

When the door clicked open, Soren exploded from the wall. Diving into a low tackle, he managed to somehow shove both delivery people through the door.

The next few seconds were a blur as the stunned workers began fighting back against what was presumed to be a mugging.

Soren twisted his shoulder to block a punch from the man and retaliated with an elbow to the chin. At the same time, the Dhole dropped low and tried to tackle him. Caught off balance, he fell to the ground. The Dhole mounted him and began throwing punches at his face, which he tried to block to the best of his ability. Desperate, he groped around and managed to grab a hold of the Dhole's tail. Giving it a hard tug, he elicited a very pained yelp from the woman ó and a renewed barrage of blows.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2014, 10:05:22 PM**

The Pizzas flew out of the delivery persons hands and laded on the floor, the box popped open and steam wafted from the hot pizzas. marita stormed into the room and began spraying from a can. the shaving cream hit the woman in the face tenmporarily blinding her temporarily, long enough for Marie to tackle her and get her off of Soren. Rose Grabbed the man from behind and soon held him in a headlock. the struggle was fast and furious as the delivery persons tried to fight off their attackers.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2014, 10:19:24 PM**

Soren staggered and spat out some blood from a split lip as he got to his feet. He shook his head to clear it and reassesed the situation.

Seeing as the Dhole had just tried to latch her jaws on Marie's arm. Soren targeted her first. He grabbed the nearest heavy object, which happened to be a beer bottle he had retrieved from the fridge. Charging at the Dhole, he swung the bottle at her head.

A satisfying *thump* was heard as the bottle connected with her skull. But before he could take another swing, the Dhole managed to block his stroke and grab his arm in an attempt to disarm him. Thinking quickly, Soren kneed her in the groin, leaving her gasping for air.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2014, 10:34:51 PM**

Marita landed a few good punches on the guy Rose was trying to subdue, the first punch caught him on the cheek, the second on the chin and the third on the nose. the man collapsed after the final blow, out cold. ' Rose take off his clothes' Marita said, panting slightly from exertion. ' i'll go find something to tie him up with ' Marita said went over to the nearby closet and found a number of suits hanging on hooks. She took one down and began tearing it into strips as Rose took off the delivery mans uniform.. She went over to the unconscious delivery man, who was now clothed only in his underwear socks and shoes. She bound his arms together using one of the strips. then wrapped another around his mouth gagging him.

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Marie winced as the dhole had tried to bite her arm, and had left imprints on her arm. she grabbed a bottle from the bar and headed towards the woman, intebnding to knock her out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **Serris** on **August 17, 2014, 10:42:45 PM**

The Dhole had recovered enough of her breath to reach into her uniform. Soren saw the movement and with a suprisingly fast sprint, charged up to her and kicked her square in the head as hard as possible. The impact caused the object to fly out from the Dhole's grasp as she was knocked unconscious by the powerful blow.

He gasped as he saw the object. It was a full-sized pistol just like the one he had once used in Lanthae during the Purifier Crisis. "Uh, guys, I think these guys were here to deliver more than pizza." He held up the pistol.

His phone then buzzed, alerting him to a voicemail. He unlocked it via the touchscreen and found that Axel had left the voicemail.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2014, 10:56:18 PM**

Rose gaped as she saw the gun, then began going through the mans clothes , and pulled out a second gun ' geez, these guys were packing heat ' she muttered as she stared at the weapon ' might as well take these along. ' along with the pizza' Marie said as she put the bottle down on the ground and picked up the pizzas which were still warm.
- Marita went over the the Dhole, pinned her armed behind her back and tied her up, then gagged her." Lets put these two in the bathroom and lock it, then go find Axel and Lily' Marita said " Help me drag this one the bathroom' she said to Rose.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 18, 2014, 10:56:01 AM**

Three solid looking guards, the middle one carrying a box of doughnuts, were making their way along the security corridor. The one on the right was in the middle of speaking, and they were too distracted to notice the two prisoners fleeing up the corridor to their right as they passed the intersection and carried on towards the cells.

"Alright, alright, here's one," the guard said. "What's the difference between a woman and a battery?"

"I dunno... what?" the one on the left chuckled.

"A battery has a positive side."

This was received with meaty, booming guffaws from the three gorilla - like men as they approached the door leading to the cells. It was ajar, and the guard carrying the doughnuts called through. "Hey Roger! I got yer doughnuts here! I know how hungry ya get after a bit'a torture. Couldn't get the ones with sprinkles though."

"Okay, my turn," said the man on the left, flapping his arm for attention as they filed in. "What's the difference between a Jew and a pizza? A pizza doesn't..." He trailed off. "Oh shit." Before the guards, three of their colleagues were sprawled dead on the ground. The cells were open.

Doughnut guard dropped the box he was carrying and hurriedly pulled out a walkie-talkie. "We've got a situation!" he barked into it. "Three men down, at least one prisoner escaped!"

Shrugging, Axel hung up the phone and looked at Lily. "Huh. I could've sworn he answered." Slipping it back into his pocket, he ran a hand through his hair and started to move again. "Alright... we're doing okay. As long as we don't draw attention to ourselves..."

He was cut off by a loud wailing as sirens overheard began to blare, and red lights flickered on and off. "**Alert! Alert!**" a voice droned. His ears flattening, Axel blinked at Lily. "Well, crap."

As she forced the sub to rise up as fast as it could, Triste heard a low whisper coming from Vergil. "What?!" she called across, glancing at him quickly. "What's the matter?" Her eyes widened when he mentioned the Headquarters. "What happened? *Vergil!* What the hell -"

Something slammed into them from the side, and Triste was thrown sideways, almost tumbling out of her chair. "Jesus!" Grappling with the controls and just barely managing to stop them from spinning into the plane wreck. "Something's on us! I need your help!"

As the water started to lap around his feet, Rio first tried to move them out of the way, but after a moment he gave up. *What's the point...* Suddenly, he remembered the small *Nutrageous* bar that he'd stuck down his underwear for safe keeping after he'd stolen it from the cleaner on the ship. In all the excitement, he'd completely forgotten about it. *If I'm gonna die, then at least I can have some goddamn chocolate first*.

He reached down and pulled it out from the front. It was warm, but still eatable. Slyly, Rio started to unwrap it with his remaining good arm for himself... but then he paused. Emilena, Foley, Flora... they'd almost, sort of become a family for him. A messed up, slightly twisted family, but they looked out for each other. They'd looked out for *him*. "Guys..." he called out, his voice crackly. "Want to share this? It's been somewhere kind of... private, but it'll still taste good..." Rio stretched out his hand, presenting the chocolate.

A seagull swooped down from the sky and plucked the bar from his fingers. Dumbstruck, Rio could only watch in shock as the bird sailed upwards and gulped the chocolatey treat down in one. With a final triumphant squawk, it then sailed off into the sunset.

After a moment, Rio leaned back, suddenly feeling very tired. "This is bullshit..." he complained.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 18, 2014, 05:26:13 PM**

Soren took the Dhole, clad only in her underwear and roughly pushed her into the bathroom. He then got a look at himself in the mirror. His face was pretty beat-up and he had a black eye but he could excuse those as he having slipped and fell.

The door did not lock from the outside but a chair under the doorknob kept it in place.

Soren looked at the remnants of their fight. "Guys, it's Axel. He broke out and he wants to meet us somewhere," he said as he hung up his phone after listening to the voicemail.

He then accessed an app in his smartphone that allowed him to remotely control another smartphone so as long as he knew its number. Inputting Axel's number, he remotely activated the microphone. Soon, he heard the sound of sirens and a synthesized recording that warned of a prisoner escape.

He scowled and shut the program down. "Shit! We have to hurry! Axel's been spotted!" He quickly donned the man's uniform. Luckily, the extra padding of his clothes helped fill out the otherwise large outfit. He tucked the pistol in his pocket

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 18, 2014, 09:03:29 PM**

But Vergil wasn't able to answer, as the sub was suddenly hit and spun violently on its side. "Dammit!" the gecko uttered, coming back to reality now. "It's that thing I told you about before!" It loomed up in their view now, a hideous creature with skin hanging down in flabby tags. It looked purple in color, but in the darkness was hard to tell. "Holy crap!" Vergil breathed, eyes going wide.

It had arms but no legs, which culminated in a sharp spike apiece that looked like bone. It maneuvered with a giant tail that tapered to a fine point, and had a double row of crooked, yellowed teeth.

"Uhhhh... I can't control that thing..." Vergil stated as it lunged for them now, maw opened wide. Vergil dove forward, slamming his hand down on the fire button for the torpedoes, which launched one straight towards the monster.

The torpedo sped towards its target, the beast crunching down on it before it blew, shattering some of its teeth and causing it to issue a shriek of pain that threw the sub back. "Get us out of here!" Vergil ordered, sliding into the seat next to her now as he realized standing up wasn't the best thing to do right here. It was about fifty times the size of the sub, so taking it head on would be most unwise as its mouth could easily gobble the sub up and then some.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2014, 10:02:53 PM**

Marita threw on the woman's outfit while Rose put the gun into her pocket. ' Time to move everyone' Rose said, regretting for a moment that they really wouldnt have time to enjoy the pizza.' we could use the pizzas as cover " Saying we're making a delivery to some room ' Marie said getting an idea "shoot axel a text mesage try and find a good place to meet.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 18, 2014, 10:33:20 PM**

Soren texted Axel. *Axel, we're heading down. Meet us by the security office.*

He then pocketed the smartphone and picked up the pizza.

When the group headed down the hallway, no one suspected a thing. Even though only Soren and Marita were wearing uniforms, everyone assumed the two to be new workers.

They soon arrived at a door labeled "Employees Only". Thanks to the RFID tag inside the sleeves of the uniforms, Soren and Marita were able to gain access with Rose and Marie trailing behind.

Soren looked around. The hallways were a bland insitutional white ó a huge change from the Art Deco inspired furnishings and ornaments of Voltaic Station's touristy areas.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 19, 2014, 08:23:47 AM**

arie looked around the hallway as they kept walking, trying tokeep a steady face and make it seem as if she belonged there. here and there passenges cut away from the dry bland walls. so far no one had stopped them.. yet.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 19, 2014, 03:05:16 PM**

Lily led Axel to the closet with the towels. "Try Soren again while we're in here!" she urged. She glanced around and was disappointed to find there were no uniforms of any sort in this closet, unless bathrobes counted.

Her eyes narrowed as she noticed a laundry chute. *Well, if push came to shove we could always jump down that...*

All of a sudden, a harmonious melody drifted across the waves. Flora looked around and cocked her head quizzically.

Riding towards them abreast a glimmering light, a fierce rugged look etched into his features, was Nairda. No longer was he the scrawny twenty-something fox they'd once known. Now he had the chiseled features of a man.

"It's a ghost..." Flora gasped, tremoring. "We're being haunted!"

At her rousing, the others slowly lifted their heads to see what the ghost was. "Nairda?" gasped Emilena.

As he drew closer, it soon became apparent what he was swimming with. Matching every stroke of his with a powerful kick of her tail was a shivering scaled mermaid, her eyes alight with an otherworldly glow. All sharks within a ten foot radius of her fled immediately.

Nobody said anything as Nairda hoisted himself onto the boat. "The silent treatment, eh?" he glowered, in a voice much deeper than before. "Do you all even remember me, or was I that transitory?"

Everyone remained stunned silent. Foley groaned loudly.

By this point, the boat was capsized enough that the mermaid could access the crew. Putting her hands on Foley's forehead, she hissed gutteral, harmonious lyrics in a runic chant no living mortal could translate. Undulating light particles orbited his skull, and he sighed comfortably as color returned to his face and the swelling disappeared.

"One of you say something to me!" snapped Nairda angrily. His eyes flared behind the bushy eyebrows of a rugged survivor. "I want to hear everyone say that you couldn't have lived through today without me! Starting with you!" he pointed an accusing finger at Emilena.

Emilena was watching with awe as the mermaid cradled her leg. Slowly, the stitches floated to the surface of the waves as the skin and muscle repaired themselves amidst a light show of ether. "You're not Nairda," Emilena said matter-of-factly. "Impossible. You must be a kelpie, or a Changeling. Trust us, we don't mind. We honestly prefer you over Nairda."

Nairda's eyes bugged. "I am Nairda you bastard! How can you not recognize your true love?"

"I can; that's the problem!" snapped Emilena. Behind her, the mermaid was whispering incantations as she ran her fingers down Rio's arm. "You made some basic mistakes in your disguise. For one, you look like a Nairda who actually went through puberty."

"I had Aurora beef me up a bit!" he retorted. "She saved me after you had me thrown overboard. She's very powerful."

Aurora was hesitating before healing Flora, but ultimately sighed and put her hands on Flora's junk. Flora's tongue lolled in relief and her eyes rolled back into her head.

"I'm supposed to believe that a mermaid found you in the time between you jumping ship and drowning?" Emilena folded her arms.

"I can't drown, you idiot! I have trans-adaptive conversion lungs, remember? They were one of the many Augments I was required to get after that horrible accident in my backstory." Nairda took a deep breath. "It was three days later that she found me, starving and barely keeping my body afloat. I kept expecting you guys to come rescue me. I figured if my ejection was part of your plan, some further step would involve my rescue, right?"

"What do you think we were doing out here right now, you ungrateful whelp!" Emilena snapped.

As the glowing evaporated and the mermaid pulled her hands away, Flora purred happily and inspected her intact flytrap. "Oh Aurora, you're amazing. Are you seeing anybody?"

"Yes!" interrupted Nairda defensively. "We care about each other far more than any of you ever cared about me! What kind of bullshit rescue plan involves relaxing on the cruise ship for the rest of the voyage and then taking a love yacht from Voltaic in a random direction? I would have been long dead by the time you left the docks!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 19, 2014, 07:18:09 PM**

(OOC - Wat?)

Simply by acting like they belonged, the five were able to walk through the back areas without interruption.

Soon, they found themselves at a door labeled "Security Staff Lounge". Loud industrial rock boomed through the closed door. Soren cleared his throat and knocked on the door. "Pizza delivery!"

The two guards, one a Belgian Malanois Baseline and the other a Human Augment, stopped their card game.

The Malanois peeled his lips back, exposing his fangs. "You order any pizza?"

The Human scowled as she put her cards down and unholstered her pistol. "I didn't order any pizza."

The door slid open, and she was confronted by a Human and four Canines. She wrinkled her nose ó her augmented sense of smell could smell that one of them was a drug addict and all of them had been involved in some sort of strenuous activity ó most likely a fight owing to the chemicals ahe could detect circulating in their blood.

"We didn't order any pizza," she growled, her pistol kept at the ready.

"Uh, sorry. Mistake been made! I get going!" Soren quickly acted like a new staff member, feigning a poor command of English.

"Hold it! You'reó" She took a step closer.

Decidedly *not* wanting to deal with Voltaic Station's prison system, he threw the lukewarm pizza at the guard, distracting her for a moment. That moment was all he needed to pull his pistol and put three rounds into the guard. Unfortunately for him, the guard managed to get off a shot as she fell backwards. The bullet missed him, striking the doorframe and causing fragments to ripinto his left arm.

The gunshot attracted the Malanois's attention. He turned to the group with pistol in hand.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 19, 2014, 09:55:50 PM**

Rose stepped forward and fired off two shots into the Malanois, the first hit him in the stomach, the second directly in the chest. Rose froze for a brief second as the guard toppled over, his gun clattering to the ground. ' Marie went over and picked it up.. ' better give Axel a call. tell him to stay where he is if hes hidden, we'll head towards him ' she said to Soren. Rose was shaking, she had never killed anyone before, and she looked at the gun she was holding with disgust ' My.. my God ' she murmured, shock on her face.' Marita stepped up and took the gun from her. ' Come on, no time to beat yourself up.. we need to get out of here' Marita said firmly to her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 19, 2014, 10:16:42 PM**

Soren's stolen uniform was starting to redden with blood. He holstered his pistol and he took out his smartphone and dialed Axel.

"Pick up, damn it!" he muttered. When he had gotten through, he spoke. "Hey, Axel. It's Soren. We're currently in the Guard's Lounge. Stay where you are. We'll find you."

He then hung up and opened the same app he had used to eavesdrop on Axel's location. Inputting the phone number, he waited until he got a lock on Axel's location.

He then turned to the two others. Heart racing, he looked around. No activity. Of course, that didn't mean anything. "Keep watch while I see if the guards have anything useful."

He examined the dead woman. There was nothing visible on her uniform, just three bullet holes in her bloody uniform. He shrugged and took the pistol from her hand.

The Malanois had nothing of use either. The ID on a lanyard from his belt was taken as well.

(OOC - Is Soren the only Human in the group?)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 19, 2014, 10:41:32 PM**

(Yes, marita , Marie and riose are all dogs)
marie took up a position near the door, hoping Sioren would be quick. ' i figure we've got only a couple minutes to get out of here Soren " marie said "Once you've located what you want from the guards. we need to go.'
Marita was on the other side of the doorway and periodically glanced down the hallway.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 20, 2014, 11:30:14 AM**

"What's the rush? I was gonna hang around, stay for the sights!" Triste snapped back as she pushed the sub to its maximum speed... which didn't seem to be nearly enough. Glancing into the rear monitor, Triste could see the huge creature already beginning to gain on them again, its grotesque face looming closer as it used its tail to propel itself through the water.

Reaching across, Triste wrapped her hand around the trigger and fired off a second round of torpedoes back at the creature. But it had learned from the last attack and it raised a clawed hand, swatting the missiles away without even blinking. “Son of a bitch…” Triste started to swear – but then the creature sliced its claw back down, and the sub was once again rocked violently to the side. This time, it was accompanied by a shrill bleeping that subsided after a few seconds. Pulling back on the controls, she managed to straighten the vehicle again, and glanced up at the damage report flashing on one of the monitors. The craft had almost been torn wide open. It’d hold together – at least, for now – but another successful attack by this monster and they’d almost certainly be dead. Gritting her teeth in frustration, Triste swerved to the left, and took them through a narrow gap in the plane’s wreckage, hoping to lose it amongst the broken machinery and twisted metal.

Scanning the ruins around them and looking at the rear cameras, where the creature's hideous, bulbous yellow eyes were fixed forwards in a dead stare, Triste had a desperate idea. "Your psionics!" she shouted across to Vergil. "Try to lift some of these metal pieces and throw them back at the bastard's eyes! Burst them!"

As they searched around for something useful in the laundry room, Axel heard a bleeping from the phone he'd taken. Looking down at it quickly, he saw it was a call from Soren's number. Answering it, he stuttered in the affirmative and hung up. "Okay… Soren and the others are on their way! We just… we just need to sit tight…"

From outside, he heard the loud rumbling of multiple footsteps and then; "Hey! Did you leave the laundry room open?!"

Throat suddenly closing, Axel looked across and saw what Lily was looking at – the laundry chute. "After you!" he choked, picking her up and tossing her through, trying to be gentle but probably not succeeding given the pressure of the situation. Gripping the sides of the chute, he lifted himself up and started to slide down feet first… but as he was disappearing down, he felt a hand grab his head, fingers wrapping around his hair tightly.

"I got the cocksucker!" a deep voice yelled triumphantly.

Crying out in pain, Axel bucked wildly, trying to shake the grip that was holding him back. He tried reaching his hands back to pry the fingers off, but in the tight confines of the chute he couldn't quite manage. Axel gave one final tug… which must have unbalanced the guard and pulled him off his feet. Suddenly, the two of them were shouting and sliding down the dark metal passage after Lily, to whatever awaited them below.

Rio stared down at his arm, amazed, as his torn flesh started to knit together, and the throbbing pain started to subside. When it looked almost as good as new, aside from the blood coating the limb, he raised his eyes and gazed with an equal amount of amazement at the strange being's chest. "Hey, something… ah… hurt my balls. Yeah. I think you should check them out, too…" he moaned theatrically, starting to pull his underwear down as Aurora tended to Flora.

Blinking, Rio looked across at Nairda, mid – underwear pull, and frowned. "Wait… how did you know we actually got to Voltaic? And how did you know we rented out a love yacht? How is that even possible?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 20, 2014, 08:18:50 PM**

"Are you kidding me?" Vergil asked, shaking his head. "At this depth I'd be lucky to move my own tail if I were out there!" he pointed out. "But I guess I could try... it's gonna be like trying to move a plastic knife through peanut butter though." He saw them zoom by an engine of the Airbus, and he began focusing on that, trying to lift it. "Ugh! Son of a bitch! This isn't gonna be easy! I'm not sure I can get enough force behind it to make it have much of an impact!" he grunted, struggling to lift it now, as he actually reached his hand out, as if he were trying to grasp it through the glass.

"You're gonna have to buy me time... just a minute or so... until I can build up enough strength to lift this thing and hurl it at his eye... maybe even 30 seconds..." he trailed off, finally lifting the engine out of the silt now and starting to raise it. "Keep him in my line of sight... I'm gonna line it up..." It wobbled and almost fell back down, but he ground his teeth now as he started to sweat, keeping it rising as he fought for control.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 20, 2014, 08:52:38 PM**

Lily cried out as she tumbled down the laundry chute. After tumbling down pipeways for several seconds, she roughly hit a curve that deposited her into the main chute. Ten stomach-churning seconds of freefall later and she landed with a "ploomph!" into a towering stack of linens.

She barely had a few moments to catch her breath before two heavy bodies landed on top of her.

"Axel?" she asked, dazed. "Axel, are you--? *Eek!*"

An enraged security guard bore down on her. He socked her once, twice, three times, constantly losing his grip due to the plushy arena of blankets and towels they were still stuck in.

Grasping out frantically, Lily grabbed his ankle and concentrated on putting him to sleep. *Relax his muscles...* she tried to think even while being assaulted. *Flood the body with melatonin...induce sleep-related nureal patterns...Block the larynx and deprive his brain of oxygen...*

She started panicking as nothing seemed to be slowing the guy down. *Why isn't this working?* she thought wildly as his fist cracked across her temple for the umpteeth time. She began to fear that she'd have to use more lethal force against yet another living person...

Then the guard threw in a kick somehow and she realized she'd been clutching Axel's ankle this whole time. "Oh thank god..." she laughed with relief, before catching the nonplussed guard's fist and putting him to sleep in seconds.

Stumbling towards the side of the chute and getting blood all over the linens, she shoved blankets out of the way until the hatch leading to the laundry room was available. "Hey, Axel, wake up. Sorry about that. Wake up!" she shook him roughly. She had really done a number on him...

Nairda didn't see Rio's question coming. "I--uh...er..."

Emilena's eyes lit up in realization. "You've been spying on us, haven't you?"

When Nairda couldn't respond, she leapt triumphantly onto her newly-healed legs. "You've been spying on us this whole time! Then I'll bet you had the mermaid send that hurricane after us, and the sharks, and *everything* because you wanted to look like the hero when we needed someone to bail us out!"

Aurora looked sardonically at Rio and held up her hand, digits splayed. Electric charges sparked and coursed along her fingertips in a warning display.

"Shut up!" Nairda snapped at Emilena, face flushing red and fists balled. "Don't try and change the subject! Not one of you has said sorry yet for dumping me off the boat!"

"And we're not going to," Emilena cut in. "Because it was *my* decision, nobody else is responsible, and I'm not apologizing to a whiny little shit that decides to put my entire gang's lives in danger just because he needs a power trip to make up for his own crippling self-doubt."

"I don't have healing powers, but I'll massage them if you like," Flora suggested to Rio.

"Could all you please sort out your relationship issues later?" exclaimed Foley incredulously.

"We're still stuck in the middle of the ocean, remember?"

"And you can stay that way for all we care!" Nairda spat at him. "Aurora and I didn't have to save you! And we're not going to help you any more until I hear those apologies!"

Aurora looked up, and pointed her finger at the seagull who was still eating Rio's chocolate bar. Abruptly, the seagull squacked in alarm as it suddenly began spasming and growing. Soon, it got over itself and crooned powerfully as it gently landed aside the boat, now the size of a hang glider.

"Okay," frowned Nairda, "I guess Aurora decided to help you anyway. Whatever. You still won't be able to fly without a harness. Aurora can whip one up, as soon as I hear--"

Aurora waved her arms, and the bootlaces turned into long, rugged ropes. The best remaining boards from the boat removed themselves from the wreck and together these pieces assembled themselves into a saddle with five hand-and-foot straps on the seagull's back.

"Aurora, can I talk to you in private for a moment?" Nairda asked under his breath.

Emilena mounted the bird. "She doesn't care about you, Nairda. There are five strapholds; she's expecting you to leave with us."

Nairda's eyes opened wider in surprise, and his lip trembled. "Aurora? Is...is this true? But I thought..."

Aurora indicated the seagull by pointing her thumb over her shoulder.

Foley grunted as he tried to climb up the bird's side. The bird squacked in protest. But eventually, he managed it and inserted his foot clumsily into the closest foothold. "I don't know if I'll be able to do this..." he muttered, looking with alarm at how high he already was above sea level. "Where is this thing even going to take us...?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 21, 2014, 05:57:18 PM**

"*Godammit!* Alright, I'll try!" Triste shouted, swerving the sub so maybe the creature wouldn't have so easy a target to go for. But to her horror, glancing up at the rear monitor after a few minutes only revealed the horrible truth that no matter how fast she pushed the craft, this thing was faster. It started to catch up, growing closer... and closer.

"Shit..." she swore through gritted teeth, firing back another volley of missiles. But Triste might as well of been firing pillows for all the damage they did. "Vergil, I don't think we have 10 minutes..." The creature's gigantic mouth started to stretch open, as if in anticipation of swallowing them whole. ""Just do it! Blind him!"

His teeth rattling as Lily shook him, Axel's eyes blearily creaked open. "Uh..." he moaned. "*Ugh...* I think I hit my... head or... or something." Starting to sit up, Axel saw the unconscious guard lying next to him and started. "Hey, I... think I got him!" he mumbled victoriously, raising a fist and making to thump him, but missing and slumping over the man's back in a daze instead.

Stumbling to his feet when Lily have him a hand up, Axel craned his neck in disorientation, simultaneously trying to pierce the darkness around them and clear the fog in his head. "What do we... do we do now?" he swallowed, trying to keep calm.

Rio winced as Aurora flexed her electrical fingers across at him, and when Flora made her offer he went pale. "You know, I'm good. They're feeling a lot better." Struggling to his knees, he could only stare in amazement as the strange being provided them with the means to escape.

Standing up, he charged over to the slightly terrifyingly large seagull and leaped on, more than happy to be off the floating wreckage. "Hey, don't worry about it," he said, clapping Foley on the shoulder as he clambered over him to get comfortable on the bird. "Thing about heights is, the only thing that can happen to you is you fall. What's worse? I mean... that, or getting shot?" After a moment, he got into position comfortably on the seagull's back, then looked over his shoulder at Foley. "And as long as we get far away from this piece of shit boat, I'm gonna feel pretty good."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 21, 2014, 10:06:57 PM**

"Agh! Fine!" Vergil shouted, crying out as he launched the engine through the water, propelling it as best he could with as much force as he could muster under here. The engine began to lose headway almost immediately, but Vergil pushed it onward with his mind, forcing it through the waters as the creature roared again and moved towards their small sub.

But that was all the gecko needed. Manipulating its path right into the eye of the creature, the bulbous yellow sac burst and sprayed a golden fluid out into the surrounding waters.

Collapsing back into his seat now, Vergil closed his eyes, his arms laying limply over the chair, splayed out uselessly as his muscle strength had completely left him. "Ugh..." he exhaled, unable to open his eyes for now, or even feel what was going on around him. He was drained, and even paler than usual, having blanched beyond his normal shade of white...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2014, 01:45:58 PM**

"We're trying to regroup with Soren...somewhere. You never told me the location," Lily reminded gently. Unconsciousness has medically proven affects on one's memory, but it was important that Axel kept it together. "We first need to get out of--" With a yelp, Lily accidentally unlocked the hatch and sent both of them tumbling to the laundry room floor amidst a wave of linens.

"Hopefully Soren can keep us updated as to his progress..." Lily groaned, nursing a banged kneecap.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 23, 2014, 04:44:22 PM**

Soren finally got a lock onto Axel's location. He scowled. "Hey, Marita, can you get a map of this place? My app says his cell phone's on the floor below us."

He then looked around the room. Not surprisingly, there were no maps in the sparsely populated room. The Human's stomach growled, reminding him that he hadn't eaten much.

"On second thought, shall we eat first?" He gestured to the refrigerator in the room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2014, 08:08:43 PM**

Grab something out the Fidge and let me get a map up on your Phone mArita said going over and taking the phone from Soren A few quick taps on the phone was all it required of someone of maritas skill to bring up a map' alright Soren i have a map created for you. there are stairs to our left, and Axel and KLily are in a laundry room currently. we head down the stairs take a left than a right and we'll be there in maybe 5 minutes' Marita said."Less, if we hurry. Just grab a sandwich or whatever in there, and then we'll scoot."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 23, 2014, 08:36:48 PM**

Sorent tossed a crab salad sandwich to Marita. At the same time, he helped himself to a catfish salad sandwich.

After gulping the sandwich and washing it down with a bottle of iced tea, he took the phone back. "Gotcha."

He then headed out of the lounge. A few of the guards passing by them waved, assuming that the four were actual guards.

As Soren rounded down the immaculate stairwell, he tried his best to keep calm. This was easy...too easy in fact.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2014, 08:57:54 PM**

'left, then Right' Marita said, keeping a normal face as they walked past guards, who took no notice of them. ' getting to them will be easy, getting out of here in one piece will be hard.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 23, 2014, 09:06:33 PM**

Soren shuddered at Marita's words. "Don't remind me," he whispered.

After following Marita's directions, he found himself at the aforementioned laundry room.

"Hey!"

The shout made Soren's hair stand on end. He turned around and saw a rather large Appaloosa mare dressed in the uniform of the Voltaic Station guards. Like Anne, she too had the unicorn-styled "radio horn" implant protruding from her forehead.

"Uh, I can explain," Soren began.

"Explain why you are taking three females into a laundry room. You know that Judaken strictly forbids sexual activity while on duty!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2014, 09:43:51 PM**

We're not having sex with him. we have to bring up a fresh load of clothes, some of the uniforms got really stained the other day and need to be washed.,. "Marita replied. some drunk passenger spilled something on my uniform and it got really stained." she motioned to a blot on her uniform."Nothing untoward going on here" she said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 24, 2014, 05:23:46 AM**

Luckily Lily and Axel were able to obtain pretty decent-looking uniforms from the dirty laundry. With Lily as a maid and Axel as a waiter, Lily peeked open the door and yelped as she saw the standoff. She quickly closed it and looked frantically along the door for a lock, heart pounding.

"What is this, an orgy?" the unicorn guard exclaimed angrily. She grabbed her radio. "Wait until Judaken hears about this!"

"Aurora, my love..." Nairda made the biggest puppy eyes he could. "You don't really want this, do you? Can't we talk about this--?"

Aurora snapped her spindly webbed fingers and a band of magical light wrapped itself tightly around Nairda's snout. Lifting her hand in the air, she deftly propelled Nairda onto the seagull's back and then tied his wrist tightly into the harness.

Flora was the last to board, gingerly mounting over the wing and settling her foot into the last reamining holster. "You know..." she observed. "I feel even better than before we started this trip. I can't quite place it but..."

"It's the drug addictions," Foley noted. "They're gone. I noticed that too."

"She healed our drug addictions?" gasped Emilena. "Give that one back!" she snapped at Aurora, even as the seagull began groaning as it slowly lifted into the air. "I need it!"

Aurora had already retreated in the wake of the choppy waves caused by the seagull's updraft. Groaning, their ride fought bitterly for every inch of air, until it finally caught a thermal and began gliding away from the wreckage site.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 24, 2014, 01:51:16 PM**

A tight smile started to creep across Triste's face as she looked back and saw the creature's eye burst, globules of a thick, yellow pus-like liquid trailing from the ruptured organ. "Good job..." she started to say, turning to Vergil - but her expression died as she saw the state he was in.

"*Shit!* Hang on!" she said through gritted teeth, glancing at the rear monitor. As she'd hoped, the creature was momentarily distracted from pursuing them, twisting in the water in pain. But it wouldn't be put off long... Triste had to take advantage of the brief opportunity *now*. "Just hold on! We're almost there..." Turning sharply, she took the sub through another broken section of the plane, trying to keep as low as possible.

When she thought enough distance had been put between them, Triste started to take the craft up, as fast as she could. In the distance, she could just start to make out the docking area. "Almost there!" she repeated, almost as much to reassure herself as Vergil.

Rio looked back and tried to grin encouragingly at Emilena. "Hey, it's not too bad. Think about how much fun you're gonna have getting all of them back again!" He shrugged. "If I ever get my own stash again, we can split it. Fifty-fifty. Uh... sixty-forty," Rio added after considering.

Turning his attention to Foley, he gleefully started pushing him, pretending he was going to shove him off.

As Lily tried to lock the door, Axel rubbed a hand through his hair. "She already saw us, Lily. Crap, if we draw any more attention..." Suddenly, he snapped his fingers. "I've got an idea," he said, seeing that they certainly looked like staff. "Muss your hair up! Sound like you're out of breath!" Reaching across and popping open her top button, he messed up his own hair then crossed to the door, pausing to reach down and unbutton the top of his waiter's trousers.

"Sorry!" he gasped, panting for breath as he swung open the door, ignoring Soren and the girls for now and focusing on the unicorn. "We didn't know we were needed, ah... we were just..." Still breathing heavily, Axel blinked at the unicorn guard. "Just... sex. A bit. We're almost off duty though!" He grinned appeasingly. "So, ah... we can go, right?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 24, 2014, 11:45:13 PM**

The mare scowled. Soren noticed that the guard seemed to be scanning his bruised face.

"I slipped and I fell," he quickly said. "While delivering room service."

The "unicorn" nodded. She cast suspicious looks at Rose and Marie, the two women who were not wearing uniforms. "Why are y'all out of uniform?"

It was then that Axel and Lily got her attention. Scanning over their tousled clothes and hair, coupled with the Rat's statement, she now had ample proof that they had engaged in sexual activity on the clock. "Your ID cards," she demanded. "*Almost* off-duty is still on-duty. I'm writing y'all up. And save the shit excuses for the superviser."

She picked up the tablet from her belt holster and got to work writing a disciplinary report.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 25, 2014, 10:15:43 AM**

"I... that's... that's good..." Vergil responded weakly, trying to recover his strength. He felt as if someone had slammed his chest with a sledgehammer over and over, after of course he'd just run ten miles non-stop. He cracked one eye open, but closed it again as remarkably, even that put strain on him. "I just hope... I won't cut too sorry a state up there... but then again... makes it look convincing... doesn't it?" he asked in a voice that was more a wisp of a question than a strong inquiry.

He couldn't even sense how far they'd risen, and finally, he forced his eyes open. "I see light... that's either very good... or very bad... it's the mining station... right?" he asked hopefully. If she answered, it was... if she didn't... well he'd have to try and fight to stay alive.

A splash occurred above them as the crane was dropped down into the water to hoist them back up. The four pronged cradle couldn't align itself with the sub though, and Triste would have to maneuver them into its grasp.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2014, 03:58:04 PM**

"My name is Aylin... Jiang. No 'e' on either of those," Lily ad-libbed quickly. "You're spelling it right, aren't you? Here, I just need to check."

She advanced on the guard, attempting to grasp the guard and knock her out with a surge in melatonin and relatively harmless brain oxygen deprivation.

There was nothing Foley could do. One moment, he was strapped in, the next, Rio played it suicidally, and sent the two of them toppling over the edge. Despite it looking as if the harness would be large enough to support an adult, the ropes here weren't particularly strong, jutting off the side of the boards as they were. They held the harness together, but their knots were stronger than their bonds. Foley could only cry out in pain as the rope struck his side, and then... began to snap. It seemed as if Rio had miscalculated rather badly...

The human's arms flailed out, but they couldn't grab hold of anything but the rope as before Rio's eyes, it broke, and with an incomprehensible shriek, the human plummeted into the ocean below...

Once his life was done flashing before his eyes, Foley pushed Rio back angrily. "Watch it! The hell you doing?"

As the distance between their ride and the crash site widened, Nairda's ethereal muzzle evaporated, and he sniffed as tears ran down his puffy face. "Why would she...I thought we..."

"What gives her the right?" fumed Emilena. "I worked hard for those addictions! They cleared my mind, helped my detective work! Like Sherlock Holmes!"

Nairda guffawed loudly. "Detective work? What the hell have you ever solved? You wouldn't recognize a clue if you rolled it up and smoked it in a joint!"

"I'm not the only one here who's clueless!" Emilena shot back. "Doesn't take a detective to know why Aurora dumped you. You're clingy, incompetent, abrasive, uncaring, mopy, and a closet homosexual!"

"*What?*" Nairda's eyes bugged out. "How dare you insult me and LGBT culture like that! I'm bisexual, there's a big difference! Aurora and I had a healthy, albeit sexless, relationship, but that was only because she had a flipper instead of legs!"

"Yeah? Well, I had legs, and six whole months of dating you, and how many times did you sleep with me? *Twice!* I'm surprised you never took Flora up on her repeated offers to stick her dick in your butt; I bet you're into that sort of thing!"

"Fuck you!" Nairda snapped. "You want to break up that badly? Then fine! As soon as this seagull puts us down, I'll go my own way. I'll hitchhike to Hollywood, blaze my own trail. I'll find people who appreciate me for who I am!"

"Why is it *always about you?*" Emilena exclaimed exasperatingly. "Are you capable of not talking about yourself for five minutes?"

The two lapsed into uncomfortable silence. Flora opened her mouth, but Nairda silenced her with a death glare, so she went back to sticking her face in the wind and panting happily.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 25, 2014, 10:44:57 PM**

Our uniforms are in the laundry mam. we were headed in to get them out, and unfortunately we didnt have any spare uniforms to wear.. "Marie said.' We apologize for the violation in dress, in the future we'll bring spares to wear in case the uniforms need cleaning again. charge us for an extra uniform and take it out of our next paychecks, if you wish.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 26, 2014, 04:47:30 AM**

Triste felt relief flooding her chest when she saw the crane splash down into the water above them, its metallic arms looking like the most welcome thing she'd seen in a while. Speeding up, she angled the sub so it fitted evenly into the cradle and felt the thump as the prongs connected, holding the craft tightly.

"I'd say you look like just the right amount of hell to be useful," she muttered over her shoulder, still scanning the monitors for any sign of the creature - but the only thing around them was the clear sea. There was a tug, the crane's machinery working to lift them free. As they started to rise, Triste thought back to what Vergil has said just before they'd been attacked. Headquarters had been attacked? *That's... that's impossible! How could...* Triste opened her mouth, starting to speak to Vergil - when something drew her attention. Movement in one of the monitors. Her eyes widened at what the image revealed.

From below, a huge shape was emerging from the darkness. Huge mouth, grotesque face, ruptured eye... the creature was making straight for them. "*Shit...*" Triste snarled. She jumped off her chair, raced across to Vergil and yanked him up from where he was sprawling back in his seat. The top of the sub had cleared the water, just about reaching the walkway... but the rest of the sub was still in the sea and the crane was pulling them up far, far too slowly. The creature's mouth started to gape open, baring its crooked teeth as it drew closer. Pulling Vergil towards the ladder leading up, she tried to ignore the steadily growing rumble as the huge mass bore up on them.

Suddenly, there was an almighty crash, the screaming of metal, and Triste was thrown off her feet as, just by where they'd been sitting moments before, huge yellow teeth tore through the walls of the sub. Water started to spray into the vehicle through the gaps where the teeth had punctured the metal, and as the screaming intensified Triste realised with growing horror that the creature was trying to tear them free and pull them back into the depths.

Scrambling to her feet, she pulled Vergil up and started to force him up the ladder. "Go! Move it!" she yelled as she started to climb up after him, the sub starting to tilt and the walls buckling alarmingly. The hatch was thrown open, and as they scrambled up onto the roof, Triste could see the joints of the crane straining and starting to buckle. They only had moments. Wrapping her arms around Vergil, she roughly threw his weakened body up onto the walkway leading to the station, and jumped up after him. Just as her feet left the vehicle, there was a final, deafening screech and the cradle was torn free from the rest of the structure. With a great splash, the sub was pulled back into the sea, and disappeared into the darkness.

For several moments, Triste could only lay on her back next to Vergil, exhausted, staring up at the ceiling as she listened to the hissing of the settling water. Finally, she rolled over and staggered up, offering a hand down to the gecko. "We almost... almost had the map! We were so close!" she panted. She turned to the dumbfounded guard who was staring at them from the other end of the walkway and nodded. "We haven't been able to solve... the problem," she groaned as she heaved Vergil to his feet. "But we've found the source. We'll need time to prepare."

Axel could see Lily making to touch the guard. "Has anyone told you what a beautiful horn you have?" he said, smiling sweetly as he stepped forward and placed his hands over her own - repulsed, the guard didn't notice Lily reaching out. With a shudder, her eyes rolled up into the back of her head and the tablet slipped from her fingers. Before she could fall to the floor and hurt herself, Axel caught her unconscious body around the waist, pulling her radio from her pocket and tossing it across to Soren. "Nice job," he said, grinning shakily at Lily as he dragged the mare to the laundry room door and tossed her in, slamming the door after her.

Turning back to the others, he blinked at Soren, Marita and the other girls. "We need to get out of here *now*... these guys don't mess around. Thanks for, ah... you know. Coming to help us." As he buttoned up his trousers again, he sniffed the air and flattened his ears as he caught the smell of catfish sandwiches. "Have... have you guys been snacking?"

"You went out with her for six months and you only banged her twice?" Rio looked back at Nairda. "That's pretty weak, dude."

Turning, he scanned the horizon around them as the bird soared through the air. Squinting, Rio could just about make out something far in the distance, although this far away it was impossible to tell what it was. "Land ahoy!" he cried out, remembering a line from those pirate movies he'd seen through the dirty shop window.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 26, 2014, 07:00:44 AM**

" Marita tossed him her crab sandwich ' you can have mine. Split it with Lily" for now we need to get out of here' She said. " i created a map of the complex, its in Sorens app.' Marie and Rose opened the door to the laundry room, and came out a minute later with fresh uniforms on." so we dont have a run in like this one again ' rose said, straightening her uniform and breathing on her claws.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 26, 2014, 07:48:18 PM**

Looking down at what had once been their submarine and its dock, Vergil sighed and closed his eyes in relief, though Triste was forcing him to stand now, and he groaned as he was yanked upwards to his feet. "All right... all right..." he held out a hand towards her, but didn't push her away... he was grateful for the support.

"I see you've met Little Nelly, as we call her." This came from Jenkins now, who smirked as he approached the two geckos.

"Little?" Vergil asked in a raspy voice. "Heh... yeah... I'd hate to see Big Nelly."

"Oh she's worse."

"Yeah? So you mind explaining what the hell that was?" Vergil asked angrily, though the exertion caused his legs to wobble like jelly, and he leaned against Triste for support.

"A creature of the Black Lagoon?" Jenkins tried evasively to dodge the question. "So... you need more time? I figured you would." he smirked again. "It's not a problem you would've solved in one go... or at least, I didn't think so."

"Yeah well... we have a good idea of the cause... but we need to confirm a few things so... we're gonna head back to our... new room I guess." Vergil responded.

"Of course. Here are your keys." Jenkins held out their new room keycards now, and Vergil took his.

Glancing over at Triste now, he gave her an apologetic look. "I might need just a little support for a few minutes... sorry." he told her, face falling.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 28, 2014, 01:11:43 AM**

"I'm not hungry." Lily regarded the unconscious guard laying at her feet. She looked uncomfortably like the ones she murdered in the interrogation room...

"We've got to locate Vergil and Triste and make sure they're okay," she said to Soren. "Do you have any way of locating them? They weren't in the interrogation room or the jail cells..." With creeping horror, she realized they were most likely dead, but fought to keep from showing her concern on her face.

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"We've had sex more than twice!" Nairda snapped hotly. "She's over-generalizing. *Especially* if you factor in all the times she just beat the shit out of me for hours until she got off..."

"If you were even remotely good in the sack, maybe I wouldn't have to," Emilena stuck her tongue out at him. "I'd beat you up right now but you'd probably fall off the bird and defeat the entire purpose of us going out into this damned ocean to rescue you."

Gradually, the seagull reached the coast of South America and did a barrel roll, sending the harness and its occupants crashing into the sand. As he flew off, he slowly shrank back to his normal size, though the superiority complex persisted for the remainder of his life.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 28, 2014, 04:50:57 AM**

Triste took her copy of the keycard from Jenkins and nodded. "Thanks. We'll try to be as quick as we can." As they walked - or more accurately limped - away, she glanced at Vergil and squeezed his shoulder briefly, tightening her hold on him. "Don't worry about it. I'm sorry I pushed you - I didn't know it was going to drain you so much." She shrugged. "But at least we're not fish food."

Though she acted concerned, Vergil's well-being far from preoccupied her thoughts. All her attempts at trying to contact headquarters had been met with silence. ***This is Agent Triste Acyle, is anyone there? Please respond.***

Nothing.

Triste could feel herself starting to grow worried, and she quickly forced the anxiety back down. *Don't be stupid. That how you make mistakes.* As they started to approach the more public areas of the hotel, Triste looked at Vergil and swallowed. "What happened at headquarters? Who attacked? Was it... *him*?"

Looking down at the sandwich, Axel shrugged then opened the laundry room door and tossed it in after the unconscious guard. "She'll probably need it more than us when she wakes up."

Starting to lead them away, he turned to Soren as they walked. "Yeah... as fast as you can. We've gotta find them and get out quick."

Rio yelled as he tumbled through the air. The ground loomed closer and he squeezed his eyes shut... but when he made impact with an "*Oof!*", the landing was much softer than he'd been expecting. Opening his eyes slowly, he recoiled slightly when he saw he'd landed on top of Flora, his face in her chest.

"Nope! Nope!" Rio muttered, rolling off and sitting in the sand next to her. Looking back out at the sea. he shook his head and sighed. "I could do with a drink right about now. Rum or something."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 28, 2014, 05:59:27 PM**

"I don't know." Vergil confessed to her, slowly regaining his strength, though he wasn't there yet. "I couldn't sense it... only that they'd died... violently." he told her grimly now. "I didn't sense the cause... too far for that. But.. how else would they have died?" he asked her now, finally attempting to push off from her and stand on his own.

He rested his hands on his knees, and huffed a little, but managed to avoid collapsing. "All right... I think I can start walking again... ugh... don't worry about pushing me... it was inevitable, I suppose." he confessed.

"Anyway... we should get back there as soon as we can... find out what happened." he stated. "It's not good... I'm assuming you can't contact anyone... right?" he asked now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 29, 2014, 07:45:17 PM**

Lily creaked the door open and found herself staring at a hallway. The carpeting and lighting implied it was a residential area, where visitors were granted access. "I don't think it's safe to wander around in public," she whispered. Instead, she kicked open another door connected to the laundry room and found herself staring at a much creepier hallway. Metal grating and wispy roped handholds followed an unlit catwalk straight into solid darkness. "Well..." she gulped, "they do have OSHA compliance out here, right? It can't be that unsafe..."

She led the way deeper into the maintenance section of the station.

"Oof!" Flora gasped, wind knocked out of her, and that was the only thing that stopped her from grasping Rio playfully before he retreated with an alacrity that made her giggle. She got to her feet and shook the sand out of her fur, regarding the others. "Everyone okay?"

Emilena was tangled in the harness, cursing and trying to slash the ropes with her claws. Foley was draped over the harness, only moving his head.

"My back..." he groaned, eyes wide. "I can't feel anything...below my neck..."

"Oh, I can help with that!" Flora skipped over. "I once saw a flier on chiropracty!"

"No no no...stay away from me!" Foley stammered hastily, but Flora hoisted him on her knee (freeing Emilena) and smacked her elbows into the top and bottom of his spine with a sickening crack. "*Aaauuugh!*" Foley screamed.

"Better?" Flora smiled.

Foley stumbled away. "Owww!!! Mother of Christ, *Jesus*, that...actually...feels a lot better than I thought it would..." he rubbed his back in dumbfounded surprise.

Flora bounced. "Hooray! Who wants to go skinny dipping? Wash the sand all off of...hey, where's Nairda?" she asked, looking around.

Further away, Nairda was climbing up the sandstone cliff separating the beach from the village above. A single tear sliding down his face, he spared no looks at his former colleagues as he regarded the lonely, solitary life that awaited him.

"Nairda, where in the nine hells are you going?"

Below him, Emilena had kicked her boots off and was angrily climbing after him.

"No, stay away!" he bellowed. "You made your intentions clear!"

"Well, I lied!" She gritted her teeth. A handhold came apart in her grasp and sent a cloud of dust into her eyes. "If I'd wanted you gone, I wouldn't have chased after you into the ocean, would I?"

Nairda sighed. "This isn't about you, Emilena!" He was halfway to the top. "You said so yourself; it's always been be about me. I've made so many mistakes, wasted so much time in the slums with you and the gang...that's not how I wanted to turn out! That's not the person I wanted to be!"

"Then we'll quit!" Emilena almost slipped, but managed to grasp a root before she fell. "We'll go find another town! Go back into crime-fighting!" She paused to catch her breath. "Goddammit, you know I hate to say this, but...I love you! I don't know how you did it, but you made me care about you, and I don't want to lose you!"

Nairda spared a single look down. "I know."

There was a rumble, and with a groan a healthy portion of the cliff collapsed, sending the pair tumbling down the cliff in a small avalanche of sand. Coughing and choking at the bottom, Emilena waded onto her knees and looked up to see Nairda had saved himself with a built-in grappling hook. Slowly he rappelled up to the top of the cliff and observed her.

"Emilena..." he took a deep breath. "If you want to prove you love me...give me your sword."

"What?" Emilena clutched the weapon to her chest defensively.

"Where I'm going...I'm going to need proof of my identity. I have a suspicion that my father, Karl Nairda, worked for the Vulture Scavenger Corps during the Scorched Earth war. Your katana has the Scavenger Corps logo on its hilt."

Emilena glanced at her heirloom katana. The sword she'd practiced for years with, the sword she knew better than her own hands. Closing her eyes and gritting her teeth, she sent it spiraling at him in a perfect reverse javelin. "There! You better not lose it, do you hear me?"

Nairda caught it with one outstretched hand, then disappeared over the cliff face.

"Nairda!" Tears stung her eyes "Nairda! I said, did you hear me?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 30, 2014, 08:12:23 PM**

Soren pulled out his cellphone and plugged Vergil's number into it. He shook his head.

"I'm not getting any hits. Either he's out of range or his phone's dead."

He then put the cellphone away and followed Lily. He gulped as he looked at the unlit catwalk over a seemingly bottomless abyss. His heart sped up slightly as he backed away. He scowled. "How about we *not* use a treacherous catwalk?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 31, 2014, 12:23:04 AM**

We need to keep moving. use your phones battery as a sort of flashlight ' Marie suggested as she began walking in the catwalk " Hold it high above your head so you can see and hopefully the rest of us can see as well. just watch your footing. the sooner we get across this catwalk, the better. i figure we've got only a short while before they find the unconscious guard in the laundry room. we need to be as far away as possible by then, and we diont want to attract any more attention than we have too. 'marita pulled out her phone its lit face glowed enough to see maybe a couple feet in front of her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 01, 2014, 05:06:20 PM**

Triste shook her head, her jaw tensing. "No. Nobody's responding." Her right hand closed into a tight fist. For years now, she'd been used to having constant communication with the Federation. The silence that was permeating her head, interrupted only by the list of possible scenarios she was running through, was deafeningly loud and uncomfortably disquieting.

She looked at Vergil as they walked. "We're on our own... for now, at least. I don't understand, Kalis is trying to find his way to the Cataract as well - how would he be able to find the time to find our headquarters too, and then launch an attack as well?" She bit her lip. "Something's wrong... I don't like this. We've got to move faster. We need to find the waypoints *now*."

Blinking at the darkness in which the catwalk vanished into, Axel gulped and looked back longingly at the door leading to the public area. It seemed to promise safety... but he knew how much more likely it was for guards to be patrolling the hallways. Running a hand across his chin, he turned back and tried to smile encouragingly at Soren. "Hey, come on... you didn't think it'd be *that* easy, did you?" Stepping past him, he clapped him on the shoulder lightly. "It'll be fine..."

Stepping out onto the metal grating, his shoes clinked lightly, the sound echoing lightly and then disappearing into the dark. From below came the faint sounds of rattling machinery. It sounded a long way down. Gulping again, Axel's tail drew close against himself anxiously as he took another few nervous steps forwards. "See? It's... it's completely fine..." he called back, his voice oddly wavering.

Axel squeezed past Marita, whose phone light could do barely anything against the gloom encroaching on all sides. Moving up to Lily, he leaned in to whisper. "Hey, I... I don't want to scare the others... I mean, we've all gotta be calm, but... Well, we still have no idea where Vergil and Triste are. If they're, ah, *not alive* anymore, we need to get out as *soon* as we can..." He shrugged, though in the dark Lily probably couldn't see it. "Think we could stow away on one of those cruise ships?"

Rio watched, wide eyed, as Flora cracked Foley's back. "That was kind of gross," he shuddered, turning back to look across the beach to the sea. Flora skipped past into his line of sight, asking where Nairda was. "What d'ya mean? He's right..." Rio started to point to where he'd seen Nairda only a second ago, but he was gone. "Huh..." And where was Emilena? The two of them were nowhere to be seen.

All of a sudden, from further up the beach the was a low rumbling. "What the shit... hang on, I'll go check it out," Rio said, getting to his feet and starting to push his way cautiously through the thin layer of undergrowth between them and where the noise had come from. Large green leaves crackling as he made his way through, he reached the other side and halted. The beach continued on past the undergrowth. Just a short distance up, Emilena was on her knees at the foot of what looked like a collapsed cliff. She tossed up a long, thing object, and Rio saw Nairda, standing at the top, reach out and deftly snatch it from the air. Her words drifted across to Rio, something about not losing it. But when Rio looked up again, Nairda was gone. Emilena must have realised this too, because he could hear her shouting Nairda's name. And her voice... was she crying?

After standing awkwardly for a few moments, Rio stepped out and approached her slowly, quietly. He could gather that Nairda had left the group, for whatever reason. Emilena clearly wasn't taking it well. When he was right behind her, Rio reached out and gently touched her shoulder - being on her knees, it was within easy reach for him. "Hey, he'll okay, Emi. He's one of the faggiest douchebags I've ever met, but he's still kind of tough." Rio shrugged. "He can take care of himself."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 02, 2014, 06:42:58 AM**

Soren sighed. "I'd have expected shootouts and chases, not this." He gulped as he tried to steady his shaking hands on a post that a tattered steel cable was attached to.

The watery light of Marita's phone did little to disperse the darkness. *What I wouldn't give for my HMD with its night vision and infrared capabilities* Soren thought. Alas, it like most of his belongings had been destroyed in Lanthae. He decided not to waste his smartphone's battery by using it as a flashlight, seeing as he might need it to contact Vergil later.

Taking another breath of the oily air, he took the first hesitant step forward onto the narrow catwalk.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 02, 2014, 10:26:54 AM**

Soren, the map i created for your app, should tell us where we are and the nearest exit to our location once we get across, use it and see how close we are to an exit ' Marita said as she walked slowly across the creaking catwalk. ' smells like there are machine down there, and i wouldnt want to fall on them from this height.
_ do you guys think Vergil and Trieste are ok? Marie said " They have been separated from us for a long time." " I';m sure they're fine. probably just having fun while they can Marita Said."I'm not physic after all.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 02, 2014, 03:55:57 PM**

"Because he's sending us a message..." Vergil trailed off now as his strength slowly began returning. "He's showing us that even though we're winning... we're not winning at all..." He glanced over at her here. "Find the other waypoints now? Shouldn't we go back to Corona? Find out if HQ is OK?" he asked. "I mean jeez! They could still... could still be alive!" he pointed out now. "I don't know! I can't sense anything but it's too far now! I can't sense life that far away... only death it seems..." he said distantly, staring off into the distance.

As for his thinking into Kalis's behavior... he just knew. This was how Kalis operated... his memories of how cruel he could be... how he loved to taunt others... it was just him. There was no one else it could be. No one's resources even came close to being capable of pulling this off. Corona's security was just too tight after all...

"I sensed our erstwhile comrades in danger before but... now it seems they're fine. I don't sense pain or suffering... it was very brief." he commented, looking at Triste again. "Anyway let's get to our room, gather our stuff, and check out... the Hotel California this is not!" Vergil cracked, beginning to move on his own again, though he was still a little wobbly.

They passed through the security scanner, weren't vaporized, and reached the main area of the hotel. Vergil was having a problem getting a fix on any one particular thing; his mind was being bombarded from all directions at once. "Damn... I have to focus..." he whispered, shaking his head.

Fumbling with his keycard, he inserted it into the door but got a red light. "Dammit!" he murmured, growing frustrated. He felt like he was quite literally racing time right now; every second felt precious to him. Jamming it into the reader again, this time the light turned green, and he threw the door open.

What was left of their luggage was sitting on the floor. Yanking the handle of his upwards, the gecko gazed at the exit now. "So... I just need to retrieve my blade and we're out of here but... should we pick up the others? We can always give them some bullshit story after all...

but I'll let you make that call. And about our next move... I think we should head back to Corona... check on HQ... see if they're OK first... what do you think? We've been running kind of thin as of late." he admitted.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 02, 2014, 05:24:32 PM**

"That's not what happened," Lily chimed in hastily at Marita's suggestion that Vergil could be ignoring them. "They *wouldn't* do that. We're a team. I'm sure they've been captured or detained. They never even regrouped with us in the hospital."

The catwalk eventually ended and they found themselves standing above a large boiler. Their only option was to climb down into the boiler room.

"The people here were just *awful* to Axel and me, they were going to kill us. We might be Vergil and Triste's only hope of survival," Lily continued as she gratefully found herself on solid ground again. "And I wouldn't feel right abandoning them."

"I don't care," sniffed Emilena. "I literally don't care if he trips and breaks his neck in a pothole. I wasn't crying, I was...looking directly into the sun."

She turned and began marching back towards the others. "Let's get into town and start coming up with *some* sort of plan to reach Corona. I think I've had enough sightseeing for one trip."

Back at the harness, Foley was fiddling with his cell phone and jumped when she entered his immediate range. "Oh! Emi! You're back!" He stuffed it hastily into his pocket.

"Are you seriously chatting with your online friends?" Emilena sighed exasperatedly.

"Well, we get signal again."

"Where's Flora gotten herself off to now?" Emilena scanned along the coast and noticed a fuchsia blob bodysurfing. "*Flora!*"

Flora came sprinting back from the ocean.

"We're heading into town," Emilena commanded everyone. "Keep your eyes peeled for either an airport or train station, but I suspect we're going to have to settle for stealing something with 4-wheel drive and reaching a bigger city. Flora, try to keep your head down until we've bought you some clothes, you're way too conspicuous. As a matter of fact, why don't you go back and keep swimming until we've returned with--"

"Nuh-uh!" Flora folded her arms defiantly. "I know what happens to cute girls who go around alone in foreign countries! I don't want to be kidnapped and turned into a sex slave!"

"You don't?" Foley asked pointedly.

Emilena rolled her eyes and silently led the whole group towards the pebbled bluff that led up to the inland.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 02, 2014, 06:26:03 PM**

Axel made his way down after Lily, then nodded at what she said and turned back to Marie and Rose. "Yeah, I'm, ah... I'm sure they're fine. Something must've just, uh, gone wrong or kept them busy. All we've got to do is find them," he said, his voice raised so he could be heard over the rumbling of the boiler. He shrugged and grinned, attempting to keep their spirits up.

"Shouldn't be too hard, right?"

Quickly checking through the bag she had left and grunting once satisfied, Triste zipped it closed and yanked the handle out. "The others are our teammates. We need to make sure we leave with them," she said as she started to make her way across to the door leading out into the hallway. "They know why we were really here, which could make them a problem. If, for whatever reason, Judaken finds out they were with us, and they torture them for information once they find out we aren't coming back, they could give some pretty personal information. It'd make things a lot more complicated for us."

Stepping out, Triste waited for Vergil then closed the door after him. "If you still want to leave them behind, it'd be smarter to do it back on land, where there's less chance of them being captured after." She shrugged as they started walking down the hall. "Of course, with communications down, they might be the only spare hands we have to help us. At least for the time being. Might be something to think about." From up ahead, a small gang of armed guards ran around the corner and charged past them. Triste didn't pay them any notice.

"And speaking of which..." she continued. "Are you sure going back would be a god idea? If Kalis destroyed it to send a message, maybe our response is exactly what he's hoping for - that we'd hear about it somehow and come back." She eyed Vergil warily. "Delivering you straight to him with a pretty pink bow and *Please kill me* stamped on your ass. If we -"

All guests, please return to your rooms and do not open the door to anyone. Exits to the port and beach will be sealed temporarily in 5 minutes, a female sounding robotic voice droned loudly, the voice echoing off the walls. **This is for your safety. Thank you for your understanding.**

Triste glanced around at the voice trailed away. Already, several guests were walking briskly up and down the hallway, rushing to their rooms and letting themselves in. Soon, she and Vergil were the only ones left. "Goddammit, what now..." She looked at Vergil and shrugged. "Something tells me that isn't a false alarm... Think the others could be in trouble? We haven't seen them since we got here..."

The robotic voice came drifting through the thick walls, distorted but just audible enough for the group in the boiler room to determine the words. Axel's grin died on his face, and his ears flopped. "Alright, ah... it *might* have just got a little hard."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 02, 2014, 06:43:00 PM**

Marita sighed as she considered what Lilly said we, i think what you say has a lot of truth to it... She began but the sound of the robots voice reached her ears and she stopped " Change of plans. we have 5 minutes to find them, period. Otherwise we'll be stuck in a portion of the hotel. not something we can afford." She started climbing down into the boiler " lets Move everyone. Rose stopped and picked up something off the ground." Come ON Rose! Marita called from the Ladder " Hey i found some money..' Rose began " You always pick up money.. show it to us when we can actually see it and we're not under a very tight deadline to avoid getting stuck in a hotel with securitv swarming all over the place..' Rose pocketed the coin and began climbing down the ladder.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 04, 2014, 04:02:33 PM**

Soren stuffed his phone into his pocket upon hearing the alarm. "Shit! We better hope the guards don't come this way!"

He grabbed hold of the ladder and swiftly descended, trying his hardest not to look down. Luckily, the ladder was clean and coated in an anti-slip compound. The fact that the boiler room was well lit helped too. A steel cable behind the ladder served as an attachment point for the safety harnesses that were recommended for workers climbing the ladder ó a sign reminding them that access to the catwalk above and the room it led to was forbidden without safety harnesses, hard hats and lighting.

Upon landing, Soren looked around. The boiler behind him was massive. Judging from the massive electrical cables that protruded from it, it appeared to be electrically heated. The low throbbing of vacuum pumps indicated that this boiler operated in a partial vacuum to reduce energy use. Above him was the catwalk the group had traversed some forty feet up in the air.

He then bought up his smartphone and activated the map that Marita had stolen from Judaken's servers. "We're in the boiler room all right and a few hundred feet below sea level. From here, we can head into the reactor silo or the industrial hub.

He then turned to Lily with a slight scowl. "There was elevator that we could have taken straight into the industrial hub. We didn't need to do...whatever the fuck we just did."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 07, 2014, 09:51:24 AM**

"I wasn't talking about them compromising our mission." Vergil shook his head. "I was talking about their trustworthiness in the first place. But as for abandoning them now... I don't think so. I meant in terms of once they're safe... so long as they're not safe, absolutely not. There's no way I could abandon them right now in this situation. I felt pain earlier from one of them... anguish in another... but then it all stopped. Very sudden... that's either very good... or very bad..." Vergil stated. "They're either safe... or they're dead." he commented ruefully.

"As for Kalis laying a trap... I doubt it." Vergil shook his head as he walked with her now. "He was nowhere near as brilliant as Rex, and a trap is more Rex's style... Kalis was raw emotion... utter desire for vengeance, power, and destruction. A desire to leave his mark on everything he did. I just don't see trap in this situation." he explained, his words rapid-fire but also calm and even, his analytic brain processing all of this in a steady flow.

As they exited the room though, they were cut off by the announcement of the station being sealed in five minutes. Glancing over at Triste, the white gecko allowed a hint of concern to flood his eyes. "Mmmm... I don't know if it's them but... five minutes isn't exactly a long time to find them, get to the ship, and hope we're in enough time to make it out of here." Vergil pointed out.

"As for not seeing them since we've arrived yes, quite true, though that's thanks partly to our own design." he admitted.

"Anyway... I don't suppose you could possibly hack a computer or something to learn their location?" he suggested. "I could try and get a fix on their location by attempting to focus on their mental signatures but... since I don't know the full layout of this place, that's a tricky proposition at best." he informed her. He was still speaking quickly, but still in total command of his thought processes, or so it seemed. Coolly assessing the situation, he was making split-second decisions in the time he had, still sounding as if had the capability to clearly think all this through.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 07, 2014, 06:16:24 PM**

"Oops...sorry..." Lily blushed. "that was really scary, wasn't it?" But part of her suspected she may have noticed the elevator but blocked it out; back when she was a psionic monster she'd developed a fondness for darkness and a fear of cramped spaces.

Still, that was in the past. Time to move. "With the alarm going off, I don't think they're going to pay as much attention to us," she said, flinging open the door that led to the industrial hub. "The reactor silo is further from the security station, which would help us locate Vergil and the docks. Everybody in Voltaic is moving quickly now; let's not be the exception!"

The town was a blatant tourist trap. Colorful signs advertising hotel vacancies and souvenirs dotted the roads. The afternoon timing and roving vacationers had made it completely impossible to hide Flora, but Emilena gave her a disposable camera and foam shark-shaped hat she'd fished out of a dumpster and that seemed to be enough to convince people she was just foreign. Though she had to wear the hat like an incredibly bizarre bathing suit.

"Ooh ooh can I get a snow cone? Can I get a snow cone please!" Flora's eyes lit up at the umpteenth shaved ice vendor they'd passed. "A pink one!"

Emilena sighed. "Rio, go steal her a snow cone. Foley, keep Rio company and be the distraction if one is needed. But Flora, you're coming with me so we can get you some real pants."

She practically dragged Flora away from the vendor and into a swimsuit shop. "What's the cheapest pair of trunks you got?" she asked the baffled cashier. "Not thongs or bikinis."

The teenage clerk stared unabashedly at all three of Flora's goods. "You...I...she's..."

"She's Scandinavian," Emilena explained, but the cashier had still lost his ability to speak for the next fifteen seconds. "Oh forget it!" she finally exclaimed, and frustratedly grabbed a green pair of trunks with a rugby decal off the closest shelf. "We paid for these with my friend's peep show. You're welcome. Have a nice day."

Flora put the trunks on and wiggled her fingers at the clerk in good bye even as Emilena dragged her out the door. "Let's go check on Rio."

"And my snow cone!"

Nairda ducked underneath a scaffolding just as a spotlight passed overhead. He'd made his way deep into the wilderness, and had come across what he originally assumed was a small airport. But the four lone figures crouching in the darkness of the runway seemed anything but official.

Using the night-vision retinas he totally needed installed after his real ones were destroyed during the horrible accident in his backstory, Nairda noticed the first two individuals place a large duffel bag on the ground and back away slowly. The latter pair examined the contents of the bag, then drew guns and shot the first two.

Like a fleeting shadow in the night, Nairda slinked towards the runway. Not a noise was made, not a blade of grass disturbed by the enigmatic But so entranced was he in his perfect execution of the night shadow that he forgot about the aforementioned spotlight. A figure from the lone watchtower cried out and started firing a stationed machine gun chaotically at Nairda's position, and the two surviving members of the runway transaction went on high alert.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 08, 2014, 06:49:16 PM**

As Lily opened the door leading to the industrial section, Axel half-turned and put a hand on Soren's shoulder. "Hey, take it easy on her," he warned. "At least we're away from the guards. We're all stressed out, we can't turn on each other now. Okay?" Giving his shoulder a calming squeeze, he turned back and followed Lily out.

Beyond, a wide corridor, the walls painted a bright white, stretched off to the left and right. Overly bright florescent lights hung from the ceiling, their glow reflecting unpleasantly off the walls and making Axel squint slightly. A sign fixed to the wall directly opposite them depicted a pair of arrows pointing to the left and right. *Generator Room* was printed underneath the former, *Security* beneath the latter. Sure enough, from the left the hum of heavy machinery drifted up towards them.

Pointing to the sign, Axel looked around at the others. "Alright! So we..." There was a whirring noise above him. Blinking, Axel looked up and his mouth popped open when he saw the security camera swiveling around to settle on the group. Axel blinked, and the camera's lens zoomed in on them with a click. "Well, ah... crap," he groaned, his throat suddenly dry. "We should probably get moving..."

Panicked guests were pushing past Vergil and Triste as the two geckos made their way down the corridor, desperate to get back to their rooms. An old woman knocked into Triste's shoulder, and she glared back at the shuffling guest for a moment before turning her attention back to Vergil. "Yeah, not a problem. If we can just get to a computer... Could try at reception I suppose..."

"... escaped down to the industrial hub! And they've been joined by a male and three females, we've gotta get down there now!" A large group of burly, armed guards charged around the corner and sprinted past them. A little further up the hallway was a metal door marked *Workers Only*. The leader of the group kicked it down and lead his squad through. As the door started to close again, Triste noticed a set of concrete stairs heading down.

"Or we could follow them," she sighed, shrugging at Vergil and letting go of her luggage.

As Emilena and Flora left the swimsuit shop, Rio was shrieking in front of the shaved ice vendor, the balding, middle-aged man looking distinctly uncomfortable as tourists milling around in the crowded street started to turn in his direction.

"He... he was touching me, Dad!" Rio sobbed, hugging Foley tightly and pointing dramatically.

The vendor's face blanched and he started looking around desperately. "It's not... *it's not true!* I have no idea who this boy is!" He looked at Foley, sweat beading his forehead. "I assure you, sir, your son is lying!" The vendor scowled at Rio, lowering his voice. "What the fuck are you doing, you little shit? You're gonna get me locked up!"

Abruptly, Rio stopped crying and let go of Foley, stepping closer to the stall. "Give me a snow cone. A pink one. And a red one."

"What?!" The man blinked, outraged. "You almost ruin me for a free *snow cone?!*" He quickly scooped them into cones and shoved them roughly into Rio's hand. "There! Is that it?!"

"No, asshole, I want your *I-Pob* too." Rio eyed the expensive music player that was hanging out of the man's trouser pocket.

"What? No way in hell, I had to save up for two years to get this thing!"

Tears instantly reappeared in the boy's eyes. "He put his hand *here*... and *here*... and-"

"Alright, alright! Here! Jesus christ!" The vendor quickly tugged the music player out and pushed it into Rio's outstretched hand. "You're going to get me lynched you little prick! Now fuck off!"

Rio grinned up at the man. "Thanks mister!" Turning around, he smirked at Foley and handed him the red snow cone, then nodded at Emilena and Flora as they approached. Sauntering up to them, he held out the snow cone to Flora while pushing his newly appropriated ear buds in. "So what's the plan? Get a ride outta here? Or stay a while?" Rio hit the play button on the side of the device and scanned the crowd. "There's a lotta wallets around here..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 09, 2014, 01:49:12 AM**

Soren took a deep breath. "Sorry, it's just that I've gone through a ridiculous amount of shit."

He then followed Axel down into the t-junction. His eyes widened as he heard footsteps coming from the right. He looked at the sign. It was the security office!

"Shit! I think we just got noticed! The guards are coming!" He beckoned to Lily and Axel. "This way!"

He took off in a steady lope towards the generator room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 09, 2014, 02:00:25 PM**

So now instead of less than 5 minutes to Find Trieste and Vergil, we now have less than 2 minutes before the guards rush in and overpower us.. and then drag us off to do unspeakable things to us' Marita scowled. " Have you never watched any heist movies Axel? NEVER go near security cameras! I thought everyone knew that!" She hissed as she ran after Soren, down towards the Generator room.
_ Hey Calm down girl ' Marie spoke up " He made a mistake.. and I dont like heist films, I prefer comedies.. ' You know what I mean Marie!' Marita retorted ' His 'mistake' just cut the time we have, in half, at the very least. just try and keep up please, we cant afford at this point to have anyone falling behind"
_ Rose hurried down the hallways, trying to keep up with all the others ' the camera had caused her to panic a little bit, given all that had happened . she simply wanted ti get out of here and take a couple days to rest before the group moved ion to the next Waypoint, whereever that might be.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 09, 2014, 08:43:22 PM**

Lily kept pace with the others.

"You lead the way Soren!" she whispered urgently. "You know the most about the layout!"

Reaching the generator room, she hit the door with an "Oomph!" as it proved locked. Whether due to the lockdown or having been locked initially, she couldn't know.

She looked back down the hallway they'd just exited, fearing the approaching shadows of guards appearing any second. "What now?"

Flora grabbed the snow cone greedily and devoured the whole thing in a few bites. Then she shuddered and clutched her head in a painful groan. "Brain freeze! Augh!"

"No wallets," Emilena replied. Well, actually..." she regarded her crew. She, Foley and Rio still looked a bit odd with their shredded clothing. At least their oceanic adventures hadn't left any room for bloodstains. "Maybe one or two wallets. We all really need new outfits, and somewhere to stay the night. Just don't get caught."

She walked until she saw a hotel with a computer in the lobby. When the group tried to enter the guard stopped them, pointing to a *No Shirt, No Shoes, No Service* sign.

"Flora, keep Rio company outside," Emilena ordered, annoyed, but the guard still stopped her. Only then did Emilena realize that she was still missing her shirt from when she'd turned it into a tourniquet for her leg.

"I'll go get driving directions and info on airports and stuff," Foley assured her, entering unimpeded into the hotel, and Flora grabbed Rio's arm excitedly and dragged him into the crowds. "We're in a foreign country. Let's go get *drunk!*"

That left Emilena standing alone outside the hotel, arms crossed and angrily glowering at everything.

The two men on the runway grabbed the duffel bag and sprinted for the plane. The machine gun on the tower scanned urgently, looking for the intruder.

Nairda had reached the fallen bodies of the initial owners of the duffel bag. They looked to be poachers from their attire, complete with pistols and hunting rifles. Borrowing one and taking aim with the scope, he located the man in the tower and sniped him. Then he raced for the plane as it slowly taxied down the runway.

But even he couldn't outrun a plane. As it slowly gained air and left him in the dust, Nairda fired his grappling hook and locked it into one of the retracting wheels. The plane bobbed dangerously as he rappelled onto its underbelly and then its wing. Smashing out a window with his elbow, he combat-rolled into the plane and came up ready to fire, wielding both pistols akimbo.

Both pilot and copilot had their hands up in surrender.

Nairda looked confused. "Huh?"

"We give up!" the first one announced urgently.

"We've seen this movie!" the second agreed. "Just don't kill us, and you can have the plane and everything!"

Nairda lowered the pistols. "Hmm. That's pretty logical thinking." He reflected on the situation. "Yeah, I suppose that's fair. Just let me tie you up and lock you in the cargo hold--"

"*Typical*," he suddenly heard Emilena's voice in his head. "*Can't even kill two poachers. What a failed excuse for a man.*"

"Yes I can!" he replied angrily.

"*You can't do anything you say you will,*" she continued acidly.

"Shut up!" he yelled angrily, as his captors regarded him with equal parts bemusement and trepidation. Then he shot both of them. "There! Are you happy?" he yelled at the empty ship. "I did it! You said I couldn't do it, but I did!"

The ship buckled due to a lack of pilot. He quickly snapped out of it and raced over to steady and fly the plane.

A few hours into the flight, it finally clicked what he'd done. "...there actually might be something wrong with me..." he realized with a dawning dread.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 11, 2014, 03:26:58 PM**

Vergil nodded, and sighed as well. "Why not? We just have to hope it's them." he murmured, and telepathically slid his bag across the floor to baggage check for the ship. Since his name was on the tag, he hoped they'd figure it out and get it to his cabin... which might be a problem right now because he didn't exactly have a cabin but... oh well. Details.

Pursuing Triste now, the gecko moved down the stairwell and made for what appeared to be passages leading into the power plant of the hotel. The guards were converging on a central point, and as Vergil could finally detect the rest of the group up ahead, he decided to act now. There were four guards ahead of them, none of which had noticed they were being followed yet.

Reaching out, he tripped two of them (the leftmost ones) and decided to let Triste handle the other two in whatever way she saw fit. As he was currently unarmed, he'd have to get in extremely close to do any real damage. The two guards he'd tripped both landed hard, as they hadn't been expecting their legs to be yanked out from under them, and as the floor down here was concrete, it wasn't a pretty sight the minute they smacked into the ground... blood spattered every which way, and at least one looked as if he'd dislocated his jaw..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 12, 2014, 11:44:26 PM**

Soren's heart raced as he looked around. All that was available was a toolbox someone had forgotten next to the door. He dumped out the toolbox's contents. Nothing except a large flathead screwdriver. Lacking any other options, he plunged the tool into the seam between thw reader and the wall. Grunting with exertion, he bore down on the tool.

Eventually, the keycard reader was torn from the wall, revealing a mass of wires. He turned to Axel. "Axel, See if you can reroute the wires to open the lock!" Soren threw the mangled screwdriver to the ground.

The Human rubbed his aching arms and drew his pistol and clicked off the safety.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 13, 2014, 05:03:05 AM**

Sprinting up the corridor, Triste reached the two guards Vergil had tripped. One of them was convulsing on the floor, blood streaming from his nose and a large gash in his forehead as his limbs flailed. The other one though... his jaw stuck out at an odd angle, and his face wasn't a pretty sight - but that didn't mean he couldn't be a risk to them. Passing him, Triste slammed her heel into the back of his neck, a loud *pop* accompanying the snapping of his vertebrae. *Better safe than sorry...*

From further up she heard yelling, and as she jerked her head Triste saw the two remaining guards approach a right hand turn and raise their guns at something out of sight. Swearing under her breath, she cloaked, disappearing from sight.

"Alright, I'm on it!" Axel flipped his vision and reached for the wires, attempting to control his breathing as the heavy footsteps got closer. He tried to concentrate, to focus his attention, but it was hard - if he couldn't open this door...

"*Freeze! Get down on the floor! Now!*"

Axel squeaked and jerked around. At the end of the corridor, two burly, hardened looking men were aiming assault rifles towards them, thick body armor protecting their torso. *Can't go back to that room again... not again...* "Soren, shoot them!" he gasped. "Fucking shoot th-"

The guard on the left suddenly bucked as if something had leaped on his back. He opened his mouth to shout out - but then his head snapped to the side with an audible crunch. As his body crumpled, the assault rifle he was still holding loosely in his right hand was forced down and opened fire, the hail of bullets tearing through the final remaining guard's knees in a mist of blood and gristle, and then sweeping up to rip through the security camera on the wall. Axel gaped as the shrieking man collapsed like a sack of meat onto his stomach and tried to crawl forwards, but was dragged back. A pistol, yanked from a strap attached to one of his ruined legs, floated up as if by magic and pressed down hard against his temple.

Triste, straddling the guard's back, pressed the pistol hard against the side of his head. "Call off the alarm," she hissed.

Sobbing, the guard tried to turn his head but Triste's fingers held him firmly by the hair, keeping him still. "Wha... what?!"

"Call. It. Off. Or you end up like your friends."

"*No!* Please... please don't. I'll do it..." The man fumbled weakly with his radio and pressed a button, taking a deep breath. "This is Ramirez, Bravo Team. Targets are down... I repeat, targets are down."

It crackled. "*Copy that. Need a recovery team for the bodies?*"

Triste wagged a finger in front of the guard's face. "No... no, we've got them. We'll bring them back through the boiler room. Over."

"*Alright. Make it quick. Over.*" The guard let go of the button and the radio went silent.

"Good. Thank you." Triste lifted the man's head back and pulled the trigger, his body jerking once then going limp. Letting his head drop wetly to the concrete, she stood up and de-cloaked, wiping a few spatters of blood off the side of her face disinterestedly as she faced the group. "Ready to get going? I wouldn't recommend staying - the room service is terrible."

Rio turned to look back at Emilena as Flora led him away. On one hand, they really *should* be trying to help her out. On the other hand... he could be getting drunk. "Alright then!" he said cheerily as they moved further into the crowd.

A short distance away, there was a clothing stall selling an assortment of tacky items that only a tourist would consider buying. As they passed, he noticed the vendor was deep in a heated argument with one of his customers... and in the corner of the stall, out of the vendor's sight, a row of bright, cheerful T-Shirts were left unattended. Seeing one that seemed about Emilena's size, Rio sidled over, slid it off the hanger and melted back into the crowd. Grinning at the printed message on its front, he tied it around his waist then rejoined Flora. "Are we gonna get wasted or what?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2014, 01:26:06 PM**

Marita stepped forward, relieved that the guards had been dispatched ' Good to see you guys again. we were trying to locate you, but it appears you found us first. We've been looking for you two for awhile now. someone spiked our drinks when we went out to eat..' Marita said to them. " my drink, along with Marie's and Rose's, had biproxytol in it, and Sorens had some sort of a hallucinogen , in any event we're all quite lucky to be alive, the doctors in this hotel are quite skilled and professional.' Marita said.

- why dont we catch up with them once we are safely out of here? I've had enough adventure for one day ' Marie said " i just want to get out of this place, get back on terra firma, and well, enjoy myself for a bit. i mean, how often do you get to go on a trip to South America..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 14, 2014, 01:09:36 AM**

Lily winced when she saw what had happened to the first set of guards. "Hold on..." she said hesitantly; she knew that time was of the essence and she was in no way responsible for their pain, but she couldn't bear to leave a human being in such a state. Then Triste mercy-killed them, relieving Lily's responsibility in the least comforting way possible.

"You're alive!" she exclaimed, eyes lighting up as Vergil and Triste revealed themselves. "Do either of you need healing?"

She glanced at the way they'd come. "I'm sure you've heard the lockdown in progress. Are we hoping to reach the docks, or do you know of an easier way out?"

Flora half-dragged Rio over to the nearest pub. "Just make sure to lift somebody's wallet or we won't be able to pay," she whispered. "Hey bartender! What's the strongest stuff you got?"

He looked disparagingly at Rio. "Get your kid out of here," he demanded.

"What?" exclaimed Flora. "That's bullshit! That's the only reason we left America!"

"Allow me," said a deep voice behind her. A heavyset businessman sat down next to her and smiled. "I recognize your ceremonial fur color. You two are Sapaar missionaries on your holy pilgrimage, are you not?"

Flora blinked. So did the bartender. "What?"

The man fished a book out of his suitcase. "Article 59 of the National Liquor Act states: "*The parent or adult guardian of a minor or a person responsible for administering a religious sacrament, may on occasion supply to that minor a moderate quantity of liquor to be consumed by the minor in the presence and under the supervision of that parent, guardian or other person.*"

The light bulb clicked. "Oh yeah!" Flora beamed. "We're part of...that religion you said. It's customary for our young boys when they come of age to travel the world with a female guardian and sample the drinks in as many countries as possible!"

"You're dangerously close to infringing on an individual's religious rights," the businessman threatened the barkeep.

The bartender picked up the official lawbook. "Well, I'll be. Guess you are allowed to be in here...vodka's probably the strongest stuff we got, to answer your question ma'am."

"Three Saharan martinis please, and put in on my tab," the businessman ordered.

Flora swooned as the bartender stepped away to prepare the drinks. "*Well.* To whom do I owe this pleasure?"

The businessman eyed her shirtless chest. "Just here on company business. Work things you wouldn't care about. I'm much more interested in hearing more about *you*."

Flora's eyes lit up. "Mmmm. Well, keep the drinks coming and I'll see what I can spill..."

It was twilight when Foley returned to Emilena. "Hey. So we can stay around here for the night, hotel prices are pretty standard for tourist traps, or we have several choices for flights out of a small airport down the road. Earliest flight is in two hours but has like eleven layovers and three transfers; I'd recommend the first direct flight to Cornova at 6 am."

He held out a sweater emblazoned with the hotel logo. "Also bought you this; looked like you're freezing your tits off."

"Why didn't you give me that *first*?" Emilena snatched it urgently and slipped it on. With a final glower at the guard, she finally marched unhindered into the heated hotel lobby. "I am not waiting until 6 am; book us on that crappy one with all the layovers. In thirty minutes if those two idiots haven't returned we'll go grab them and start our hike to the airport."

Nairda crash-landed the plane into the cliffside of the Yungas Road; Nairda had used a combination of extensive gliding periods and over-reliance on thermals to fly the plane much further than its gas tank would normally allow. Climbing up the cliffside was an arduous ordeal but his augments downgraded the struggle from "impossible" to "strenuous." He was always better than Emilena at climbing and endurance, though only now did he reflect on how many times he'd neglected to point this out or rub it in her face.

After some hiking down the road, he eventually came across the site where his gang had encountered their old friends from Lanthae. He paused for a moment looking for the blood stains from when that white gecko had slashed Emilena's legs open, but rain and weather had completely removed all traces of the encounter.

Still, he was able to reach the spot where they'd hidden the Mexican tow truck. Slashing vines and fronds out of his way, he turned the thin sliver of metal jammed through the exposed steering column like he'd always seen Foley do, and to his amazement it started the truck. Inching it onto the road, he began driving back the way they'd first come.

Things were quite perilous as he slowly started realizing just how high up he was on the "road of death." He'd never obtained a driver's license, and slowly the perpetual drizzle evolved into a torrential tropical storm, shaking the car with otherworldly howling and hurricane winds.

As Nairda attempted to navigate turns he could barely register through a rain-blasted windshield looking out into almost complete darkness, for the first time he found himself missing Flora more than Emilena.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 14, 2014, 09:08:51 AM**

Vergil winced as Triste executed the final guard after promising him he wouldn't follow the same fate as his his comrades. She'd also killed the survivor from his group... and it left his stomach reeling. Killing in the heat of battle was one thing but... killing opponents who could no longer fight back... it was excessive. It wasn't right...

His eyes shifted to Lily as his face fell. "No... thank you." he replied simply. He knew Triste would justify her actions to him... but it didn't mean he'd agree with her. In fact... he wasn't sure he agreed with any of this... if they were just as bad as Kalis... what separated them from him? It was something he'd argued with her over before... but she hadn't changed...

He replied to Lily's question. "The docks are the only way off this station. They blow anything else out of the water or the sky. We have to leave in an authorized fashion." he answered. "If you're all ready... I suggest we not waste any time in checking out." He turned to head back to the stairwell now, thoroughly disgusted with everything.

Now of course... he wasn't sure if this group could check out... he and Triste were probably fine but... the rest had been recognized. Still... maybe he could pull one final trick out of his sleeve in the event they were to be stopped.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 14, 2014, 10:01:47 AM**

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then we'd better get moving then' Rose said iin reply : frankly I'm sstarving, when we get out of here I'm stopping at the first pizza place i see..
_ so long as its under 10 credits a pizza right/ Marie smirked " girl you dont need to be so cheap all the time.. " Nlot the time for it Marie' Rose replied.

_
lets just get to the docks first ' maritas interrupted, preventing the girls from arguing, time was of the essence here. She moved towards the stairwell and Vergil ' whats the quickest way to the Docks from here? ' she asked Vergil. " so we can beat it out of here once we check out. ' Marita was dreading checking out, as the camera had caught them in the boiler room, where visitors were not supposed to be. Hopefully the clerks manning the front desk werent linked to the security system. Still playing it cool, was the best choice, she decided.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 15, 2014, 05:35:27 PM**

Triste glanced over her shoulder as Vergil made his way back towards the staircase with Marita, Rose and Marie trailing behind. She didn't need mental powers to tell that he was upset. Sighing, she looked back at Soren, Lily and Axel and gestured. "Come on, let's go. Unless you want to be here when the clean up crew finds the bodies." Triste turned and stepped over one of the bodies. "I wouldn't recommend that."

Axel blinked, his fur still standing up on end. As Triste started to walk away, he shook his head and went after her. "No, wait. Wait! Where the hell have you two been?! We -" His foot caught on the foot of one of the guard's corpses and he almost fell flat on his face. "*Son of a bitch*... The only reason this happened is because we had no idea where you were!"

"*Later*," Triste said flatly, barely sparing him a glance.

Axel's mouth opened and closed. He looked back at the other two, brow furrowed. "What the hell..."

As the sun started to set, the pub began to fill with loud, brash tourists looking to get drunk. Above the heads of the drinking patrons, a small shape swung amongst the wooden rafters. Still clutching the remains of his third Saharan martini, Rio drained it then flopped down on one of the beams above the bartender. "Get me another one. Put it on... that guy's tab again." Rio still didn't know who the man in the suit was, but as long as he was buying drinks Rio didn't care.

"You really shouldn't be up there you know," the bartender warned.

"It's part of my holy pilgrimage." As the bartender started to prepare another, Rio stared through the fog that was just starting to creep across his vision at Flora and the businessman who were still together. He smirked. If the guy wanted some of *that* from her, he was in for a surprise. Shrugging, Rio reached down and plucked the new drink from the bartender, then started moving across the rafters again, looking down to spot any potential targets he could steal from.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 16, 2014, 12:23:48 AM**

"Let's not bug them, dear," Lily added hastily. It didn't take empathic powers to tell they weren't interested in small talk. "We can share what we've all learned once we're off this station."

She double-timed it in order to keep up with Vergil and Triste, who weren't slowing down in the slightest for their wounded and battered teammates. Having had to rely on far too much improvisation to survive up till now, she was content to let the professionals take control of the situation.

Thirty minutes later Foley was still surfing the internet and snacking on a bag of trail mix he'd purchased from the gift shop. Emilena had been sleeping on the couch in the lobby, and finally the cashier walked over and shook her gently. "Ma'am? I apologize, but we can't let you..."

Emilena brushed her off rudely. "I get it. Go away." She groggily stumbled over to Foley. "What time is it?"

"You were asleep for about an hour and a half. Our flight was delayed so I didn't feel the need to wake you." Foley held out his trail mix but Emilena pushed it aside. "Flora and Rio aren't back yet," he continued. "Where are they, anyway?"

Emilena groaned. "Looking for booze, from what I overheard before they left."

"What? exclaimed Foley. "And I wasn't invited?" He thought for a few seconds. "You know, I'm okay with that. I've been thinking...that mermaid gave us an opportunity most don't get. A second chance. I've decided I'm not going to drink and I'm not going to do drugs anymore."

Emilena rolled her eyes. "Stupid."

"Of course you'd say that." Foley frowned. "What I'm trying to say is...when we get back to Cornova I think I'm out." He couldn't look her in the eye when whipped her head around. "I want to go into a legitimate field, actually make something of myself. Not to say you guys weren't fun and all, but...you can't run cheap drugs forever, you know?"

Emilena didn't say anything. She gave herself a minute, mulling her potential responses carefully. Ultimately she just sighed. "Fine. It's your choice. Probably the smarter and less life-threatening option, really. At least you're handling your departure better than Nairda did."

Nairda screamed as he barreled off the side of the cavernous mountain of death.

Drawing his katana to slice the seatbelt off, he kicked the door to the truck open and fired his grappling hook in the direction of the road. Several stomach-churning seconds of free-fall ended abruptly as he smashed into the thick foliage of the sheer cliff.

He was thoroughly soaked to the bone in chilled mud by the time he next hoisted himself back onto the road. Shivering and weeping Byronic tears of bitterness, he stumbled his way through the stinging rain towards civilization.

Flora was getting increasingly touchy-feely with the businessman; after her third martini she was listening raptly as he explained the logistics of South African class action suites and the case a hypothetical one would have against a multinational conglomerate's alleged use of unreported advertising fees.

"That is so *interesting!*" she exclaimed truthfully, reaching over to unsubtly brush her hands across his chest and almost knocking her glass over in the process. "I'm sorry, I don't mean to change the subject, but..." Her hands shook as they brushed the pleated collar of his travel coat. "Has everyone ever told you...how *handsome* your suit is?"

The businessman grinned and urged her to finish her drink. "You want to come back to my hotel room? I have several suits even nicer than this one..."

Flora hiccuped and excitedly stood up, grabbing him for support. "You'll have to model *all of them* for me!" She'd regained her balance but didn't stop clutching onto him. She stared with glazed awe at his unbuttoned cufflinks.

"Yeah, before you two go anywhere you owe me for like, eleven drinks," the bartender piped up. He'd been impatiently polishing the same glass for the past thirty minutes; they were taking up valuable bar space from the regular evening clientele.

As the businessmen took out his wallet, he glanced at Rio. "What about your kid?"

"Oh, don't worry about him! He'll be fine!" Flora fake stumbled so she could press her body up against his. "Oops...I think I *hic* may have overdid it..." she giggled.

The businessman became more concerned about what he felt pressing up against his leg. He pushed her away and stared in horror at the massive bulge under her bathing suit. "That's...a purse or something, right?" he stammered.

Flora batted her eyes. "Sure, if you want." She stepped forward, but he pushed her into the bar and staggered backwards in disgust. "Ow!" she protested, clutching her head. "Come on, I thought we had a thing going!"

The businessman made a bolt for the door, but at a signal from the barkeep a bouncer stepped in his way. The businessman rammed him and sent him stumbling.

Flora ran forward. "Wait!" She grabbed his arm. "Look, don't worry about my flytrap, that just means I'm really good at pleasuring one! Please don't--"

He brutally slapped her to free his arm and sprinted in a panic out the door. The bouncer got to his feet, enraged, and chased after the man, drawing a pistol.

Flora was lying stunned on the floor, nursing her cheek. "I...I..." Tears welled in her eyes. Before she could say anything else, the bartender silently grabbed her and Rio and threw both of them out the door, slamming it shut behind them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 16, 2014, 01:15:38 AM**

Soren loped after the two. His scowl and clenched fists said it all. His pistol slapped uncomfortably against his stomach as he ran. Luckily, the hallways were deserted. But knowing that an alarm had undoubtly been tripped, he *did not* want to press his luck.

"*Those two get lost. We nearly all got our asses killed trying to find them and they don't even talk to us!?*" he fumed.

"Axel," he whispered as he jogged alongside his friend. "I *really* hope those two don't lead us into another clusteróFuck!"

Soren fell to the floor as he slipped on a recently washed patch of floor. His heart rate spiked as he heard distant shouts that seemed to be coming from the other branch of the y-junction tha Triste had led them to.

He staggered to his feet, trembling slightly. Luckily, nothing was too badly damaged. He looked around the hallway. Just a bunch of pipes and wires lined the ceiling. An alarm box that was labeled specifically for non-security related issues was on the right fork of the y-junction. He smiled; he now had an idea.

"Axel, Marita, I need you to help me cause some problems. If we do that, we should be able to clog up the station's staff," Soren said. He shot a glance at the wires and pipes that crisscrossed the metal ceiling.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 16, 2014, 08:57:51 AM**

Vergil by now had neared the top of the steps. He'd mostly recovered his strength from before, though didn't want to test his limits right now to find out. He opened the door leading out into the civilian areas of the hotel, poking his head out and narrowing his eyes to scan for any hostiles. He didn't see any, but he did pick up on the conversation behind him. Sighing, he closed the door.

"It's clear and no... we're not wasting any further time. You want to stay here and dick around, that's your prerogative. Me? I'm getting off this station. The docks are 100 paces away to our right... I'm not causing any more problems and I'm not staying around to risk security bagging my ass." he chided Soren. "They're already on to us... so I'm leaving."

Opening the door with a shove, the gecko strode out into the hallway and made for the front desk to his right. "I'm checking out. The Somerset party I believe it was. Two of us. I believe you had a weapon of mine on hold." Vergil informed the receptionist.

She bit her lip and pulled up his reservation. "It seems you canceled your stay with us this morning sir... when you arrived."

"So I did." Vergil responded, having temporarily forgotten that detail.

"Your weapon will be inserted into your luggage, provided it isn't locked. Have you already checked your bag?" she asked.

"Yes." he curtly replied.

"Good... then in that case... I'll book you a room on board and you'll be on your way. Any class preference?" she asked, looking across at him.

"First." Vergil stated, staring at her.

"Very well... printing a boarding pass for you and your wife now." she tapped on a few keys and the passes were printed.

Taking his, he handed Triste her own, and moved to go stand in line for the security scanners now. The ones leaving the station were to ensure nothing suspicious was being smuggled out, as Judaken was certainly the target of its share of corporate espionage. He turned slightly to see what the others had been doing, uncomfortably noting the location of cameras overhead. Still... he and Triste weren't inherently suspicious on their own... and their DNA was in the system... which might help out if they couldn't in fact leave this place.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 16, 2014, 09:30:25 AM**

Marita strode to the counter and handed in her room key ' checking out mam " she said politely to the receptionist "The Jones party. all 3 of us ' she added as Rose and Marie put their keys on the counter " we'd like to book second class passage on the next flight out of here. We've had a wonderful time and we will certainly recommend this hotel to our friends and family' Marita said keeping a straight face.
-
Rose wore a smile, inwardly she was hoping that checkout and boarding would be quick and uneventful so they could relax and unwind, and get caught up with what Vergil and Trieste had been doing. "Likely having lots of 'private' time she thought to herself and chuckled slightly '
_ Marie waited for the receptionist to take her key and check her out, alphabetically she was the first name on the group, but marita was the one whose name was in the system.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 17, 2014, 06:12:03 PM**

"Thank you, dear." Triste smiled warmly at Vergil, taking the pass he handed her. Slipping it away, she looked at the receptionist and shrugged, offering her an expression of sincere disappointment. "I'm so sorry we had to cut our visit short. This really is a *lovely* hotel." Shrugging again, she joined Vergil at the queue for the scanners.

Behind, waiting with Lily and Soren, Axel was busy trying to keep his face straight. They were so close to getting out, but if a member of staff recognised them somehow... He looked up for a second, and caught Triste's eyes from the line in front. She locked gaze with him briefly, glanced upwards then turned around as if nothing had happened. Tilting his head slightly to see what she'd been trying to tell him, he caught a glimpse of the security cameras watching over them. "*Shit*... cameras, guys. Keep it cool." The receptionist beckoned him forwards, and forcing a pleasant expression on his face Axel approached, holding Lily's hand and keeping his face angled away from the cameras. "Hello! We're the, ah... the Whents. We'd like to, ah, check out."

"Of course, sir." The woman clicked around on her computer. After a moment, she frowned. "It says here you were booked in to stay just earlier today... Was there a problem?"

"Oh, no! There was, ah.. just some family trouble back home. Can't be ignored. You know how it is."

"I'm sure." The receptionist looked over at Vergil and Triste, and Marita and her girlfriends, then turned her inquisitive eyes to Axel. "Seems to have been happening a lot recently..." She shook her head. "Well, I'm very sorry your stay had to be cut short. I hope you'll be able to enjoy your visit to the fullest the next time. Will that be a First Class return?"

Axel nodded. "Thanks." He took the two tickets she printed out, then turned to walk with Lily to the security scanner that Vergil and Triste were just passing through. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see the receptionist pick up the phone on the desk next to her and start speaking into it. About them... or something completely unrelated? His tail twitched nervously. "I'm really, *really* not going to miss this place..." He whispered to Lily.

"Hey! What the hell did I do, man?!" Rio yelled indignantly through the door.

"*Hey... where'd my cash go?!*"

He stiffened at the muffled voice that drifted across from inside, and turned to Flora. "Yeah, let's get going." Looking at her face, he paused when a dim streetlight revealed the tears in her eyes. "Hey, it's alright... someday you'll find someone who likes your co... your flytrap."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 17, 2014, 09:05:40 PM**

Marita took the Ticket print outs for herself Marie And Rose and the three of them headed to the line of passengers waiting to have their tickets scanned to board. Marie was first of the three girls in line just behind Trieste and Vergil. a young lizard couple stood in-between them and the geckos. Rose kept her expression neutral as the line slowly moved. Marie looked at her pass, seemingly interested in what seat she had been given. Marita stared ahead at the scanner in front of them, and the escalator beyond which lead to the ship that would take them from this ghastly miserable hotel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 18, 2014, 10:19:47 PM**

Lily shivered nervously as she walked as fast as she could to reach the others.

"Hey!" She nearly leaped out of her skin as a supervisor marched up to her. "Your uniform is a mess!" he exclaimed. "You can't be seen in public looking like this!"

"I--I..my shift is up...I was actually just going home..." she stammered wide-eyed.

The supervisor glanced at her, clearly suspicious at her behavior. Then noticed the bloodstain on the underside of her sleeve. "Did you injure yourself?" he asked, alarmed.

"Yes...it's why I'm not on duty now! But I'd rather make my boat than go to the infirmary!"

His eyes narrowed as he noticed her yellow-tinged eyes and dilated pupils, both indications of drug use. "I think I want to speak with you in my office."

Lily looked in a panic at her allies, silently begging them to help her out.

Flora was so intoxicated she could barely walk; she relied heavily on Rio as they made their way back to the hotel. "Why won't anyone sleep with me Rio?" she sobbed drunkenly. "What am I doing wrong? Am I ugly? Do I not show enough interest in what they say? In who they are?"

She hiccuped and stumbled off the curb. "I just want...just want someone to..." she buried her head in her hands. "Why did I choose to do this to me?" she cried. "I bet my old *ugly* self could have gotten laid by now...but I don't understand *why...*"

Emilena noticed them approaching from a distant street lamp. "Oh for god's sake, they can barely walk. How'd she even get alcohol, aren't they both underage?" She stood up to go buy a sweater for the night guard's sake, but noticed the gift shop was closed. "Drat. Guess we're starting our hike now. Hope you're looking forward to being a drunkcrutch the entire time."

Foley groaned. "This is why I didn't go to college..."

Nairda raced out of the rain and into the locked door of the airport terminal. He was starving, but all the shops were closed and the airport was completely shut down until morning. Narida wasn't aware airports did that, but admittedly his only experience was with huge bustling metropolitan airports, not backwash jungle airports.

This still meant he'd have to wait until morning to take his flight. Finding an empty spot behind a dumpster, he turned on his sensor augments that would warn him of any unwanted activity in his immediate vicinity, and fell into a fitful sleep.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 19, 2014, 12:15:50 AM**

Soren stepped up to the supervisor. "Excuse me, but I saw her slip and fall previously," he said. Before he had regrouped with everyone else, he had snuck off to a control room inside the industrial area of Voltaic Station. Exploiting the tiny bit of knowledge he had learned from Anne about industrial computer control, he shut down the main coolant pumps for the distillation columns that purified the solvent used in ore extraction, shut down the output valves and fed false data into the sensors. All he had to do was wait until the reaction inevitably ran away.

A Golden Retriever worker scowled as she looked at the temperature gauge on the nearby pipe. The readings from her tablet and the gauge failed to match up. Not to mention, the distillation column was making some rather unusual burbling noises.

She held up her radio. "Hey, can we get someone down here? I'm getting some fucked up readings for Distillation Column No. 2. It'só"

The worker was abruptly cut off as a massive blast rocked the area. 2,000 liters of the solvent inside the ten meter high distillation column had finally reached its thermal decomposition point ans detonated, reducing the ten meter high column to shrapnel. Rivulets of burning solvent mixed with the silvery puddles of the liquid metal coolant as workers frantically tried to contain the mess and aid the wounded. All as alarms blared through the area.

Soren staggered as the blast was felt on the surface. "The fuck was that?" he asked, feigning ignorance.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 19, 2014, 08:32:57 AM**

Vergil was waved forward into the scanner, even as Lily was accosted by a supervisor. The scanner was clear for Vergil, and he proceeded on towards the ship, but stopped as he wondered how he'd assist Lily. As he was about to open his mouth, an explosion rumbled from somewhere deep within the station. Briefly wondering on it, his brow furrowed as he sensed further needless pain. Soren hadn't joined them right away... and the gecko now suspected this latest disturbance had something to do with him... or maybe not, it was hard to tell.

Still... it was needless. And it made him wince as he sensed it, but he figured the situation would at least distract the supervisor... but just in case not... he'd stick around... see what he could do.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 19, 2014, 02:06:37 PM**

As the explosion far beneath them shook the floor, Axel stumbled and threw out a hand to steady himself, his palm slapping against the chest of a woman also queuing to leave the hotel. "Ah... sorry! I'm sorry!" he stammered, ears reddening, but the woman was far too distracted by the panic around them as members of staff rushed around and guests looked around in confusion, trying to understand what had just happened.

"What the hell..." Were *they* responsible for... whatever that was? Axel didn't think so, but he didn't think sticking around to find out was a good idea. Turning back to Lily, he saw that the supervisor who'd been questioning her was facing the other way, distracted by the terse instructions that he was barking into his earpiece. "We need to go *now*," Axel said under his breath, pulling Lily away and towards the scanner. Stepping through, he half expected alarms to start squealing, given how their luck had turned out so far... but he emerged on the other side with no problems. "Alright... okay..." he breathed, glancing back to make sure Lily and Soren weren't having any problems. He was looking forward to never, ever having to see this hotel again.

"Not the holiday you were expecting, Whent?" Triste said behind him.

Clenching his jaw, Axel didn't reply.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Rio muttered, not understanding Flora. *How much has she had?* His knees shook as Flora put her full weight on him, which wasn't helping his alcohol impaired balance, and as he guided her down the road they almost buckled. "That... that guy was an asshole," he grunted. "But, you know, if... if you looked for people who liked getting screwed by dongs, you'd get laid more..."

Glancing up, Rio saw two familiar figures approaching. "Hey, you missed out!" he announced. "Some guy, he... he bought us, like, drinks!" In the gloom, he didn't see the puddle of sick in front of them, and with a squelch his foot slipped, sending him and Flora crashing into the chunky mess.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 19, 2014, 03:30:03 PM**

Marita Marie and Rose quickly filed through the scanner without problems, and joined the others on the other side ' lets get going, and take our seats ' Marie said as she put one foot on the escalator " We have second class seats so we'll be a section behind the first class. anyone else buy second class?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 19, 2014, 06:17:43 PM**

Lily was quite grateful to find the supervisor suddenly had more important things to worry about. Allowing Axel to drag her through the security checkpoint she should have bee-lined to in the first place, she did a quick headcount to make sure the team all there. "Yes, let's go," she agreed hastily. "Thank god for that...whatever just happened. I hope these people run up millions of dollars in repairs..."

"You're right!" Flora agreed with nothing Rio had said in particular. "It *wasn't* fair of him, or Emilena, or any of them!" On a dime her countenance had flashed from drunken sorrow to rage. "I'm selfless, and understanding, and *gorgeous*, and they're just...just...*assholes*! Who the *fuck* cares what they think???"

And then Rio tripped and sent her sprawling into a puddle of vomit.

Clicking her tongue with annoyance, Emilena hoisted the folf to her feet. "Where in god's name have you both--?"

SLAP!

A piercing crack broke the dead silence that immediately befell the team. Emilena massaged her jaw and stared silently at Flora, who began quaking uncontrollably as she realized what she had just done.

"I'm sorry! I--I don't know what came over me, I don't...please don't kill me!"

Emilena firmly grabbed her by the wrist and dragged her over to the women's bathroom. Flora's yelps and cries echoed back out.

"You don't think she's actually killing her, do you?" muttered Foley, looking slightly concerned.

After a few minutes, Flora emerged spluttering and soaked. "I was just washing her off," Emilena crossed her arms, noticing Foley's expression. "With freezing water. We've got a long hike ahead of us, she needed a pick-me-up."

She threw Rio a large wad of damp paper towels. "Don't get tired yet; we need to make the airport in under two hours. Next time you sleep, we'll finally be on the way home."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 19, 2014, 10:45:21 PM**

Soren casually walked through the security checkpoint. His uniform had been exchanged for some casual clothing. Perhaps too casual as he had on a set of board shorts and an obnoxiously loud Hawaiian shirt.

"Have a nice day sir," the Vulpine guard said as she handed him his boarding pass.

"Thank you," Soren replied between clenched teeth.

He watched some of staff shepherding the crowd into safe rooms and others barking orders into radios and scurrying to ensure there were no injuries and the structural integrity of the hotel was fine. The Human had to admit, Judaken was efficient as all hell.

He then sat on an Art Deco styled sofa with brushed bronze ends and sighed. "What a shitty vacation," he muttered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 22, 2014, 08:54:29 AM**

With everyone through the security scanners, Axel felt he could finally start breathing a sigh of relief. From the ramp leading up to the Bremen II, a heavyset security guard came charging down and towards the group, and for a moment Axel felt a twinge of panic surge through him. But then the man pushed past him, not even pausing to glance at his face, and ran through into the hotel.

Swallowing, Axel turned and nodded at the others. "Alright... well, if nobody has any objections, how about we get the *hell* away from this place?" He started to make for the ramp, then blinked at Soren's shirt. "You know, ah... if you're gonna keep wearing that, I'll need to buy some sunglasses." Giving a last nervous grin, he scurried up to the ship, eager to set sail.

Rio snatched the paper towels from the air and started trying to rub the chunks off his trousers. "Thanks." With the sorry state his clothes were in, he was almost starting to feel at home again. Having to dress up in fancy, clean attire on the ship had been *horrible*.

Wiping off the worst of it, he straightened up a little unsteadily and dropped the wet paper in the gutter. "Airport? Are we stealing a plane?! Hell yeah!" Hopping onto Foley's back, Rio waved his arm. "Let's go! I'll... I'll carry you next!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 22, 2014, 01:46:53 PM**

Lily couldn't agree more. Badly shaken by her close call, she went way too quickly through security, and only the catastrophe in the base allowed her to do so.

The boarding of the cruise ships was one of the most disorderly in Voltaic history, but people were eager to get off the docks in light of what had just happened. Luckily, it appeared Voltaic was just as eager to keep the fallout as away from the tourists' eyes as possible, and were accelerating the departure as quickly as they could.

"Um, no, actually we are legitimately flying as economy class passengers," Foley answered Rio. "Though I'm sure you nutjobs would have all loved to steal a plane."

"We could have stolen a plane!" Emilena smacked herself in the forehead. "Foley, when I told you to lay out our options, I expected you to lay them *all out*. What the hell."

"Well, since I had to pay for the tickets because you all keep your money in tins under your mattresses, how about you just *make believe* you're stealing a free flight home!" Foley snapped back. "Cause that's actually totally what you're all doing. From me."

"I can pay you back, Foley," offered Flora.

"No, you can't," he responded tersely. "These tickets were not cheap. And I don't accept sexual favors as a form of currency."

"That's not what I meant!" Flora riled up again. "There's more to me than sex, you know! Stop talking about me like that, and treating me like I'm only--*Ow!*"

Emilena whipped her with a wet rolled up paper towel. "Shut up. Seriously. Rio, this is why we don't get her drunk."

She checked the skyline. "There it is. Now, keep your eyes on the ground, let me do the talking, and follow all the directions on signs. *Especially* at the metal detectors, we don't want a repeat of what happened in Mexico."

"I thought we agreed never to speak of Mexico again," Foley shuddered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 22, 2014, 01:59:56 PM**

Marita Marie and Rose went towards their rooms, separated from the others by a flight of stairs. the second class row had nice accommodations, but right now Rose and the others were not looking at the scenery or the quality of their room. they just wanted to recuperate from their experiences on Voltaic as quicjkly as possible and hope nothing else happened.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 24, 2014, 10:35:14 AM**

Soren emerged from the bathroom with a wet towel in hand. His second class cabin would have been a first class cabin on any other ship. A brushed bronze Art Deco mirror adorned one of the walls. Directly below that was an empty refrigerator. Plush black carpet lined the cabin's floor.

His obnoxiously loud clothing had been exchanged for more subdued casual wear ó a black t-shirt and black khakis.

His stomach growled. "Might as well see if everyone else wants a light meal."

The Human picked up his smartphone and dialed Axel. "Hey Axel," he said. "I'm going for a light meal. Care to join me?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 24, 2014, 04:28:48 PM**

Back in his and Lily's cabin, Axel was lying face down on their bed, exhausted, his head buried in the thick pillows. "You know," he started, his voice muffled and indistinct. "I know I said you could choose our next holiday after that nude beach... but I'm calling a veto on all underwater hotels. Deal?"

Pushing himself up on his elbows, Axel looked over at Lily, his face growing serious. "I'm so glad you're okay. Back then, when you were tied in that chair... I was so scared that-" He was interrupted by the cheerful chiming of their cabin's phone coming from the corner of the room. "Crap... I'm gonna need to get a new cell phone when we get back..." he muttered as he pushed himself off the bed and crossed over to it.

"Hello? Oh, hey Soren." Axel rubbed a hand through his hair. "A meal? Ah... yeah. Yeah, I could go for that. See you in a moment." Truth be told, he wasn't actually too hungry... but it'd at least take his mind off the situation for a while, and it *had* been a long time since he'd eaten last. Hanging up, he glanced at Lily and gave a tired smile. "Want something to eat? You know, ah... keep your strength up."

Alone in her cabin, Triste sat in a chair facing the window, once again sharpening her knife with slow, methodical movements. Her yellow eyes gazed out at the sea as it sped past, unblinking and unseeing - her thoughts were elsewhere.

How can headquarters be gone? What happened to our defenses? We knew something like this could happen... She couldn't wrap her head around the fact - and Triste was uncomfortably aware that, without assistance from the Federation, they were sitting ducks... even *with* Vergil's powers, the extent of which were impressing even her.

Vergil wanted to go back to HQ, to check for survivors and see if anything could be done to help them. *Bad move... I don't like this...* Kalis might not be the type to set a trap, but turning up at the site of one of his most recent attacks with one of his HVTs... Sighing, Triste continued scraping her knife, eyes narrowing as she tried to think what their next move should be.

Rio frowned. "Aw, we're *not* stealing a plane? I've never done that before! It would've been so cool..." He continued pouting all the way as they trudged their way towards the airport in the distance.

By the time they'd almost arrive, the sun had sunk and the daylight had vanished, leaving the group in a murky darkness. The only reason they could see where their feet were landing was because of the light thrown out by the airport that they were fast approaching. "So... when we get home, what next? We still following those guys?" Rio started. "Lily and Axel and... Srensren or whatever the fuck his name is. We could -"

Suddenly, a flashlight beam was aimed at them, blinding the group momentarily. It lowered, revealing a portly security guard, standing next to a gate that lead further into the grounds of the airport. "What's going on, eh?" he demanded in a heavy Canadian accent, looking each of them in the eyes.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 24, 2014, 05:55:08 PM**

Lily sighed. There were so many things she wanted to say to Axel, but if others were waiting for them they should probably save the heavy conversations for afterward. "I'm not hungry, but I don't want to be alone." She climbed wearily off the bed and hugged him. "I was really scared too..." she whispered. "And I almost can't believe we're both safe and alive. I've been thinking..." She gulped. "I've been thinking of honing my abilities to more...offense-oriented styles...I just don't want to be unable to protect you again..."

Emilena's eyes flashed at the guard. "We're getting our boarding passes and then flying on a plane, *asshole*. What does it look like's going on?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 25, 2014, 03:21:27 PM**

Axel hugged her back tightly, a metallic finger lightly brushing against her cheek. He sighed, knowing more than anyone else how peaceful Lily was - thinking about how she must be feeling, to consider using her powers to *hurt* others... it tore at him. But if it meant she'd be safe...

Swallowing, Axel kissed her forehead. "Look... I'm going to try as hard as I can to protect us. To make sure you don't have to... you know, do *that* with your abilities. But if there's ever a reason I, ah, can't be there... Maybe that wouldn't be a bad idea." His tail flicked. "As long as you don't, ah, accidentally hurt yourself when you practice. That would just suck."

Holding her shoulders, he looked down into her eyes. "I... I know you don't like causing anyone any pain. And I love you for that. But if someone... *anyone* is trying to hurt you, you have to promise me that you won't hesitate... that you'll put them down first and make sure they won't come after you again. Do you understand? *Promise me.*"

"Oh, you are, eh? Then why aren't you coming in the main entrance? I'm not so sure aboot this..." Shining his flashlight across the group again, the guard paused when it shone on Flora's face, and squinted. "Wait a moment... Venus! I remember you! Back in... Corona, was it, eh? What are you doing all the way out here? You look like shit."

Licking his lips, his eyes flicked down Flora's body. "If I remember right, us two and your... fly trap down there had ourselves quite a time..." Grinning to himself as the memories flashed before his eyes, the guard stepped aside and swung open the gate, waving the beam of his flashlight towards a side door on the main building of the airport. "Never let it be said that I don't repay favours, eh? Just go through there, and you'll miss all the queues. Be on your place in a flash. And Venus..." he continued, smiling toothily at Flora's breasts. "You make sure you hit me up next time you're in town, eh?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 25, 2014, 03:42:37 PM**

marita , after taking a short nap, decided to give 'lily a call" We never did get the chance to have lunch together' She said to herself as she dialed Axel's room number' She listened to the ringing of the phone and waited for Axel to pick up. Rose was going through her purse on the sofa in the room, picking out the contents ,- spare change- Rose always picked up coins wherever she found them- lipstick, makeup case, a few breath mints.. pictures of Marie and Marita, nothing unusual there. marie was washing her headfur in the room's shower, feeling the hot water run down her face over her breasts, and down her front.. ' she toook a deep sigh " gods am i glad to be out of that hotel' she said to herself as she put shampoo in her headfur..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 25, 2014, 04:10:09 PM**

Soren was at the Ironworks, the *Breman II*'s onboard casual cafÈ.

In contrast to the Art Deco style of the rest of the ship, Ironworks had a near-industrial look with exposed wires and pipes. The tables and benches were heavy polished steel slabs.

A waiter refilled his glass of water. Soren wondered what was going to happen next. He pushed the thoughts from his mind and bit into the warm bread.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 25, 2014, 04:55:03 PM**

Lily shook slightly. "I...I don't know if I can promise that..." Her voice had slight tremors. "I can take getting hurt...I can heal...but if I kill someone who was hurting me..."

She jumped when the phone rang, cutting through her thoughts with a pleasant chiming. Since Axel answered it last time, she picked up. "Oh, hello Marita! Dinner? I guess we never did treat you to that dinner, did we? Soren reserved seats at the Ironworks, let's meet there. Look forward to seeing you and the girls, and...I'm very glad all three of you are okay," Lily smiled, even though Marita wouldn't see it.

She hang up and resumed hugging Axel. "We said we'd talk about all this later. Now the entire team is waiting on us, we need to kick things into gear."

She was dressed and walking out the door when she realized that she'd omitted Triste and Vergil from her mental picture of the 'entire team.' *I guess that's to be expected...they don't seem to consider us part of their team either...*

"Freddy?" Flora stumbled in surprise, and Foley only barely caught her. "Freddy, oh my god what the hell are you doing out here?" She lit up. "You recognized me! I was aquamarine when we filmed those, and my breasts were so new! Do they still have the painting Freddy? You remember the painting!"

"Look, I hate to break up...whatever you two are babbling about, but we are *very late* for this flight!" Emilena practically dragged Flora towards the proffered doorway.

"I'm still in Corona Freddy!" Flora called as her teammates dragged her to the terminal. "My real name is Flora, look me up! I love you Freddy! But then again," she howled as Foley shut the door behind them, "I love everyone!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 25, 2014, 05:38:53 PM**

Marita hung up after Lilly did and turned to Rose " We're headed out to eat at the Ironworks. just put on a fresh attire, nothing too fancy. We'll leave once Marie gets out of the shower.'

Rose noddded, went over to her suitcase and unpacked a fresh red dress, and changed into it. Marita wernt into the corner and changed, her new dress was a light green one. Marie got out a few minutes later and changed into a purple dress. she took a deep breath as she came out ' i cant tell you how much i needed that.. sio whats the oplan girls for dinner?
-
We're going toi the Ironworks, meeting back up with Lily and the others hopefully this time the drinks won't have extra stuff in them' marita said.
-

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 26, 2014, 02:02:42 AM**

Locking the door behind them, Axel slipped the key into his pocket then turned and put his arm around Lily's shoulders. "Hey... maybe this time they'll go easy on the drugs," he said lightly as they started down the corridor, grinning but only half joking.

A few minutes later, they emerged into the industrial-looking restaurant. "Well, ah... now we know why Soren picked this place," Axel smiled, glancing around at the Ironworks' rather unique decor and waving a hand when he spotted their friend sitting on the other side of the room. "Hey Soren... let's hope the drinks pack less of a punch than last time," he nodded, pulling out a chair for Lily and sitting next to her. Rubbing a spot on his cheek where a small bruise had formed, he blinked at Soren and cocked an eyebrow. "So... I hope you enjoyed your stay at the hotel." He grinned sarcastically. "Was it everything you hoped it'd be?"

Rio nodded at Flora. "See? I told you there's people who like what you're packing!" he announced, then started shuddering as images of what that entailed passed through his mind. The group emerged into a large room, at the end of which was a large row of women sat behind computers, dealing with tourists who were booking their passage home.

As they started to make their way towards a vacant ticket desk, Rio tried to arrange his expression to look as innocent as possible. He was still slightly miffed that they were doing this the legal way. *When I'm older, I'm gonna steal all the planes...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 26, 2014, 12:51:11 PM**

Vergil all but collapsed into bed in his cabin. He was worn out with the day's ordeals, and was still feeling somewhat drained from earlier. Headquarters in shambles... his superiors all dead...

Taking his phone out, he could see he had a missed call and voicemail from Fugate. Fugate! He was still alive! Without even listening to the message, he dialed the stoat and waited patiently while the phone rang. Fugate picked up on the second ring. "Mr. Speicher... you're alive."

"I could say the same for you!" Vergil replied breathlessly. "What's going on? Did anyone else at HQ survive?"

"No... they're all dead." Fugate replied sadly. "High command has been crippled. We're calling in our top military commanders to fill in but... things are a mess here. What's your progress? Did you locate the third waypoint?"

"Yes..." Vergil said heavily here, closing his eyes as tears began to streak his cheeks.

"You sound upset. You aren't forgetting this mission's objective, are you? Kalis has struck hard but we have every confidence you'll beat him to the Cataract. Two more waypoints to go..." Fugate urged.

"Yes... I suppose so." Vergil said softly now, the energy leaving him. "I'm thinking of heading back to Corona to regroup... my team has become polarized I'm afraid... but I can't entirely trust some of them either." the gecko stated.

"Not surprising, considering they aren't government operatives. If you need a new team..."

"I don't know yet. I don't even know what I'm doing yet... we lost a team member on the second waypoint... and with him it seems the glue holding this team together has melted. I feel I need to find out more about Rex too... I'm no closer to understanding him and Kalis than I was starting this thing."

"Don't get distracted." Fugate reminded him. "We need efficiency out of you... I'll lend what support I can but... we need you to stay focused..."

"I can't just cut the humane side out of my job!" Vergil snapped. "I'm not a machine! Maybe you all are, but I'm not!" he replied with disgust.

"Calm down... remember to be objective. We need efficiency out of you!" Fugate repeated.

"I KNOW... but this isn't a mission that's like that! Everything's riding on it... I try to stamp out my emotions I become what?" Vergil asked crossly. "I tried doing that, it's only made things worse! I have to go... I'll talk to you later... I'm glad you're alive." Vergil said, and without waiting for a response, he hung up on the stoat.

"Uggggh!" Holding his head in his hands, he flexed his finger joints, rubbing his forehead to try and clear his mind. "What would you do Rex? How would keep your head about you and press on? If only I could remember you more... you kept me even in tough times... that much I remember." he murmured. Slamming his phone into the bed, he let out a cry, then pocketed the device, pushed himself off his bed, and headed for his door.

Exiting his cabin, the gecko decided to wander aimlessly throughout the ship, unsure where he was going or where he'd end up...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 26, 2014, 07:36:14 PM**

Lily smiled at Soren. "How are you Soren? Things got really stressful there at the end…"

A waiter came to take their drinks. "I'll have just water…" Lily said in a small voice. That was her best chance at noticing a drug before she drank it… "But please come back, we've got a few more on the way."

The waiter nodded.

"So anyway," Lily said under her breath as the waiter grabbed everyone else's drinks. "How are you doing, Soren? I've talked to Axel and the girls, but you've been very quiet lately. I just want to make sure you're all right."

Emilena uttered a strangled groan of annoyance. "That was the *correct reservation number* you goddamn machine!"

The machine beeped at her and reset itself to the home screen.

"No! Dammit!" Emilena kicked it.

"Hey hey now," Foley stepped forward, "How about I…?"

"No! I'm not typing that in again!" Emilena marched over to the nearest teller, completely cutting the line. "Give us our boarding passes dammit, we're in a hurry and your stupid machine is a malfunctioning piece of crap."

"Do you have any bags to check?" the woman droned in a monotone voice.
"No!"
"Would you like to upgrade to first class for just $10 a person?"
"No!"
"Would you like travel insurance for all your belongings?"
"No!"
"Do you all have government issued ID?"
"No-Yes!"

The woman handed her the boarding passes. "Please pass through the security checkpoint on our right and proceed to terminal B11. Have a safe flight."

As Emilena grabbed the passes and doled them out, fuming, Foley looked uncomfortable. "Uh… pretty sure Flora doesn't have her passport any more."

Emilena remembered that Flora had lost all her original clothes and belongings in the boat crash. "Goddammit. We'll figure something out." Then she got shushed by Flora.

"Don't worry, guys," Flora's eyes flashed knowingly. "I've got a plan…"

"Oh great," muttered Foley.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 28, 2014, 01:24:47 PM**

Marita Rose and Marie entered the resteraunt " and caught sight of Soren Lily and axel, and made their way toeards their table ' Hi guys' Marita said ' Sorry we're a bit late, we all had to take showers after all the ruunning around on Voltaic' She smiled and squeezed into a seat next to Soren, Rose sat next to Axel and Marie by Lilly.' So how are all of you holding up? rose asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 28, 2014, 11:39:58 PM**

A waiter refilled Soren's glass of water. The Human sighed. "I've been doing okay...considering all the insanity that's recently happened."

"More bread?" the waiter asked.

"Yeah," Soren replied as he swirled his glass of ice water, listening to the ice cubes gently clink against the glass.

He then turned to Lily. "It's Vergil and Triste... I honestly can't stand them."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 29, 2014, 09:38:30 AM**

Axel motioned a hand, and the waitress poured him a glass of water too. She didn't look like the waitress that served them before, but he still took a cautious sniff as he raised the glass.

Better safe than sorry... Taking a gulp, he nodded at Soren. "I don't get it... they just vanish without telling us where they're going? What were they're doing? I thought we were meant to be a team?"

He looked around the table and shrugged dejectedly. "Jesus.. this could have all been avoided..."

Rio grinned excitedly. "What is it? Do it!" he urged as he waited for her to reveal her masterplan. "If you're gonna steal something, let me help!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2014, 02:41:14 PM**

Lily sighed. "We really, really should have a talk with the two of them," she admitted. "We're all on the same team here, and I think we're letting our responsibilities and the severity of this mission affect us personally. I'm sure if we all sat down and talked out our issues, we could find a compromise and continue onward as a team."

She hesitated as the waiter filled her glass. "Could you, um, drink from that please?" she asked.

The waiter hesitated, but when she continued looking at him expectedly, took the glass and daintily sipped it.

"More. I'd like to see for sure that you drank some…"

He took a huge swig and handed it back to her. Lily tried to will herself to sip, but ultimately gave up and continued being thirsty. "What do you all think?" she asked the others. "Vergil's not talking to any of us, but it could just be stress. Besides, we have no idea what Voltaic did to them while they were being held prisoner. They did some pretty awful things to Axel and me..."

A bird landed on Nairda’s head and tried to peck his brains out. Luckily his sensors warned him, and he woke up in time to save everything but a few chips off his skull.

He glanced at the streets. Activity. It probably wasn’t the best idea to go back to sleep. Instead he groggily stumbled into the airport, whose doors were now open.

He was starving, but he barely had enough to afford the plane ticket. He drank from a water fountain until his stomach hurt, just to distract himself from the hunger.

At the security checkpoint, the burly security guard asked for his ID. Nairda checked his back pocket and found it empty. “My passport! Where’s my passport?”

After a frantic search, he came up empty. “You don’t understand, it was just...I mean…”

They threw him out of the airport. “Can I at least have a refund?” he begged.

The iguana stared suspiciously at the passport. “You’re Nairda Kibagami, huh?”

Flora beamed. “Yup! I came to this country for the dirt-cheap cosmetic surgeries. They were amazing!”

“It says here they you’re male,” he pointed out.

Flora dropped her pants and the embarrassed guard asked no further questions. Then she got could only walk a few feet before being immediately picked out of the line for yet another random body search.

“Look, she’s allowed to do shit like that, and then I get in trouble when I make a sex joke!” protested Foley, watching the scene from the gift shop. Emilena was ignoring him, and looking thoughtfully through a large selection of traveling trinkets. “What are you even looking at, anyway?”

“Like hell I’m getting on that flight without some sort of self-defense.” Emilena selected the largest sized toenail clippers they had. “This’ll do.”

Foley raised an eyebrow. “How is that a weapon?”

Emilena demonstrated by holding it like this. (http://i.imgur.com/9AqnznE.jpg)

“They let you take those on planes?” exclaimed Foley, wide-eyed.

“Yeah, and we’re going to miss ours if Flora can’t stop getting searched at every security checkpoint.” Emilena sighed as Flora finally rejoined them, purring.

“I think I’ve sobered up guys!” she announced. “I’m really, really sorry for how I behaved to you all.” Her face fell. “Especially you, Rio. You should ignore most everything I said; I...wasn’t thinking clearly.”

Emilena ignored her and directed them to their gate, which was boarding soon.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2014, 04:17:46 PM**

I don't think Trieste thinks much of us, because we're civilians ' Marita said as she took a small sip of water. 'i dont know what happened to you guys or what happened to Trieste or Vergil. we were getting the biproxytol flushed out of our systems. which isnt easy, at the best of times. fortunately the medical staff there was very good, i have no complaints about them. i.. don't think things have been the same since Tony died. for whatever reason, i think he held us together. the whole reason we were together in the first place before our drinks got spiked was to pay tribute to him..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 29, 2014, 04:28:24 PM**

Soren nodded as he examined the olive oil that was given with the bread. Suddenly not feeling hungry, he took a tiny sip of his ice water. Satisfied that it wasn't drugged, he took a larger drink.

"Lily's right. We need to have a talk with those two. I'm just going to say it, those two have been treating us like shit recently. And that needs to stop. I don't know what they were trying to do by keeping us in the dark at Voltaic Station. They said that we're supposed to be a team. We can't have team members keeping secrets from each other. One of these days, it'll screw us over."

"Ah, our appetizers are here," he said upon smelling the distinct bready aroma of fried food.

A plate of fried calamari with a sweet and sour tamari ginger dip and some hummus with lentil chips was placed on the table.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 30, 2014, 03:48:43 PM**

"Mffmphhff," Axel said as he stuffed his face with some of the appetizers. He swallowed then tried again. "Yeah. If we're going to work as a team, we can't do this to each other." He sighed. Ever since Tony... ever since *that* happened, Vergil's been... I don't know. Distant. You... you don't think that's why they tried to go it alone? That they somehow blame us for that?"

He blinked at the other around the table then bit his lip. "We really *do* need to speak with them..."

"Don't worry about it," Rio said, giving her a gentle shove. He blinked shiftily. "But, you know, you *did* promise me the drinks were on you next time we went out. I mean, a promise is a promise." Soon after, the boarding gate opened. As they passed through, he looked around excitedly at the group. "Holy shit, do you think they'll be showing the new *Spongejack Roundshirt* movie on the plane?!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 30, 2014, 04:19:50 PM**

Marita grabbed a bit of calamari for her plate. she didnt bother with the sauces, and just popped the crunchy treat in her mouth. " i dont know how talking about it would go. I dont know if they blame it on us that it happened, and truthfully I dont care. I think it was, well, an accident. but this group has not been the same since , indeed I dont think trieste has ever trusted us. i'm not a physic, i cant get inside their heads, but trieste has always been more well, aloof around us, al least thats how I see it. Who knows, maybe talking about it, will get us somewhere.." she sighed and began drinking more water.
_ Marie tried some of the humus, and found it to be pretty good. she grabbed a few of the chips to munch on while the others talked. Rose helped herself to the Calimari. ' But we're alive arent we/' Rose said to the others ' that has to count for something right?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 30, 2014, 07:55:53 PM**

Lily wasn't hungry. She watched as everyone enjoyed their appetizers. "I'll have the garden salad," she told the waiter who had arrived to take their orders; it was the cheapest thing on the menu.

"Let's let them relax on the cruise; they seem really tense right now," she said. "Once we disembark in Corona we'll all be on the docks, and we can talk to them in town. That should give them time to cool off steam."

Why is everything so awful? Nairda lamented. *I must be having the worst luck in the entire world! Emilena never had to suffer through anything as bad as this!*

He was eyeing the Mexican border with trepidation. Some hopefuls had taken him under their wing and taught him the art of sneaking past the border patrol. Seemed simple enough, but he admittedly only gets one shot. Each of them was armed with a spring-loaded pole vault, produced by the Colombian sports equipment black market. Nairda had sold his Augmented grappling hook for it, and only afterward realized his grappling hook would probably have been much better for the caper they were about to attempt.

Rodriguez looked at him. A beat of sweat dripped down Nairda's neck. He had bonded and loved his Mexican friends, and now their moment of truth was upon them.

Further away, Rodriguez noticed the signal. Leaping to his feet, the two men made a break for the fence, sprinting like their lives depended on it. Searchlights clicked on as the two dozens runners triggered a silent alarm.

At the designated point, each of them planted their vault and went flying through the air. Fighting to keep his form perfect, Nairda's internal altimeter clocked his terrifying ascent. Eighteen feet…twenty-five feet…twenty-nine feet…

Tucking into a ball, Nairda could hardly believe when he barely glanced over the thirty-foot border wall blocking him from the American soil. Activating his shock absorbers, he hit the ground rolling and stumbled to his feet. Other runners landed on either side of him. "°indale!" he shouted, as a helicopter rose quickly into the air and opened fire with a machine gun.

Sprinting like his life depended on it, Nairda saw border patrolmen closing in with automatic rifles. Drawing his katana, Nairda smacked the first one with the blunt of the blade and sent him rolling. Grunting as bullets pinged off his armor, he downed another with a sharp whack to the helmet.

The helicopter fired a single blast directly at him. It hit the katana and shattered the blade, sending painful vibrations rippling through both of his arms.

The patrolmen seemed to decide that Nairda was the highest-priority target, and all bore down on him. With a cry Nairda got one last look at his fleeing friends before a dogpile of sweaty angry Americans blocked his view. "°Corre Rodriguez! °Corre SeÒora Rodriquez y los niÒos! °Yo nunca te olvidarÈ!"

At least a dozen men beat him unconscious with electrified nightsticks.

"Probably, to be perfectly honest," Foley noted. "Nowadays they've got the entire *Etherflix* library and you can sign in with a guest account. The airline has this partnership thing."

"That's great, get on the plane," Emilena repeated for the fifth time. "Honestly, have you people never boarded an airplane before?"

She ushered them into their assigned seats, which due to being purchased last minute were nowhere near each other.

Flora leaned over to the businessman opposite her. "Hey…wanna join the mile-high club once we hit cruising altitude?"

The flight attendant explained how air masks worked and then with a groan the plane taxied down the runway, hitting mach speeds.

The woman's baby next to Emilena began bawling as soon as the plane began moving. "Madam," Emilena informed politely, "I must inform you that if your baby plans on being this loud the entire flight, I will be forced to knock it unconscious." The man to the left of the mother grunted his approval at that plan.

The woman instead took some sleeping pills and fell asleep, leaving her baby's bawling to annoy everyone in that cabin of the plane.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 02, 2014, 08:55:45 PM**

Marita nodded to "Lily' Yeah you're probably right. For Now, Lets just enjoy a nice dinner. She ordered a steak and shrimp combo, she was hungry."if any of you guys like Shrimp. I'll be glad to share" She offered. Marie ordered a pasta entree, and Rose ordered cheese ravioli.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 02, 2014, 09:46:51 PM**

As it was, the Bremen II was sailing to Corona, which was the world's busiest port as well as capital city. The convenient thing about Corona was that it was insanely well protected from external attack but an efficient port of commerce and transit.

The large liner docked at its usual dock, having made a two week voyage from Voltaic Station to Corona. It had transited the middle Atlantic to the northern Atlantic with no problems, and fortunately, Kalis's fleet was not encountered. So even though Triste hadn't wanted to go back to Corona, there was little choice, since the Bremen II made a triangular loop: Corona to Rio, Rio to Voltaic, and Voltaic to Corona.

So now it had docked, and summer had turned into fall during the group's absence. The unloading process had begun, though with tighter restrictions on immigration due to the numerous terrorist attacks that had taken place at Voltaic as of late. There was quite literally no place on the planet the Big Four as they were known couldn't reach. Security however wasn't as tight as at Voltaic for the simple reason that terrorist attacks in Corona were next to impossible to stage for any great length without being overwhelmed by the numerous fleets that orbited the city. More than a million troops could be brought to bear, but the city was still on high alert thanks to a recent attack that had gone unsolved publicly...

Still... being a current resident of Corona helped one's reentry into the city. And since every one of the party was indeed a current resident of Corona... problems with immigration would most likely be minimal. The things they had to be looking over their shoulder for were not the legal authorities, but the hit teams Judaken would undoubtedly be dispatching now. Still, they were home for now after a particularly grueling trek, and but two waypoints remained to be found before Torment's Cataract... and Devastation's Inception.

Aboard the Red Castle, Kalis gazed out at the night sky as his fleet drifted over the polar regions on idle. One more waypoint... the one he hadn't been able to secure before Rex had died... or more correctly, Kalis had eliminated him. But his hastiness had proved to be a mistake. Killing his erstwhile boss hadn't been good, as without him, Kalis had unfortunately not been able to locate the final waypoint. So what to do?

The obvious answer was use the fools who were currently finding the waypoints. Let them get the penultimate waypoint, then nab them... torture them... make them give up the location of the last waypoint, then kill them, obtain it, and activate Devastation's Inception. Destroy the Ivitz Federation, rule the world, end of story.

Of course there was one hitch to that plan. How to actually nab those fools at the right time. Kalis hadn't been able to place a tracker on their group yet... but as it turned out, providence had strange ways of working... and providence hadn't let him down yet.

As for torturing them, he wasn't concerned. They were weak. They were a close knit group. Breaking one would threaten the others... and break them all. He wasn't concerned about that. His game plan now thoroughly established, Kalis chose to do something he'd been learning over the past ten years or so... sit down and wait. The world wasn't going anywhere... he could burn it all in due time. Best be patient... let providence work itself out... and it certainly would... of that he had little doubt.

The richest part was of course the irony of the situation. But he'd get to that... all in due time... two gifts he had received as of late... both incredibly useful. Both coming from Varanus... which was the only reason the monitor wasn't dead right now. While Kalis didn't tolerate failure of any kind, he also was wont to forgive his mentor and heir since he'd actually done something productive this last excursion. Both gifts were delicious... but one in particular Kalis was looking forward to revealing. He felt like a chess player right now... the world being his board. But the nice thing about this, is that he was winning... and he reveled in each move he made...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 02, 2014, 10:32:13 PM**

Soren rode the elevator up to his apartment. He sniffed the air. It still stank of bums, debris and cheapass cleaning materials.

He unlocked the door and shoved his luggage against the kitchen table. "So you're back from your vacation?" a familiar Shetland Pony said as gave a quick snort to clear her nostrils.

"Anne! Glad to see you! Ióow!" Soren gasped for air as the powerfully built mare embraced him in a bonecrushing hug.

She released him and turned to the three Canines. "So how was your vacation?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 03, 2014, 02:48:07 AM**

"Thanks." Axel leaned into the taxi that had driven them from the docks to pay the driver, then stepped across to drag their luggage out from the back. As the car sped away, he stood on the sidewalk, leaning on the bag and taking in the familiar sight of their tiny house, set against the fading light of the evening sky. He sighed and looked at Lily. "Is it crazy that I've never been happier to see this place?"

"Oh, hello you two!" a woman called from across the street as she watered her garden. "I hope you two had a lovely - oh!" She gawped as turned and the streetlight above him illuminated the bruise on his cheek beneath his fur that was starting to fade.

Axel waved back. "Hey Mrs. Kershan! The, uh..." He blinked. "The waiters were really insistent about their tips." Turning, he shrugged at Lily and started to heave the luggage up the small path leading to their screen door. "Have you, ah, heard anything from Emilena? Has she... you know, has she found anything?"

The high powered binoculars revealed everything that was going on in Vergil's apartment. So far, there was nothing of interest. Swearing softly under her breath, Triste lowered them, setting the device down on the small table beside her and slouching forward in her chair, the darkened apartment cloaking her in shadows. The small, cheap room she'd rented since the first day she'd arrived in Corona after discovering where Vergil lived was situated in a complex opposite from his, giving her a good view into his apartment.

After a heated discussion with Fugate, she'd had no choice but to go along with what Vergil wanted, and take a short moment for the group to recuperate in Corona. For a long time, she'd sat in her rented apartment, watching his building as the sun started lowering in the sky, sure that at any moment there'd be trouble, Kalis making a move on Vergil. But here'd been nothing.

She sighed and rubbed her eyes. *Am I getting too paranoid?*

Rio took a deep breath as he stepped into the cavernous room of the gang's hideout, taking in the scent of dust, sweat and shame. The plane journey back had been long and grueling - a huge man, perhaps a few inches off being classified as a planet, had been seated next to Rio, and the boy had spent the majority of the trip buried under the man's overflowing stomach, struggling for air.

Staggering over to the musty sofa, Rio collapsed back into it, propping his feet up on a crate filled with Foley's technical equipment. "Hey Hal!" he called out into the quiet as the others made their way in. "We're back!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 03, 2014, 04:55:39 PM**

"I haven't heard anything from her…" Lily muttered under her breath so Mrs. Kershan couldn't hear. "For all I know she's still in South America."

Lily smiled weakly for Mrs. Kershan's sake, but mainly just focused on unlocking the door, dragging her suitcase into the living room and collapsing onto the sofa. "My god…" she panted. "We're home. Finally."

She glanced at her luggage. *What's the point of even unpacking?* She wearily curled up into a ball right there on the couch. "Let's just phone in for pizza; I'm not making anything…" she murmured sleepily. "Wake me when it gets here--"

She glanced through half-lidded eyes one last time at the window as the setting sun dipped under the porch roof of Mrs. Kershan's condo…and immediately jolted upright when she saw a glint of light in the nearby tree. Racing to the window, she drew the curtains quickly, then peeked out again.

She recognized a police camera. Were it not for her looking at the perfect moment of the setting sun, she wouldn't have noticed the glint of its lens. "Axel!" she exclaimed. "Axel, we're being watched!"

She ran and closed all the other windows. As she locked the kitchen drapes, she got a glimpse at an unmarked van parked near their road. It was revving its engine and driving off.

"Axel," she stumbled backwards. "We can't stay here. It's the police; they've bugged the place." She didn't know if Denny North was responsible or if some other part of her dozens of illegal doings in the past few days had led them here, but she knew that they'd be back soon.

Nairda stumbled through the ashen forests outside Lanthae. The American border patrol had been furious when the computer check revealed that Nairda was an American citizen, and let him go with a free Aloe Vera wipe as an apology for the overnight torture session. They also let him keep the hilt of his shattered katana.

"Emi's gonna kill me…Emi's gonna kill me…oh god oh god she's gonna kill me…" he repeated over and over until he'd managed to effortlessly fit the sentence into his normal breathing pattern. He tried to come up with possible ways of fixing the blade, but Emi would know.

I can't worry about that now… he finally forced himself to shut up. *I'm almost there…*

Rounding a hill and limping through the stale fallen leaves, Nairda got his first glimpse of the house of his parents; Emile and Lena Kibagami.

As he climbed through the back door (the front door was booby-trapped; Emilena's gang never used it), Foley was so tired he didn't even have the strength to snap at Rio to take his grubby paws off the merch. "I'm going to bed." He stamped towards the guest room.

"Me too…" yawned Flora. She followed him in. "Hey, not my bed!" Emilena heard Foley exclaim.

Emilena was as tired as everybody else, but she first checked every square inch of the safe house for traps or alterations since they'd last been there. She didn't notice anything out of place. "Hal?" she called out.

Soon she was satisfied that the safe house was trap-free, but she wondered why Hal was gone. *He should have left a note at the very least…* she wondered. *Well, if he's not back by tomorrow we'll go looking for him.*

She retreated to her private bedroom, undressed and climbed under the covers, having never checked the outside of the front door, where Hal's decomposing head was impaled on a stake.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 05, 2014, 03:06:26 AM**

In the bedroom, Axel was busy shaking out a cigarette that he'd hidden in the sock drawer. Shooting tentative glances towards the doorway, he flicked on his lighter and started to bring the flame forwards... then jumped at Lily's shout, dropping both on the floor. "Hang on honey!" he called back, hastily bending down to pick up the incriminating evidence in case she came in. Then he paused, his eyes widening as he realised what she'd just said.

"What? *The police?!* Are you sure?!" Axel cried, dashing out of the bedroom and rushing over to her. "What the hell did we do?" *Actually, that might be a stupid question...* Pushing a hand through his hair, causing it to stick up crazily, he struggled to think what their options were. Obviously, like she'd said, they needed to go... but where? Soren's was the obvious answer, although Emilena's hideout might be more anonymous - but would she even accept them in? He swore under his breath. Either way, they didn't have time to decide here. "Alright, we... let's just go, okay? We can decide where to go when we're not being... ah, you know..." *Spied on.*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 06, 2014, 12:35:57 PM**

It was long" Marita said as one by one the girls came up to greet Anne " so you feeling better? this place.. looks just about the same as well we left, well more or less' She said looking at Anne with a smile.
Rose went over to her room and pulled out her coin jar and tossed the coins she had scooped up during the trip. The jar was about two-thirds full,m and her closet had several others fill;ed nearly to the brim.I Really should count my coins ne of these days ' she said to herself./
Marie went over to her room to put her luggage away and head in the bathroom to take a much needed shower. the water wasnt very warm, but it was beter than having no running water. after the luxury of voltaic and the cruise, hiome felt small and bare.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2014, 03:51:44 PM**

Lily's heart was racing as she grabbed her suitcase (the only thing in the house she knew for sure wasn't bugged…) and led the way out the back door.

It wasn't until they were a block away from the house that she felt courageous enough to even speak. "We need to find somewhere to stay..." she whispered urgently. "I'm so tired…our only real options are Soren and Emilena…" As much as the idea of living with a gang of drug dealers didn't appeal to her, she might get lucky and they weren't even home yet. "It's getting dark and we need to find shelter fast. How about you go ask Soren, and I'll ask Emilena? Then I'll call your cell in an hour and we can decide what to do."

Nairda stumbled across the tended fields of an algae farm, shivering in the twilight wind. The farm was very remote; he could barely see the ruins of Lanthae on the horizons.

He knocked tentatively on the door. After a few minutes, a lithe female Vulpine in a bathrobe creaked the door open a sliver. All Nairda could see was her eye, which he noticed with a pang was the same dark brown color as his own. "Who are you?" she asked firmly, not unlatching the door.

"H-hi…" Nairda stuttered, flushing red. "You…probably don't recognize me, but…"

The Vupline's eyes went wide. "Nairda?" she gasped. She flung the door open and placed her H&K USP on the side table. "Nairdey-poo? Is that you?"

"Hi mom…" Nairda smiled, looking embarrassed as she flung her arms around him and kissed him all over his face. She had snow-white fur, with pale blue hair and black markings on her arms and tail. Her fluffy bathrobe seemed several sizes too small and clung unsettlingly close to her curves. "Uh, where's dad?"

"He'll be back soon; he's hunting in the mountains. Oh, he'll be so glad to see you!" She pinched his cheek and gasped as she observed how cut up he was. "What happened to you? We need to get you cleaned up!"

"Oh, nothing," Nairda blushed as Lena dragged him into the bathroom. "I just had to jump the Mexican-American border with-- hey! Whoa!" Lena was stripping his shirt off. "Mom! Come on!"

Lena glanced at him sideways. "Honey, I am your mother. There ain't nothing on you I haven't seen." She pulled off his boots and pants and turned on the shower. "Now you get yourself washed up and respectable before your father gets home," she ordered. "Don't skip the soap!"

"Okay, mother," Nairda acquiesced, sighing as the warm water washed over his tired body.

"Make sure to use shampoo!"

"Okay, mother!"

"And sweetie," she stuck her head in one last time, causing him to jump and pull the shower curtain shut. "I'm *so* glad you're safe and home…"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 07, 2014, 12:46:31 AM**

Anne nickered and nuzzled the girls as they hugged her. "Yeah, much better."

She went over to the kitchen and grabbed a plate with five rather unappetizing looking patties on them. "I'm going to be making dinner. Catfish burgers with toasted seaweed chips for Soren and the three canines. And a lentil and oat burger with with seaweed chips for myself. She offered the Human a toothpick with a small piece of cooked catfish burger on it.

Soren nodded as he took the toothpick. "Thanks!" He ate the meat. He screwed up his face as he choked it down. "Anne! What the fuck did you do to the burger!?"

"Bad?"

Soren shook his head. "It's overcooked and all the flavor's gone! Just stick to vegetarian cooking."

The Human flopped down on the somewhat grungy couch and turned on the TV (an LCD TV they had picked out of a dumpster and he had repaired).

"Good evening Corona, this is Raina Kapoor of Corona News Service." The anchor was a Dhole wearing a bland but tasteful suit. The background behind her changed to show "Suspects in Fishing Tender Explosion Sought. "Corona police are searching for the suspects behind yesterday's explosion at the Corona Dockyards that destroyed the fishing tender *F.V. Tilapia*, owned by Davis Fish Farms. Anti-fishing radicals are suspected but other parties cannot be ruled out. The company and police are offering a 500,000 credit reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the guilty party."

Soren sighed as he rubbed the bridge of his nose with his hand.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 07, 2014, 02:12:19 PM**

Axel chewed his lip. He hated the idea of splitting up... but they had to find somewhere to lay low as quickly as they could, and wandering around until they found somewhere was a sure way to get picked up by the police.

"*Crap*..." he hissed. "Alright, I guess we've got no choice. But..." He trailed off when the sound of a vehicle speeding up the street reached his ears. Tugging Lily behind a dumpster, he held his breath as the car roared past - then let it out shakily. Unless the police were employing tiny, elderly women who struggled to see over their steering wheel, it was a false alarm.

Axel turned his attention back to Lily. "If anything comes up, *anything*, you call me straight away, okay?" He pulled her into a hug. "See you soon, honey..." Tweaking her nose and trying to keep a confident face, Axel backed away and started running in the opposite direction.

Almost forty minutes later, Axel was riding up in the elevator to Soren's apartment. As he leaned back, gasping for air while trying to avoid breathing through his nose - the smell of sweat and cleaning products was really quite strong - he absent mindedly thought about when the last time he'd visited Soren was. *Too long...* Finally, the lift shuddered to a halt and the door rattled open. Stepping out, Axel made his way down the corridor to Soren's door, trying to keep his tail from dragging in the suspicious marks staining the floor.

Reaching the door, Axel swallowed then rapped. "Uh... Soren? Marita? It's Axel, I've, uh... Me and Lily have a problem..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 07, 2014, 05:12:11 PM**

Marita heard the door knock and went over to open it " as she did she saw Axel sodden and panting standing outside ' Axel! Please, do come in" she said kindly " You look like you've been running in a marathon. Whats going on?' She asked as she held the door out for him. " look, just come on in and tell us about it, alright?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 08, 2014, 08:55:07 PM**

Lily nodded. "Be safe," she urged her husband, before he disappeared down the street.

It was than that she looked around and realized she didn't remember how to get to Emilena's hideout. Rio had led her, and he had a distracted, infinitely circuitous way of leading that made replicating the voyage almost impossible.

She debated calling Axel so soon after they'd separated, only to realize she also had no phone or available way to contact him. "I really thought this through…" she muttered sleepily.

Since her desire to leave the wiretapped house was the only goal she was currently capable of realizing, she picked the opposite direction Axel had gone and just started walking. Perhaps she'll find a friendly face by accident.

Nairda finished his shower and languidly grabbed a towel. The water temperature was amazing, and the jets tickled his feet in a wonderful way, and it all combined to make probably the best shower he'd ever experienced. Then he got out and noticed his clothes had all been removed from the bathroom floor.

"Mom?" he called, wrapping the towel around his waist and opening the bathroom door, letting out wispy clouds of steam. "Where are my--?"

"Look dear, I made you your old favorite!" Lena came hurrying, holding a bowl of Astro Flakes. "You used to eat this all the time when you were younger! Wanted to be an astronaut. Remember that?"

"Where are my clothes?" Nairda repeated.

"I put them in the washer, they were filthy!" Lena pushed the bowl into his hands and hurried him over to the living room couch. "They'll be cleaned by tomorrow, don't you worry about those; just relax. You're home."

"Could I…uh…wear some of dad's clothes?" Nairda asked uncomfortably, setting the cereal on the side table. His mother felt far too close in her skimpy bathrobe squeezed next to him on the couch.

Lena smiled and cradled his chin. "Why do you act so stiff, my child?" She ran her hand along his face and pounding chest. "It's been years since I've seen you, and it seems that now we're together, all you want to do is keep away!"

"That's...not true, I just--*hey!*" Nairda yelped as she tugged at his towel. Despite his best efforts, she proved stronger and more persistent than he was able to handle. Not to mention the towel was doing an embarrassingly poor job of hiding his body's natural reaction. "I...Mom…?"

Lena purred and triumphantly threw the towel away. "*Relax*. You're home…let it all out," she whispered softly in his ear. "There's nobody here to judge, just your loving parents who've missed you."

"I…I don't really think this is appropriate…" Nairda protested feebly, then found himself unable to speak as she stroked him expertly.

"I'm so pleased you take after your grandfather," Lena smiled hungrily. "I love Emile with all my heart, but he never could fill me up like I desire…" Putting her finger over Nairda's mouth, she slowly got on her knees in front of the couch and stimulated him with her breasts and tongue.

Nairda groaned and his eyes widened, then he moaned and his eyes shut tight. "Mmmph! Mmph! Mmmmm…" was all the protest he could manage as his mother gave him exactly what she reckoned he needed.

Outside, Emile Kibagami walked up to his front door, hand reaching for the knob...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 08, 2014, 09:55:04 PM**

As he heard the knocking on his door, Soren shut off the TV. He got up, went to his bedroom and grabbed the Remington 870 hidden underneath his bed. He chambered a round and headed to the "foyer" of his apartment.

When he saw it was Axel, he let out a breath and let the shotgun dangle from its sling. "Sorry about that, can never beówhat the fuck!?" he exclaimed upon seeing Axel panting heavily.

"What happened!?"

Anne saw Axel's distressed state and quickly poured him a glass of water. "Easy, y'all," she said. "Don't overwhelm him."

She gestured to the kitchen table, which was covered with computer disks and USB sticks that had been sent through the mail as spam. Normally, they'd be tossed into the recycling bin but Anne had been using her free time to break open the USB sticks and extract the tiny circuit boards that she could hock for a few credits (the elaborate metal extraction system in her apartment had been destroyed with Lanthae. Not to mention, the bacterial cocktail and nutrients that the bacteria needed were not easy to got a hold of).

Two marijuana plants in the corner provided the only greenery in the apartment. Of course, no one else did anything with them except Anne. The mare had gotten off all other drugs except marijuana. Granted, it was probably the safest seeing as she grew her own.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 09, 2014, 02:27:21 PM**

Axel nodded, waving a hand in thanks as he made his way through the door and more or less fell into one of the chairs around the kitchen table. "Th... Thanks," he gasped, accepting the water from Anne and gulping it down. Draining it, he took a few deep breaths and set it down, pushing aside a stack of USB sticks to make room for it, then glanced at the shotgun Soren was toting. "You must really hate junk mail..."

Shaking his head, he rested his elbows on the table and rubbed his face. "I'm sorry, I... ah, shit..." Axel looked around at the others. "When we got home, can't have been more than, uh, an hour and a half ago, me and Lily found bugs... cameras. It's the police, they're watching us. We... we don't know why. But we can't stay there anymore." He nervously started fiddling with one of the computer discs strewn across the table. "I know it's... ah, I know this isn't what you need right now. You know, with everything else that's happening. But... could we lay low here for a while? Just until it gets... sorted out?"

He blinked. "We didn't know if you'd be here, so Lily went to try with Em..." Axel paused, his ears turning pink as his eyes flicked over to Soren briefly. "Emma, one of her friends. But we'd prefer if it was with you..." He swallowed. "We don't know what else to do, guys."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 09, 2014, 03:09:15 PM**

You were bugged? great. Probably the result of our little visit from Zaloga, we were videotaped entering there after all' Marita sighed. " but sure you and Lily can stay with us. we have enough room to squeeze a couple more folks in.. Just bring in whatever you can spare..' She added. We have an extra foldout couch in Maries room you can use. Its not the lap of luxury but its better then nothing.. Theres also the little matter of rent.. but we'll work that out once you guys are fully settled.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 09, 2014, 05:49:07 PM**

Lily grew more and more tired as she walked. She was practically sleepwalking when a hobo stuck a dirty change cup in her face and jolted her to alertness. She handed him what money she had and kept walking.

Where am I? she thought, realizing with dawning apprehension that it was getting dark and she had no idea where in Cornova she was. "I should have just gone with Axel..." she muttered.

She stumbled into a park. The idea of sleeping on a park bench seemed better and better with every step she took towards the nearest one. Planning on merely recuperating strength, she hardly noticed as she curled up on the bench and drifted off to sleep in the warm city breeze.

Nairda was squealing shamelessly as Lena worked her magic, and didn't notice for several seconds when his father opened the door and stepped inside. "Ahh!" he screeched in dawning horror, pushing his mother away. Emile wore a rugged khaki wife-beater and camo pants, and had 4 dead seals slung over his shoulder. He looked with surprise at the stranger in his home. "Oh god please don't kill me!" Nairda sobbed in horror, staring at the bloody club clipped to Emile's utility belt. "I'm so sorry, I--"

"Honey, it's Nairda!" exclaimed Lena. "He's come home!"

Emile dropped his clubbed seals in surprise. "Nairda?" he stepped forward, squinting in the light. "My god, it is you!" Emile lifted him off the couch and crushed him in a manly hug. "You're home son! You've finally come home!"

"You...you're not mad that I was…?" Nairda was stunned both from his father's reaction and from having the wind completely squeezed out of him.

"Good heavens, sweetheart, poor boy's hardly home for one night and you're already jumping his bones!" Emile chuckled at his wife. "You need to get that libido under control!"

"He was in one of his moody spells something fierce!" Lena defended herself. "There's no faster way to help him when he's all pent up like this. Trust me, a mother knows these things."

Emile took one look at Nairda and nodded knowingly. "She's right. C'mere son, let me show you how a pro does it." He trapped Nairda in a corner and made a grab for the goods. "For some reason your mother thinks she's better at this than me, despite me having insider male knowledge."

"Well I've got years of experience!" Lena folded her arms. "You haven't blown anyone since Karl all those years ago, and he always said I was better!"

Nairda stumbled. "Karl! Karl Nairda!" he dodged under his dad's arm and made a run for the bathrobe now lying crumpled on the floor. "That's who I came to learn about!" He wrapped the robe around his waist like a tunic. "Nobody's blowing anybody until I learn your history with him. Why did you name me after him? And why--" his voice choked, "--did you put me up for adoption if you really loved me?"

Both of his parents grew silent.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 11, 2014, 05:12:39 PM**

"Really?" Axel blinked at the others, then reached over and squeezed Marita's hand. "Thanks... thanks *all* of you. Sure, we... we can pay for any rent. No problem." He sighed, relief flitting across his face, then grinned at Soren and Anne. "And I can... well, ah... maybe it's better for everyone if I don't cook. But Lily can make the best lasagna *ever*. It's insane. Actually, ah, maybe I should call her..."

Leaning back in his chair, Axel pulled out his cell phone and scrolled up until Lily's name and a picture of her face flashed up on the small screen. He hit *call* and held the phone up to his ear. The dialing done droned, and then after a second there was a click as the phone was answered. "Hey, honey, it's all okay. You don't need to see, uh... you know. *Them*."

A pause. "That's great baby. Where's the address again?"

"I..." Axel paused. The voice was female, and it certainly sounded like Lily. Almost... but the pitch was just a little off, the pattern of speech a little too fast. Axel blanched. "Uh, wrong number madame!" he announced in an unconvincing Indian accent. "Very sorry! Goodbye!" He hurriedly slammed his finger down on the *end call* button, then tossed the phone across the table, USB sticks scattering in its wake. "Crap! *Holy* crap! Ah..." Axel blinked. "I don't think we should try calling Lily again..." Whoever it was who answered, it wasn't Lily - it must've been a member of the police force, trying to determine where he was. *Do they have Lily already? Or did they just pick her phone up from our house?* As much as he tried to remember, he couldn't recall if Lily had taken her cell with her when they'd left.

He knuckled his temple and groaned. "Goddamn it..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 11, 2014, 10:53:52 PM**

Marita Went over to the desk where she worked, opened a small drawer and pulled out something that looked like a small USB Stick " A little something I invented for phones so i can be comfortable making secure calls . Can tell if the caller is genuine or if its someone like a cop . if its a real caller, its turns green, ifs its an impostor, it turns red. It can also tell if your phone is bugged.' She added ' she went over and Picked up Axels phone, She slid the device into the phones charging outlet, and waited a few seconds, for a couple seconds the device was green, then it started changing color, before turning a bright shade of red. ' Yes Axel, that caller was a cop. They likely have most of your stuff' she said to him."where did you leave Lily? We need to go find her and bring her back here before she runs into trouble. Well, any more trouble that Is " she said taking the device out. "we'll have to buy you guys a whole new wardrobe. new phones, ids, the works.."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 12, 2014, 09:22:27 AM**

Anne looked out the window. It was fairly dark already and she could see the distant lights of the towers of Corona's Business District. "It's getting dark," she said. "Lily could be *anywhere* in Corona."

Soren sat down. "We need to find her." He rubbed his forehead with his hand. "But that won't be easy."

"No shit." Anne took a bite of her own lentil and oat burger. If we don't narrow it down, we could spend days or even weeks, looking for her."

The Human took a bite of his catfish burger. It was dry and nearly flavorless but a liberal application of ketchup and seaweed flakes helped somewhat. "Which is why we need to narrow our area down," he said with a mouthful of food.

Anne turned to Axel. "Do you have a vague direction of where Lily went?" She then turned to Soren. "Bring up the interactive map of Corona on your laptop."

Soren booted up his laptop and did so. "Okay, now what?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 12, 2014, 10:59:46 PM**

Lily woke up shivering. From what she could tell, it was still night time, and she was still laying on the park bench. She cast her hand through the darkness, hoping to extract a sweater or coat from her suitcase, and couldn't find it. Somebody had made off with it in the night. She groaned and sat up. The nap had been far too short, but it revitalized her to the extent that she realized just how stupid she was for sleeping out in the open. Rubbing her temples, she looked dizzily around and realized to her horror that there were four to five homeless men surrounding her.

"It was her!" said the first one, holding out a bony index finger and shaking it at her. She recognized him as the one she'd given her loose change earlier. "She did it!"

"I didn't mean to!" Lily said reflexively, not even sure what he was talking about. She leapt to her feet, but there were two more on the other side of the bench.

They squinted suspiciously at her and she drew back nervously. "She don't look nothing special," one grunted.

"Look at me, Seamus!" The first man leapt in the air. "I'm walking! *Walking* goddammit! She did it!"

Lily started putting the pieces together. "When I gave you those coins…I healed you didn't I?"

"My rheumatism is gone!" he cheered, jumping in the air again for the hell of it. "I can walk!"

Lily soon found five more hands shoved in her face. "Heal me please!" one shouted at her. "I'm blind in one eye!" "It hurts every time I breathe!" coughed another. "I don't know what's wrong with me, I just hurt everywhere all the time!" another chimed in.

Lily's face softened. She touched the hand of the third one. "You were born with a malformed central nervous system," she informed him. "These should have been treated when you were a child…let me see what I can do…"

After a few seconds, she took a deep breath, and the homeless man stood up straight for the first time in his life. "I don't believe it…" he breathed. "It…doesn't hurt…"

The heavy smoker grasped Lily's hand impatiently, and in her surprise she cured his black lung. When the half-blind man tried to get his turn, she pushed him away. "Stop!" she coughed. "Give…me a minute…" Instead he grabbed her hand violently, and in desperation she cured his detached retina and pushed him away.

"It's a miracle! It's a bloody Christmas miracle!" he cried in disbelief. As Lily shuddered and coughed violently from her shriveled lungs and frayed nerves, she saw through her one working eye as murky shapes crawled out of the shadows. The ruckus was attracting others…

"Sweetie, this would be a lot easier if you let one of us relieve your tension first," Lena offered tentatively, But Nairda shook his head fiercely.

Emile sighed. "Years before we had you, your mother and I were mercenaries, active during the Scorched Earth war. To pay for our combat augments, we'd sell our talents to the highest bidder and traveled all over the world on behalf of various patrons."

"Karl Nairda was a junior sergeant stationed at a Royal Expeditionary Force outpost," Lena chimed in softly. She palmed Nairda's cereal bowl and offered it to him pleadingly. Nairda took it. "In the last year of the war, he hired us to help him smuggle his lover out of the country...he planned to go live with him once the war was over. Until then, we kept him company…"

Both of his parents were getting teary-eyed. "He was so passionate…" Emile sighed nostalgically. "Used to sneak out of camp to see us. Had strong opinions on life and politics, demanded we refer to him with female pronouns, remember that sis? Never got the hang of that…"

"He was the only other man I ever loved." Lena was lost in her memories. "We weren't even sure which of you was the father at first. Thank god you turned out to be Emile's. Imagine giving birth to a foal; I would've burst!"

Nairda wrinkled his nose. “I’m taking a shot in the dark and guessing that he died?”

Both of his parents nodded. “He just never came back one day,” sniffed Emile. “We learned later he was shredded by anti-aircraft turrets during a raid on a Red Merchant ship. To be frank, all three of us died to some degree that day.”

“It was awful…” Lena started sobbing. “We mourned for so long...couldn’t bring ourselves to have sex for over a week! But Karl’s death taught us how fragile life was, so we cashed out and went to live peacefully as simple farmers. Away from the war and its memories, and with our beloved newborn son...” she smiled at him.

“...Whom you almost immediately put up for adoption,” Nairda added.

“We never wanted to!” Emile’s visage grew dark. “You have to believe us! Your forced abandonment was the decision and doing of one man...an old Scorched Earth veteran named Yoshihiro Kojurro…”

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 14, 2014, 10:46:54 AM**

Axel took a deep breath and rubbed a hand through his hair, then slid next to Soren, leaning over the human's shoulder. "Give me a second... ah..." He slid a finger over laptop screen, tracing the streets laid out on the map. "Yeah... yeah, okay, here's where we split up," he muttered, tapping *Beckerson Street*. "And, uh, I'm not sure where her... friend... lives, but I think it's somewhere in this direction..." He vaguely moved his finger in the opposite direction to where he'd headed. His eyes narrowed, ears drooping as he saw the area it led to. "Crap..."

If Lily had kept walking in the same direction as when he'd last seen her, she'd have hit the seedier areas of town pretty quickly - areas where a woman should probably think twice before going out for a walk on her own, especially if it was dark outside. Axel twisted his neck to look out the kitchen window.

It was dark outside.

"Crap!" he hissed again, pushing away from the table. Axel looked around at the others, his tail flicking fretfully. "We... we should try and look for her! If she's in trouble..." *She* can *kill people just by touching them though... at least she's not helpless...*

Rio was snoring as he slept on the couch in Emilena's hideout.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 15, 2014, 09:24:51 AM**

Soren looked at the map with the markings that Axel drew on it. "It looks like she's gone into the Algae Works District." The Algae Works District earned its name owing to the vast quantities of oil farms present. While it was a vital part of Corona's economy, the farms tended to depress land values. As a result, many unsavory characters lived in and around the area.

He shook his head. "Let's go find her."

He ducked into his bedroom and threw on his augmentworker's uniform (blue jeans and a standard t-shirt). The uniform contained shear-thickening fluid that would greatly dampen blows. Although it was not bulletproof. He grabbed the pistol he had stolen from Voltaic station and checked the magazine. Fourteen rounds. It would be enough for now. It was then he realized that he was in Corona, not Lanthae. And he didn't have a permit to carry the pistol. Seeing as jail time was not worth it, he put the pistol back and picked up a large wrench from his toolbox.

Soren then sat on the table and turned to Anne. "So you coming too?"

Anne nodded. "Definitely. I know that place pretty well."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 18, 2014, 01:24:42 AM**

"Alright! Let's do it!" Axel thumped a fist into his palm. Anne certainly looked sturdy enough to deter any potential trouble that might come their way while looking for Lily. He looked around for a weapon, snatching the closest thing off the table to follow Soren's example. It was a pen. Gritting his teeth in frustration, Axel slipped it into his pocket and headed for the front door. *What if she's been caught by the cops?* He shook his head to clear the thoughts. They'd cross that bridge if it came to it.

As he waited for the others, Axel glanced at Marita and the other girls. "Maybe, ah... someone should stay here in case she comes over? We... we don't want to miss her if that happens."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 18, 2014, 12:40:13 PM**

Soren turned to Axel and his choice of weapon. "Uh, you can go take something from my toolbox if you need it."

"Hold it," Anne replied as she ducked into her room.

"Anne, please don't bring your knife or a gun; we don't want Corona PD on our asses."

"I'm changing my shoes and packing something else."

Soren sighed. Anne, being an Shetland Pony, wore horseshoes. Changing her shoes usually took several minutes.

Anne threw a hoof boot and a shoe puller (in the event she lost a shoe) into her backpack.

Opening her drawer of farrier tools and spare horseshoes, she retrieved several road studs from a small plastic container and began screwing them into her shoes.

A minute later, she exited. "All right, ready to go," she said, slinging her backpack over her shoulder.

"What took so long?" Soren looked at Anne's feet; her shoes didn't look any different.

"Screwed in some road studs. They'll help me grip the sidewalks better," she replied.

"Don't you already have borium shoes?"

"Yeah. But these studs will also help if we get into a fight."

Soren shrugged. "Sure, whatever you say." He opened the front door of the apartment. The smell of urine wafted in.

Anne made a disgusted face. "*Again!?*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 20, 2014, 01:09:23 PM**

Tucking a screwdriver into the back of his trousers and pulling his shirt over it, Axel's nose twitched as the smell from outside engulfed him. "Jeez Soren, we could have waited for you to go." Giving the human a quick grin, he glanced back at Marita, Rose and Marie. "We'll be back really soon. If, ah, if she *does* turn up, give one of us a call, okay? We probably shouldn't be out any longer than we need to be." Nodding at Soren and Anne, he stepped out into the corridor. "Alright, let's get going."

A short while later, they were walking the streets, yellow lights overhead dully illuminating the sidewalk in front of them as their breath misted up in the chilly night air. "So... if we hear any cop cars driving past, you won't be offended if I hide behind you, right?" Axel asked, looking around nervously and eyeing Anne - she was considerably bulkier than him, the perfect cover.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 20, 2014, 03:23:41 PM**

Will Do' Marita said to AXel Before they left " we'll get to cleaning up this plasce while you guys are out. Marie will pull out the extra cot for you and Lilly" She smiled ' Good Luck Guys.
- Rose went into Sorens room and began picking up some opf the junk that lay scattered on the floor " we keep telling him to keep his place clean , but does he listen?' she sighed and she pulled out a dustpan and broom and began sweeping.
_ Marie went into her room and began pulling out the guest bed from the sofa. it was a couple fluffy pillows and a thin green blanket covering it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 20, 2014, 09:39:24 PM**

Vergil stood outside what had been the secret headquarters of Federation Central Command. He was on the sidewalk, and hadn't entered the building. He could sense a lot of pain... suffering that had taken place here only days ago. The building had suffered a subterranean explosion that had taken most of Central Command with it. It was a crippling blow... but for now, Admiral Bryce McCormick had assumed command of the remnants of Federation High Command. As senior admiral in the fleet, he was planning to launch an offensive to destroy Devastation's Inception once it had been located.

While Vergil may have suspected some of his superiors of wanting to obtain the warship for themselves, Admiral McCormick seemed to be on the level. He was genuine... a soldier yes, but a practical one. While not on the level of Rex, Vergil found he still liked the admiral. He'd met with him briefly since returning, and had received the admiral's assurance that the Federation's military resources would be thrown at Devastation's Inception should Kalis get there first.

Wearing a trench coat, the gecko shoved his hands in his pockets and let out a sigh. He was no use here... there was nothing to see... but he had to get more information on Rex. If he could just remember more... he might be able to track Kalis's next moves. Might be able to understand why they defected... turned traitor. Kalis was always the more impulsive one... the hot-headed one. Compared to Rex, he was reckless, but he wasn't stupid. He was cunning... perhaps not on the level Rex was, but he was pretty close. He knew how to survive and progress...

Turning from the scene, he began walking to the nearest tram station... but he wouldn't be making it back to his flat any time soon... unbeknownst to him...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 20, 2014, 11:31:06 PM**

Soren shivered and rubbed his arms; the chilly air sliced through his thin winter coat. Discarded soda cans and drug paraphanalia indicated that this was a rather bad part of Corona. He passed by a sleeping ó or dead ó Komodo Dragon ó sprawled out next to a decrepit looking 24 hour deli. A group of youths (Human and otherwise) were hanging out there. One of them, a rather muscular toung Jaguar watched the trio go by. He smiled as he caught the glint of Anne's horn and Axel's arms.

Anne, clad in light windbreaker, relied on her natural fur coat to keep her warm. She turned to Axel. "Yeah, you can hide behind me...but if I'm fighting, you're joining me!"

After several minutes of walking, she stopped and her ears pricked up and began swiveling.

Soren noticed Anne's ears moving. "What's up?"

Anne scowled as she lifted her upper lip in the characteristic Flehmen of Equines. "We're being followed."

The Human peered back and noticed that a group of youths was rapidly closing in on them. "Shit! Run!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 23, 2014, 02:34:41 PM**

"What? What's the matter?!" Axel glanced at Soren, then spun around to see what the human was staring at. His eyes widened as he saw the gang drawing close. They didn't look like push-overs... and they were moving *fast*. Even with Anne and Soren by his side, Axel didn't think taking them head on was a good idea - he had a feeling they weren't rushing out of an eagerness to discuss the latest political news. "*Crap!*"

Without another word, Axel wheeled back and started sprinting up the deserted sidewalk, his long limbs flailing. Where the hell was everyone? Where were the police?! *Oh right...* Veering to the right, he cut up a short side passage, his heart beating faster as they passed nothing but barred shops and locked doors. They wouldn't be finding any help soon.

Emerging onto an adjacent street, Axel saw a sign indicating the city park - but at the rate they were being pursued, there was no way they could reach it in time. Gasping, his lungs already starting to burn, Axel pointed at an alleyway just coming up. "We... we could try and lose them in there!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 23, 2014, 07:36:10 PM**

Lily wretched painfully, an unknown number of ailments crippling her at the same time. She could hear things, but all it ever amounted to was more hands grasping her and transferring their pain onto her.

“How does she do it?” gasped a traveling businessman. “My ears don’t ring any more! I feel young again!”

“She’s our savior!” announced one hobo. “The one the Bible promised! She’s here to purge our sins!”

“The Bible don’t say there’s one of those,” snapped another, “Jesus was that. And Jesus ain’t no woman.”

“Then screw Jesus!” snapped the hobo. “What the hell has he ever done for me? I can *walk again!*”

An old woman fondled Lily’s shoulder and blinked in horror as her back straightened for the first time in thirty years. "Unbelievable…" she whispered. "A Negro woman...the savior…"

"This can't be…" muttered a man, who glanced at his now un-neutered pet seal. "You know what I think? I think she's a test. To stray us from the path of righteousness."

"How can you say that?" the initial hobo demanded. "She's healing us!"

"Exactly!" the other man countered. "What are our bodies but vessels housing our immortal souls? Her healings are merely temptations! Look at what blasphemous things she got you to say within the last few minutes!"

"They weren't blasphemous, they were *true!*" shouted the hobo. "This woman is the only person whose ever helped me my whole life! What the hell has God done for me?"

"Don't you dare use ëhell' and ëGod' in the same sentence!" a different hobo snarled, stepping forward. "You shut your mouth or I'll put you down."

"Hey, you know what?" the businessman interrupted, trying to scoop Lily in his arms. "Y'all argue about this, I'm gonna take her home."

"Don't touch the savior!" snapped the first hobo, and a different man knocked Lily out of the businessman's hands.

"He's right!" the old woman stepped forward, standing straight. "This Negro is a gift from heaven!"

"She's the anti-Christ, the devil!" the seal-walking man jumped in. "Don't listen to them! They've been led from the path! She means to destroy us!"

"Hogwash! If anyone's the devil, it's a god who hasn't done shit to help anyone on the Earth in thousands of years!" cursed the first hobo, and the second drew a knife and stabbed him in the back. As the man fell, he grasped Lily by the hand and got back to his feet, fully repaired and etched with rage. "You son of a bitch…" he growled. "My savior just revived me, let's see *yours* do that!"

He drew his own stiletto and pounced the other. At the same time, the seal-walking man drew a pistol out of his belt and brandished it for self-defense, but the businessman whacked him with his briefcase when he thought the man was trying to commandeer Lily. The gun skittered into the gathering crowd, and several people jumped for it. A shot broke out. Pandemonium ensued shortly afterward.

* * *

Nairda blanched. "Kojurro? I know that name! He was like a father to me...the father I never had…"

"That was his goal, yes…" Emile's eyes darkened. "Kojurro worked with the Vulture Scavenger Corps from time to time. He toyed around with us once or twice, but none of us liked him. Karl in particular would pick fights with him, so eventually the three of us collectively severed ties with Kojurro."

"He had his nuts blown off while trying to steal a tank late in the war," Lena chimed in. "He was lucky to survive, but he became...unhinged after that."

"I always wondered why he didn't have any…" mused Nairda.

"We lost track of him after a while, figured he died or something," Emile continued the story. "Then, after less than a month of blissful farming life, he showed up at our door."

"He was holding some unpaid debts over our heads," Lena shuddered. "He said that nobody leaves the Scavenger Corps that easily. He would have brought the whole regiment down on our heads…"

"But he promised to let us go and never reveal where we went...if we gave him you." Emile couldn't meet Nairda's eye. "The only thing he wanted but could never have...a protege."

Nairda's mouth dropped open. "So you did it? You gave your son away just so you could keep farming and screwing each other in peace?"

Both of his parents nodded.

"On the plus side," Lena hastily added. "This would allow you to gain some augments and combat training, we figured. You could continue the family legacy in a way."

"That's a lame justification and you know it!" Tears were pooling in Nairda's eyes. "Do you know how hard my life has been because of what you did?" Do you know just what I had to go through?"

His parents listened silently as he cried his way through his life history. From his years of thievery to his near-death experience in the old robotics factory, surviving the destruction of Lanthae and his close calls as a member of Emilena's drug gang to his messy break-up on the South African beach.

"And now…" he sobbed, "...the love of my life has rejected me, and I broke her sword so she'll never forgive me, and I'm never gonna be a rapper and I'll never accomplish anything…"

His father stepped forward and hugged him wordlessly. For a few minutes, husband and wife stood quietly and merely allowed Nairda to cry it all out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 23, 2014, 10:23:15 PM**

Anne's ears pricked up again at the sound of a gunshot. She ignored it, knowing that this was a *very* bad part of Corona. She noticed the alleyway. "No good! They'll corner us in there!"

Soren stumbled on a discarded bottle and landed on his side. He picked himself up. "It's worth a shot!"

He ducked into the alleyway. The scent of alcohol and urine permeated the dirty ground. Anne ducked behind a dumpster. The shouting faded away, much to her relief.

"In here! I saw a metal horn!" The shouts came closer. Anne's tail swished as her ears laid back.

The first thug to enter, a burly Leopard barely out of his teens smiled. His white fangs glistened in the dirty white glow of a damaged streetlight. He cracked his knuckles. "Nowhere to hide, *Gleamer*!"

The three other thugs with him (a Fruit Bat, an Appaloosa mare and a large Iguana) all smirked and stalked into the alley.

Gleamer!? Soren thought. *Oh shit! The Purifiers are here too!?* His heard pounded furiously in his chest as he reached for his crescent wrench.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 24, 2014, 01:57:09 PM**

The first sensation that came into the ferret's mind was cotton... cotton filling his head... groaning a bit, he forced himself into wakefulness, trying to figure out where he was... and what was going on. He was slumped... his chin touching his chest. "What?" he asked, his mouth dry. So lightheaded... he shook himself up, trying to jolt himself into being alert. "What's... going on?" he whispered, looking around. Where was he? He was in some car... not just any car... an old one. One of his father's? But... impossible... his last sensation was of falling... falling to his death...

Studying his surroundings, he could tell he was in a Duesenberg Model J... from the early 30s. Had to be one of his father's cars... but his father didn't own a Model J like this... or at least... not that Tony could remember. He was parked on a side street... it was day... or something... mid-afternoon maybe. Corona? Patting his pockets, he felt no phone... great... no way to contact anyone.

But as he sat there, watching the street he was perpendicular to, the ferret noticed another old car, but this one, unmistakable as one of his father's... or more correctly, the personal gift of his father to his enforcer, Stryker. The black 1936 Cord 810 rolled past, its coffin nose leading the way as it seemed to be a harbinger of death... as it often was. Gazing in confusion as the Cord drove by, Tony hesitated... and noticed the keys were in the Dusey's ignition.

"He drives a Duesenberg..." Tony murmured, repeating the oft used ad the company used to market its top of the line automobile. Turning the keys, he listened to the satisfying roar of the straight eight turn over. 265 horsepower, 120 mph top speed. Pushing his foot on the clutch, Tony briefly wondered if he should follow Stryker or not... or if this was just a freaky dream. He wasn't exactly driving an inconspicuous car after all...

But he figured what the hell? Stryker might be able to tell him what was going on. Shifting into gear, Tony got the car rolling, and muscled the wheel to the right. Without power steering, this car was a bit more difficult to turn than your average model, but once it was moving it was OK. He was used to it after all. Turning right to follow the black Cord, Tony could see it was already a block ahead. Damn... well... there was no telling how he'd gotten here... or even ended up here. A bad dream maybe? No waypoints after all?

Braking at the light, he let the Dusey idle while he thought about what to do. Best just follow Stryker... see what he was up. Didn't want to interrupt after all in case he was carrying out a hit. The light changed, and he got the Model J moving, trying to do his best to just stay back and not draw any further attention to himself... though his car was turning plenty of heads on the street as he drove by.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 25, 2014, 03:28:10 PM**

Crouched down, his nose almost turning inside out against the reek wafting out from the overflowing dumpster he was hiding behind. His breath caught in his throat as the footsteps of their pursuers got closer, a triumphant voice announcing where they were. A scuffing sound, approaching. His eyes wide, Axel's gaze quickly flicked down the end of the alley, where Soren and Anne were hiding a little further in. A dim shadow stretched down the length of the filthy passageway, then a voice, smug, cocky and dripping with self-satisfaction.

"*Nowhere to hide, Gleamer!*"

Oh shit... Axel's teeth bit down on his lip as he leaned back into the shadows. Were these guys Purifiers?! They were back?! He swallowed, his throat suddenly dry as whoever was in the lead of the group drew closer, almost on him. Struggling to control his breathing, to steady his nerves, Axel slowly reached back and pulled out the screwdriver. If these really were Purifiers, he knew they couldn't afford to take it easy, and they had nowhere to hide - they needed to deal with them quickly. A dark shape started to swagger into his viewpoint, and gritting his teeth Axel leaped out. With a grunt, he plunged the screwdriver into the upper body of the leopard.

And paused. The point of the screwdriver started to sink through the leopard's skin - then stuck into the thick, heavy muscle that bulked him up. He struggled to yank it out, then blinked at the young thug who easily outweighed him several times over. "Ah..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 25, 2014, 08:15:09 PM**

Tony drove through the streets of what he now knew was Corona. He still had no idea how he'd gotten here, but he wasn't going to question it. He was here now... that's all that mattered. He kept his eyes on the Cord belonging to Stryker. He always stayed a block behind due to his rather conspicuous car, but fortunately for him, Stryker seemed preoccupied. Resting a finger under his nose and his elbow on the open window frame, Tony ran several things through his mind.

The black car up ahead made a turn, and Tony sped up a bit, making the turn a half a moment later. He braked almost immediately though, noting that Stryker had pulled over to the side of the road. Inhaling, Tony decided to do the same, putting the Duesenberg against the curb and crawling to a halt. He tapped a claw on the steering wheel as he shifted into neutral and watched intently as Stryker emerged from his car. What was he doing here?

Up ahead, the sungazer lizard strolled onto the sidewalk then leaned nonchalantly up against the side of the building, checking his watch. Tony continued to drum his claws on the steering wheel, and looked away when Stryker seemed to glance in his direction. Clearing his throat slightly, the ferret pretended to be looking across the street, as if waiting for someone.

Glancing down, he got his first sight of the Duesenberg's exterior, thinking maybe it'd help him learn more about the car... and why he was in it. OK so from the looks of things... he was in a sleek sedan or phaeton as they were called. It was sporting unique red and black colors on its side, and it wasn't supercharged, from what Tony could tell. It was rakish and beautiful, but whose it was was anyone's guess. Tony's father didn't own one like this... and the year... it was either early 30s or late 20s.

Figuring that the glove compartment was as good a place to look as any, Tony reached over, and popped it open. Aside from the owner's manual, which was in pristine condition, the car lacked registration of any kind... which was bad news for him, in case he was pulled over. It was bad news anyway, since he didn't have his wallet on him either. "Dammit..." he breathed. For all he knew, he was sitting in a stolen car, albeit a beautiful one, and one that was likely to attract attention. That was the great thing about Duesenbergs that also made them very conspicuous... they were all hand crafted to the owner's specifications. The Duesenberg (http://www.velocityjournal.com/images/full/2003/s2003072901/du1929modeljmurphy7502.jpg) idled as Tony glanced back in Stryker's direction. OK... he still hadn't moved... must be waiting for someone... but who and why? He wouldn't have much longer to wait as it turned out...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 25, 2014, 11:06:10 PM**

Lily groaned as she regained consciousness. All she could remember was that some sort of fight had broken out, and she eventually passed out from her injuries.

Where was she? It was dark, and musty. She was nude, and her backside felt numb from the cold metal she was laying on.

She tried to sit up and smacked her face on more metal less than a foot from her face. Her hands cast out and quickly confirmed she was in a box.

Her chest tightened. *Oh god, I’m in a coffin. Oh god, oh please no…*

She kicked the end of the box and the end swung open with a creak. As quickly as she could (which was not very quick due to the lack of wiggle room) she abandoned her box and found herself in a morgue.

Her breathing slowly returned to normal. After thinking she’d been buried alive, she could almost deal with waking up in a morgue.

There was a tag wrapped around her left big toe. Shivering in the stainless steel room, she slipped it off and read it.

Name: Jane Doe
Cause of Death: Multiple, see extended file
Organ Donor ☑

It also noted the time and date of her dissection and autopsy. Lily felt nauseous; if they'd already removed her internal organs, there were some receivers who will be getting truly miraculous transplants. She decided not to think about what exactly this is going to mean for the future of medicine.

I need to get out of here first thing first, she thought, wrapping a smelly sheet around her for warmth and then replacing it out of respect for the body underneath. *They weren't able to identify me, but who knows if they had time to try and match DNA or really check things out.*

She had to find Axel. But how?

* * *

Emile picked Nairda up and carried him to the bed, tucking him in gently. Lena brought an extra blanket in case it got drafty during the night.

"It's all right Nairdey-poo," his mother finally said softly. "Emilena sounds like a hard person to live with."

Nairda shook his head. "She's perfect...she is my sun and my moon...my muse..."

"Of course she is," Emile comforted. "The goods ones are always a handful. I think I know what your problem is."

Nairda sniffed. "You do?"

Lena nodded. "You need to be firmer with her. I don't think you're making your priorities and needs clear enough. She sounds like a woman who prefers direct communication."

"Try this," Emile instructed. She slapped his wife in the face. "Get on your knees, bitch. Show me why I keep you around."

Lena purred and followed his instructions, unbuckling his belt and dropping his pants. In a few minutes, they seemed to have forgotten about Nairda.

"Err..." Nairda's eyes bugged out and he averted his gaze. "I'm reasonably certain she'd kill me if I tried to do that."

"Of course she won't," moaned Emile, slightly distracted. "Cause you love each other. Right?"

Nairda nodded fiercely.

"I think I know the problem," Lena spoke up, taking a break from her husband. "I think you're just inexperienced in bed. That life story involved a depressingly low amount of nookie before you met your ëtrue love'. You're probably not satisfying her."

"She's, eh, not as sexual as you two are...' Nairda said apprehensively, but his father cut him off.

"Nonsense! She just says that cause she's unimpressed with you! Lena has said that to all sorts of guys!"

Lena nodded. "But we can fix that. Lucky for you, your parents are something of experts on this subject." She stripped off her bathrobe and crawled onto the bed. "Before you see her again, we'll make you into a *stallion*."

Nairda drew the blankets over his chest. "Uh, that's all right...I don't think that would be… uh..."

Emile took his shirt off and crawled in the other side. "It's okay, son," he comforted. "Part of our job as parents is to teach you about the birds and the bees. Just lie back and relax."

"I don't, I…" Nairda struggled, but he hadn't anywhere to go. And after a few minutes, he didn't feel like he had the willpower to make them stop, especially after they incorporated him into their routine.

"No more worrying, honey," his mother comforted him. "Just focus on how good it feels…"

Nairda took a few deep breaths, and found it harder and harder to think of anything but the sensations. Finally, he gave in.

"Ohhh...there you go Nairda…" Emile groaned.

"Just like old times, Nairda…" his mother sighed. "Mmm…"

"Old times? We haven't--" His mother put a finger over his mouth so he couldn't talk any more.

The further along they went, the more Nairda felt something was off. It was only when Lena accidentally referred to him as Karl that he suddenly realized he wasn't the Nairda they were both fantasizing about.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 27, 2014, 09:14:33 PM**

Stryker soon vanished into the building, which was more of a warehouse now that Tony thought about it... and Tony wasn't sure what was going on. The ferret stayed in his idling car while Stryker made his way through the sleeping assortment of fools he considered killing all while they slept. It would be so easy... but he had only thing on his mind, and that was his target. Well... almost one thing on his mind.

Pausing over Rio, the sungazer lizard smirked. He took out a small jet injector, which was loaded with a much stronger knock out agent then what he was planning on using on Emilena. Injecting the substance into the kid's neck, he proceeded to strip him naked and rolled his clothes up into a ball, which he'd dump someplace far away en route to the castle. Taking out a marker, he spit the cap off to the side and began to write upon the kid's chest and belly: "I have taken Emilena. If you want her back, you'll have to lynch me for answers. Torture me in the most horrible way you can imagine, or I'm not talking."

Smirking again, he proceeded over to the sleeping fox and took out another jet injector with a much weaker dose. This one would ensure she'd be out for an hour or two... after that, whatever woke her up would wake her up. Injecting her neck with a soft hiss of air, he proceeded to create a bundle using Rio's clothes, and carried her out of the warehouse with no issues.

Tony watched as Stryker reemerged with... hey was that Emilena? What was going on here? The fox was unceremoniously dumped into the trunk of the Cord, and soon, the black automobile was driving off. Pulling away from the curb after shifting into gear, Tony began to follow at a distance. At least the car was easy to keep an eye on... but knew his own was as well... so... best keep it way back.

They got onto one of the highways, and Tony made sure to keep plenty of cars between his own and the Cord. He stayed in the slow lane, which fortunately Stryker did as well. But this road left the city eventually so... where was he going? If he didn't exit... they'd be leaving Corona. So where were they going? "Where are you taking me, Stryker?" Tony whispered, wishing his car had a radio or... some way to communicate. Still, at least he was in a Duesenberg... there were far worse cars to be in after all.

They must have driven for close to 35 minutes before actually leaving the city, with Stryker taking an exit that led onto a small road that wound its way into a forest. OK... this was getting creepy. Tony hung back, letting the Cord disappear into the woods before he started pursuing. This road looked like it wouldn't have many turnoffs, so if Stryker did park somewhere... it might come up on him quickly. Tony therefore eased the Duesenberg down the road, taking it as slowly as he dared.

Fortunately, no car loomed up in his vision as he drove down the road at barely 30 mph. Some shape was rising up from the trees the closer he got to it though, and the ferret gasped as a massive stone Gothic castle suddenly appeared at the end of the road. "What?" he breathed. The Cord was parked in a lot out front, and Tony slowed to make sure Stryker wasn't in the car... but he wasn't; it was empty. Guessing Emilena wouldn't be inside the boot either, he pulled his Duesenberg into a nearby parking spot and shut the engine off. So... what now? He couldn't just waltz in the front door...

Drumming his claws on the steering wheel, the ferret started playing things through his mind now, wondering just what he could do from here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 28, 2014, 08:04:16 AM**

The smooth tones of *Mozart's Requiem in D Minor* washed soothingly from the small vinyl player, the music playing across the small, dark, cold room. The only light came from the network of monitors fixed along the length of one stone wall, their harsh blue light spilling across the small desk in front of them and giving clarity to the content of the room. It was sparse - a bed, neatly made. A bare, smooth floor, the pale stone slabs looking freshly scrubbed, the strong smell of bleach hanging in the air lending credence to this fact. Above the bed, a row of photos were stuck along the wall, each showing a different person in profile - a few men, but mostly women. Each had a thick black marker line drawn across their eyes, each except the photo at the end of a smiling young woman. Pushed into the corner at the far end of the room was a large trunk, a padlock hooked through the opening and keeping it shut. Hanging over the trunk was a small shelf lined with various tools; hammer, screwdriver, pliers. There was a window, but the shutters were closed tightly, stopping any potential light from intruding, ensuring the room was kept dark.

William liked the dark, the comfort it offered him, the promise of security. The middle aged man was sitting in front of the mass of monitors, his oddly stretched body hunched over as he stared at each screen, the grainy images hooked up to security cameras all over the property.William brushed a strand of brittle looking blonde hair out of his eyes with bony, grotesquely long fingers and turned his gaze back to the one image that held his attention the most.

The cell containing the gecko and the fox. He licked his lips in anticipation, the corner of his thin, pallid face giving the slightest of twitches. He didn't care about the gecko... but the woman... If Stryker didn't finish her off, and left just enough of her for him to work with, maybe she could become his new project... William's eyes flicked almost accusingly to the trunk in the corner. His current project was becoming a little too *unresponsive*. He studied the flickering image of the unconscious fox and felt his throat grow dry. *Emilena Echo*... He could really have some fun with her...

Movement in one of the screens on the top right. William's large green eyes rolled up to look. He blinked. The image showed the parking lot at the front of the castle. He could recognise the car belonging to Stryker... but there was another. One he *didn't* recognise. An intruder? Nobody else was meant to be arriving...

More movement. Whoever it was, they were still inside the car. Drumming his skeletal fingers on the desk, William considered radioing Stryker to report this new development - but that could delay him getting started with Emilena, which meant *he'd* have to wait even longer. William shook his head. No. It'd be quicker if he dealt with this himself.

He slid his long body from the chair and crossed the room, then bent and slid a case from beneath the bed. Clicking it open, he pulled out an assortment of metal components, and quickly, in a practised and smooth motion, assembled a long, heavy looking sniper rifle. Screwing a silencer to the end of the barrel, William glanced over at the trunk and cleared his throat. "I'll be back soon, dear," he called, his voice light, slightly wheezy. "When I do, well... I'm afraid our time together is going to have to come to an end."

Muffled groaning, gurgling, a few very weak thumps coming from inside the trunk. William smiled. Maybe she wasn't quite as unresponsive as he'd thought.

Opening the door, he stepped out into a long hallway, most of the light provided by the large chandeliers suspended from the ceiling, and turned right. He was already on the top floor, so it didn't take him long before he arrived to a heavy door that opened out onto a walkway running around the castle's roof. Holding his beige jacket shut against the chilling wind blowing against him, William walked around until he came within sight of the parking lot, far, far below. Licking his lips again, he set the sniper rifle up against the stone railing and peered through it's high powered scope... then frowned.

Whoever was sitting in the mysterious car, they were positioned just far back enough so he couldn't get a clear shot at them. But he could still keep them from trying to go anywhere. Taking a slow breath, William moved the crosshairs to the car's front right tire and squeezed the trigger. The gun whispered as the bullet flew out and tore through the rubber. He quickly swiveled the scope across the rear tire and took that one out as well, then fixed his crosshairs back over the driver's side of the vehicle. *Come on... just give me a clear shot...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2014, 05:26:00 PM**

As Lily prepared to leave the morgue, her eyes caught the body under the sheet she'd almost stolen. It was a middle-aged man whose tag named him Gittsun. He was pudgy but fairly muscular, probably looked attractive when wearing clothes. The sight got her thinking.

Can I raise the dead? she wondered, gasping slightly at even the idea. Was death the cessation of existence, or was it a condition? Could it be healed?

She crept closer to the man, hardly daring to believe what she was thinking of doing. The only thing that made her hesitate was the realization that she might transfer his death onto herself. *But is that any indication I'd stay dead?* she wondered to herself. *I have no idea to what extent I can heal…*

Her hands hovered nervously over Gittsun's chest. She had no way of knowing what could happen next. *I could leave and test this later…but how often will I have a dead body so easily available? And shouldn't I learn my limits before it's the life of someone I care about on the line?*

Besides, if this kills me and then brings me back to life…I could be immortal…

That realization shocked her to the core and she drew away in fright. *I can't risk it!* she thought in a panic, tripping over an empty table and stumbling to the exit, staring at Gittsun with wide eyes. *Not on a stranger!*

She stumbled out of the morgue, mind swirling with questions and existential dreads, and completely forgot she'd already extensively touched Gittsun while returning his sheet.

Emilena grunted. She'd been having a completely nonsensical dream, but as her body quickly shouted to her brain that things were very, very wrong in the real world, she found she couldn't remember anything she'd been dreaming about.

She realized with a sinking feeling that this was not the room she'd fallen asleep in. Her vision slowly returned and revealed a classic medieval dungeon. Musty chains hung from dank stone walls, as did Emilena herself. Her clothes and any possible form of self-defense were missing, though if she were to escape there were more than enough nasty torture instruments rusting in the dark corners with which to arm herself. But in her current position, she suspected those will be doing her more harm than good.

She regarded the sungazer lizard who was doing nothing to disguise his status as the interrogator. "Hi…" she panted, for the spread-eagle position was making it hard to breathe, "Would you mind reminding me who you are and how I pissed you off? There are so many of you I can't keep track of them all."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 29, 2014, 01:12:25 AM**

The wound was superficial at best. The Leopard's denim jacket and heavy muscle greatly inhibited the penetration of the screwdriver.

Hania smirked and pulled out the screwdriver as it was a very shallow wound that didn't even need medical attention. "Really?" he said. "I thought you Gleamers were freaks of nature that could do shit like lift cars?" He shrugged his broad shoulders. "Oh well." He turned to his three companions. "Let's take them apart!"

"Not without a fight," Soren muttered. "Hey fuckface!" he yelled. He stood up from behind a garbage can and swung his wrench like a baseball bat, aiming at the Iguana.

The Iguana reacted just in time, barely ducking the blow. He lashed out with his tail, striking the Human on his arms ó which had no effect thanks to his STF laced clothing.

Soren ducked another tail whip. He scowled; the Iguana's long tail gave him a serious reach advantage. And what was worse was that the thug appeared to have slipped a metal sleeve at the end of his tail.

The Fruit Bat was currently scaling a fire escape. Thanks to Anne having hooves, she was unable to climb after him. Of course, that didn't stop her from grabbing an empty can of paint thinner and hurling it at him.

The Shetland Pony mare felt a tap on her shoulder. "Not now, I'mó" She staggered back as the Appaloosa mare kicked her in the back. Pushing off with her hands, she dodged another vicious kick from the mare.

"Afraid?" the Appaloosa asked with a smirk. She tensed her leg slightly. That was a signal for Anne to charge forward. The kick still landed but instead of the steel shoe striking her, it was just the fleshy part of where her hoof began. The two Equines went down on the filthy concrete.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 29, 2014, 01:29:55 PM**

Tony's heart exploded when he heard the distinctive pop of the air going out of one of the tires and the car starting to settle. They were shooting at him? What the hell? Didn't they recognize the damn car? Even if it wasn't one of his father's...

Snapping the keys to the on position, the ferret pushed the starter switch with the front of his foot, even as a second tire began losing air pressure. Get out of here! Pushing the clutch and shifting into reverse, the ferret slammed his heel into the accelerator, and the Duesenberg's powerful engine roared into life. The car rattled terribly as he began backing up, and he jerked the wheel to the right then to the left, throwing up a moving target as he backed out of the lot. Just don't damage the wheels... don't damage the wheels...

Fortunately, he didn't have far to go. The trees soon intervened with any shot, and since they were nice big coniferous trees, seeing the Dusey would be hard once Tony managed to regain the road. The car protested badly, but Tony only had to make it less than 200 yards. If the tires could last until then... the wheels wouldn't be damaged. He knew typical tires could go roughly 400 yards before shredding into nothing if they were flat, so he only hoped the owner of this Model J had taken good care of it.

Already he was muscling the wheel to keep the Dusey as straight as he could, but it was a battle that was fortunately downhill from here. Since the castle was on a hill, the terrain would work to his advantage of getting clear of that sniper, as would the trees.

Listening to the thumps and then hisses of the flats, Tony was completely out of sight of the castle less than ten seconds later. He slowed down then, and began nursing the Dusey backwards. "Come on baby... come on... you can do this." he urged. He didn't dare take it much further. The last thing he wanted was to be stranded out here in the wilderness near a creepy castle. Sighing heavily as he eased the car to a halt on the side of the road, he exhaled an expletive as he tried to get his nerves to settle.

Heart pounding, the ferret knew that fortunately for him, most Duesenbergs carried two spare tires, one on each side, and extra fortunately for him, both spares were present. This was to balance the car as much as it was because roads in the 30s weren't always the greatest to be driving on, and two were often times needed on a longer trip.

Tony ran his claws through his head fur, lowering his head a bit as he thought about what to do next. "Fuck..." he whispered again, trying to calm himself. OK... OK... do NOT go back up to that castle again... at least... not until you change the tires out. He could do that... he did it growing up in his father's considerable garage. OK... just... calm down...

He searched the car one more time for any weapons, and did find a Glock in a box on the back seat... but that was it. OK... so someone had left him a weapon. Someone had wanted him to see Stryker... but why? Exiting the Dusey and shoving the pistol into his rear waistband, Tony noticed now he was dressed like a weird chump. Nothing like what he usually wore. He had a long blue trench coat on, and a plaid shirt with tan slacks. Odd. Wasn't in his wardrobe.

Detaching the right side tire, Tony checked the trunk for the proper tools and saw that fortunately they were all there. OK... time to get to work... and hope he hadn't ruined the wheels in his retreat...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 29, 2014, 03:43:12 PM**

"Aaaugh!" Emilena screamed as she felt the blade drive deep into her chest. Within a few minutes her panicked mind managed to piece together that it wasn't a necessarily vital organ that just shut down. "I guess this isn't an interrogation, is it?" She coughed, tasting blood. "Cause you're not providing much of a framework if you were hoping to gain information from me…"

She paused. "Wait a minute…that arrogant tone…bad at torturing…defaulting to rape threats…I remember who you are!" Her eyes went wide as she realized how bad this situation is. *Shit, I was hoping to get through life without seeing this guy again…*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 31, 2014, 06:14:51 PM**

William's breath whistled through his teeth as he tracked the car with his sniper rifle, the crosshairs following the driver's side as whoever was in the vehicle reversed, the movement swaying and uneven as they fought for control. *There!* The driver had moved the car back just far enough so he could see a shape behind the windscreen; male, not human. His long finger tightened on the trigger. He drew air into his lungs as he prepared to take the killing shot...

The car reversed into the treeline, and suddenly thick branches and layers of leaves blocked his view of the target. William clicked his tongue irritably, moving the scope to try and catch another glimpse of the intruder, but it was too late - they'd managed to get out of his sight. For now. He let his hand slide from the trigger, leaning back as he lowered the rifle, the gun making a *clack* sound as it settled on the stone handrail. He could try to take another shot, blindly, hoping the bullet would find it's target - but he didn't. Wasting bullets was so... *vulgar.*.

As the wind rustled through the trees, the breeze blowing back his straw coloured hair, William sighed, closing his eyes briefly and feeling a familiar stirring in his lower body as he considered the hunt that could be at hand. Taking stock, William opened his eyes and walked back the way he'd come.

What the fuck... Axel stepped back in shock as around him the others went for each other. Who the hell *were* these guys?!

No time to think about it. As Hania yanked the screwdriver out, Axel jumped forward and slammed a fist into the side of his face. The shock of the impact ran up his metallic arm, reverberating through his body - it was like punching a brick wall. Axel might have the height advantage... but that was about it. This guy was built like a truck...

Before he could react, a fist hammered into his face, the force of a hurtling train behind it, connecting square with Axel's nose and rocking him backwards, throwing him off his feet and causing his back to crack against the hard alley floor. For a moment, Axel could only lay there dazed as blood streamed from his nose. Of course, they just *had* to have the luck of running into the only Purifier sympathizers in Corona...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 01, 2014, 06:47:27 PM**

Soren had decided that he had enough of ducking attacks. He tensed slightly and drove forward like a football player. The metal plate lashed against his back (which he didn't feel due to his STF laced clothing) but it did nothing to slow him down.

He grunted as both the Iguana and him slammed into the brick wall, the Iguana taking the worst of the impact. Soren tried to get in a blow with the wrench, but the thug quickly blocked, stopping Soren's arm with his own. A quick leg sweep and Soren found himself on the ground.

"Myó" Soren reacted quickly, punching his attacker square in the groin as hard as possible. While the Iguana's genitals were concealed inside a slit (as was common to all Lizards), groin attacks were still very painful.

The thug crumpled to the ground, swearing profusely as he clutched his groin.

The Human ooked around and decided who else needed help. Anne was fighting a two-on-one battle. And one of the thugs attacking her appeared to be a rather big Appaloosa mare. And judging from the sounds her kicks and punches were making as Anne carefully weaved around them, she wore brass knuckles and horseshoes.

He turned to Axel, who was lying on the ground. A hulking figure with his back turned to the Human was stalking towards the prone Rat.

The Human picked up an empty metal jug and started pounding on Hania with it.

Anne spat out some blood from a busted lip. She had just broken a beer bottle over the Appaloosa mare but all she did was brush shards of glass from her hoodie. It was then that Anne realized she wore STF laced clothing ó just like Soren.

The Fruit Bat in question was perched atop the fire escape. He silently leapt off and glided towards Hania. A large lump of wood was in his hand.

As Soren was attacking Hania with the empty metal can, the Fruit Bat snuck behind Soren and raised his piece of wood to strike him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 02, 2014, 11:46:14 AM**

Marie had finished setting up the gust bed for Axel and lilly once they arrived at the apartment. Rose had tidied up her room and had gone into Sorens and annes to tidy up, which was not easy to be easy, Soren had supplies abnd bits of junk everywhere, like he usually did " we really should start charging Soren a fee for picking up his room'; she muttered to herself, as she puts some selding tools on a bench.
_ Marita was making dinner for for when the others returned '   she was ly working on a hay-and-oatscake for Anne.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 02, 2014, 03:22:57 PM**

Axel blinked, dazed, raising his head as a huge shadow settled over him. Blearily, his vision focused on the gigantic wall of muscle looming above. His head swimming, Axel struggled to push himself up into a sitting position.

Hania smirked at the figure writhing below him, squirming in the filth of the alley floor before his beautiful, pure superiority. "You gleamers are all the same... you think *those* make you the pinnacle of evolution?" he gloated, swinging a heavy boot back and delivering a powerful kick to the rat's metallic arm, sending him crashing back to the floor. Axel yelled as his shoulder exploded in pain, and Hania's grin broadened, his perfect teeth glinting in the streetlights illuminating the alley. "This is what evolution looks like," Hania continued, indicating his powerfully built body, his impressively toned arms. "Being in touch with mother nature... understanding that you're above everything and everyone else..." The leopard shrugged and cracked his knuckles, then raised his foot again, intending to bring it down on the rat's skull. "But I guess there's just no teaching those who squander nature's gifts..."

Clang! Something heavy and metallic slammed into the side of his head, and pain rushed through Hania's ear, forcing him to clasp a hand to the side of his head. With his attacker momentarily distracted, Axel grunted and raised himself back up, glancing behind Hania to see Soren preparing to swing again with a metal jug. Desperately, he looked around for something to use, but there was nothing, only empty cans and used cigarettes. Movement behind Soren, and Axel's eyes widened as he managed to catch a glimpse of someone about to strike his friend. "Soren, watch out!"

Hania was starting to overcome the pain from the blow Soren had dealt him and was starting to turn to face the human. Scrabbling to his feet, Axel charged forward and slammed into Hania at full pelt. The leopard lost his footing and, with a roar, collapsed backwards onto Soren and the fruit bat, crushing the two of them against the floor. Yelling, Axel leaped on top on the writhing pile. Straddling Hania, he wrenched the pen from his pocket and stabbed it point down repeatedly at his face, aiming for his eyes.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 02, 2014, 04:08:13 PM**

Corrected to avoid forum violation.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 02, 2014, 05:51:34 PM**

"Well, thank god i got you fired from that carnival then--" Emilena grunted and her eyes grew wide as she felt a searing pain lance into her abdomen. "And here I thought your worst crime was hollowing out your pineapple smoothies. Augh!" She winced and squinted her eyes shut as he smashed against her again and again. There were dark spots interrupting her vision both from the strangulation and the beating she was taking, but she willed herself to stay awake. At the moment, falling unconscious would almost certainly lead to her death.

Someone started throwing rocks against the window on the alleyway side of Marita's apartment. "Soren!" cried Lily, looking both ways down the street frantically and trying to keep as hidden as possible behind a dumpster. "Axel! Please open up!"

She'd had to make the journey from the morgue darting from alleyway to parking lot, and considered it a miracle she'd made this far. But with morning traffic, she was all too aware of the number of people getting a possible chance to see her looking decidedly out of place.

Foley was the first person awake in the warehouse, though that wasn't saying much as it was already late afternoon. Gingerly stepping over Flora's sleeping bag, he made his way towards the computer room to get to work on telling his online friends that he was finally back on a real computer, and logging the amazing stories he had to tell them.

He was ensconced on his chat rooms when Flora stumbled naked into the room. "Do we have any food or no…?" she muttered sleepily.

Foley ignored her lack of clothes; she did this every morning. "Didn't check, but if we do I want one of whatever you make."

"Who died and made me mom?" Flora grumbled, crossing to the mini-fridge. "Got beer…want beer?"

Foley shook his head. "I was serious. I'm giving up on that crap. Healthy as a horse from here on out."

Flora shrugged and popped the pull tab. After a few refreshing swigs, she walked into the next room. "I might run to the store and buy eggs or something, can I have money?" she asked over her shoulder. "I'll have some grub ready for when the others wake up."

Foley's response was interrupted by Flora gasping loudly. "Foley!" she screamed, looking at Rio in horror. "Foley, get in here!"

Foley gaped when he saw the status Rio was in. "Jesus. Is he dead…?" he whispered with characteristic bluntness. Flora was quaking frantically, too scared to touch the boy, so Foley reached out and jostled his shoulder. "Hey, kid…wake up. Rio?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 02, 2014, 06:18:22 PM**

marita stopped cooking when some rocks began rattling her alleyside window. She set the bowl aside and went over to the window, opened it and looked down, within a few seconds she saw Lily peeking out from behind a Dumpster. ' Lily! good heavens! The others have been looking all over for you. Look Just Give me a second I'll grab a dress you can slip on and be right Down." Marita closed the Window ran over to her closet and picked out a light blue dress that she rarely wore anyway, then tucked it under her arm and Headed for the door. ' lily right outside ' she called to Marie" I'll going down to to bring her in..
"
_ Where the heck has she been? the others went to look for her hours ago?" Marie said. ' Well You can ask her that once I get her in here. be back in 5 minutes' marita replied and headed out the door. marita went down to the elevator and rode it down to the ground floor, then headed out towards the alleyway where Lilly was. " A couple minutes later she caught sight of Lilly, looking tired, worn.. and sans any clothes.. ' ' I brought you something " Marita said Holding out the dress to her ' Just slip that on, and then follow me..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 02, 2014, 11:05:02 PM**

"Whaó" Soren turned around to see the thug about to swing a piece of wood. He blocked with his arms, the STF laced clothing dispersing the impact but the blow atill stung. But before the Fruit Bat could take a second swing and Soren could throw a punch, Axel's body slam had pushed Hania on top of him.

The Human went down, his legs trapped under the enormously muscular Leopard. Fortunately, he had also managed to fall atop the Fruit Bat. While he couldn't fight with Hania's muscular bulk atop him, neither could the Fruit Bat.

Unfortunately, the Iguana thug had recovered from the groin shot that Soren had dealt him.

Anne ducked under a blow from the Appaloosa mare's brass knuckle punch. Broken pieces of concrete rained on her mane from the blow. She blocked the second punch and tackled her into some garbage cans.

"Oh, yuck. You know how much this hoodie cost?" the mare exclaimed as she threw a piece of semi-rancid catfish patty away.

"Less than a trip to the ICU!" Anne grabbed a bit of the mare's mane and slammed her, muzzle-first, into the concrete wall.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 03, 2014, 07:58:17 PM**

Hania grunted as he warded off Axel's frantic attacks, waving them away as he attempted to snatch the rat's arm out of the air, but the writhing mass below him made it difficult. Axel, still sitting atop the leopard, yelled in frustration as he kept stabbing downwards with the pen. Trying to fight this guy was like trying to fight a brick wall...

Hania's arm shot out and grabbed Axel's pen arm, his grip tightening around the metallic wrist and causing the joint to creak alarmingly. Grinning at the shock in the rat's face, Hania pistoned his other arm forwards, connecting with Axel's face in an open palm strike that rocked his head back and sent him flying through the air. With a grunt, Axel slammed into an open dumpster and tumbled inside.

Rolling to his feet, Hania snatched Soren off the floor, shook him, then threw the human further into the alley. Putting his hands on his hips, he laughed triumphantly. "You fools have no chance of defeating me! Uh, I mean us! Hurry comrades, make short work of them!" Hania commanded, gesturing to his cronies and flexing his muscles. "Teach them what it means to be a parasite to nature!" With a final, gleeful cackle he spun around and stomped over to the dumpster that Axel had fallen into, throwing back the lid and plucking the rat out by the nape of his neck. "Now, are you ready to -"

"Yah!" As he was lifted free from the metal container, Axel slapped Hania in the face with a rancid seal steak that he'd fallen on top of, the meat leaving a streak of rancid juice across his face and lodging into his large mouth. It was a desperate gesture, surely it wouldn't do anything... But Axel gasped in surprise as Hania dropped him to the floor and stumbled back, a horrified expression contorting his features.

"What have you done?!" Hania howled, clawing at his face. "That was meat! *Meat!* You've... you've turned me into one of you! One of the monsters who devours Mother Earth's creatures, raping the gifts she's given us!" With a crushed whine, Hania sank to his knees, severely weakened.

"*-ey, ki... ake... Rio?*"

The voice floated through from somewhere far away, and Rio groaned. Who was it? Why weren't they leaving him alone? All he wanted to do was sleep... just sleep... A hand shook his shoulder, hard, and slowly Rio felt himself starting to come back into his body. But it was cold... why was it cold...

Groaning again, Rio's eyes creaked open, and he blinked in the sudden harsh glare of the light illuminating the large room he was in. "Urgh... what..." A dark shape leaning over him, and after a moment of solid concentration Rio recognised Foley. "*What...* What the fuck do you want, I'm sleepy!" A sudden roiling in his stomach, and with a gurgle Rio toppled forwards and threw up, just missing Foley's shoes. "Oh god..." Collapsing back into the sofa, Rio noticed for the first time that he was naked, and that there seemed to be writing on his body, although with his head swimming the way it was, he had no idea what it said. The boy blinked, looking at the other two blearily. "Did... did I get into the pills again?"

Cursing under her breath, Triste checked her watch for what felt like the hundredth time. Vergil *still* wasn't back at his apartment... Where the hell was he? *He should know that staying out in public on his own isn't a good idea...* Attempting to contact her higher up had led to nothing, and the same went for trying to contact Vergil himself. It was as if he'd just vanished.

Shit... Was he stupid enough to go back to headquarters? Had something really happened to him? How could she tell? Hissing, Triste jumped off her chair and headed for the door of her dark, lonely apartment.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 03, 2014, 08:31:21 PM**

Soren grunted as he slammed back first into a metal dumpster. Before he could get up, he felt the Fruit Bat's arms tighten around his neck.

"Had enough?" the thug taunted.

"No." Soren pulled the arm away from his neck and bit his attacker as hard as possible.

The thug immediately screeched as the bite drew blood. He released Soren.

"You...you...savage!"

The Human smirked and got up. "Says the one who snuck up on three guys and planned to kill them?"

He blocked a punch with his left arm and delivered a vicious palm-strike to the the thug. He then grabbed the dazed Fruit Bat and slammed him head first into the dumpster, the sound of flesh and bone impacting against metal rung out in the grimy alleyway.

He then turned around -- only to see the Iguana thug squaring off against him. In the faint morning light, he could see something shining in his right hand. "Shit! He's got a knife!"

Streaks of blood marred the concrete wall as the Appaloosa mare slid onto the filthy ground. Anne finally knocked out -- or killed -- the mare attacking her. She flexed her now numb fingers.

She winced as a broken rib began to act up.

Her ears pricked up as she heard Hania screech something about meat. Ignoring the stunned Hania, she trotted over to Axel and lifted him up.

"You okay?" she asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 04, 2014, 09:32:37 PM**

Corrected to avoid forum violation.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 04, 2014, 11:43:02 PM**

"Heh…Nairda could make me *scream* in bed…" Emilena grunted, wincing and shaking violently as Stryker drove the knife into her side again. "You hear me screaming? You're goddamn *tame* compared to what he does to me every night…and he doesn't forget his damn job cause he's getting pussy either." She spat blood in his face defiantly, gasping for air. "Whole room full of torture devices, and the only one you can think of is your dick…"

Lily wrapped the dress around her like a tunic before quickly darting into the house.

"It was awful!" She gasped, collapsing on the kitchen floor. "I'm so tired…I should never have split up with Axel…"

Staggering to the kitchen sink, she drank several mouthfuls of tap water before she felt ready to keep talking. "I've been…out all night…" she panted. "I haven't seen Axel since we split up outside out house…"

She made to walk deeper into the apartment. "Where is he? I…have to talk to him about something. Something important."

"Someone was in here!" shrieked Flora hysterically, jumping up and looking wildly around the room. "Someone was *in our safe house!* While we were *sleeping*!!!"

Foley grabbed Rio a wet washcloth so he could clean himself up. "What do you remember?" he asked. "Do you know anything about who did this to you?"

"*She's gone!*" Flora darted out of Emilena's room in a state of panic. "*Where is she?!?*"

"Flora, will you calm the hell down!" Foley snapped. "You're not helping!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2014, 01:15:07 AM**

Just slow Down " Marita said calmly. ' Axel and the others went out to look for you after you got seperated. We're going to let you Axel stay here for awhile, we'll come to an understanding about rent later. First , lets get you something to eat, as I bet you are quite hungry. After yiu eat, Rose will show you to your room, Its Roses reallybut she has a guest bed You can have. Once you get something to eat I'll call the guys and let them know you made it here safely, and that they can come back" Marita said " Now, is there anything You'd prefer to eat?"
_ Rose pulled out a chair for Lily to sit on ..' Where were you?" she asked lily.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 05, 2014, 08:31:10 AM**

Tony had replaced one tire, and was working on the second now. He'd decided to keep the flats, even though they were worthless at the moment. They fit conveniently into the holders on either side, and the ferret figured if nothing else they'd make for good shields for the engine block in case he was shot at again.

Straining a bit, he wiped his brow. What was his plan after this? They either hadn't recognized him at the castle or hadn't cared. He didn't even know the date, or how long he'd been unconscious for... nor how he'd ended up back in Corona sitting in a Duesenberg Model J. He continuously scanned the trees just in case, but so far, the forest was silent. He'd pull back for now... look for other roads or ways to approach the castle... and try and find a phone so he could call his father.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 05, 2014, 06:48:07 PM**

Axel grunted as Anne helped him up, turning his head to spit out a mouthful of blood. "Yeah, I'm... I'm just peachy..." In front of him, the huge bulk that was Hania had started to rise, the shock of the meat beginning to fade to a distant memory. "Gather your strength comrades!" he called out. "We must eliminate these -"

Hania's shrill voice was cut off with a sickening *crack* as the sole of Axel's shoe slammed into the bridge of his nose, knocking the leopard down onto his back. Staggering around, Axel drew back his leg and kicked him again in the temple, rocking Hania's head to the side as his foot connected solidly with his skull. "Eliminate that, you *fuck*," Axel spat, then shot a look up as Soren yelled that a knife had been brought into play. "Let's finish the rest of them off quickly. There's no reasoning with these bastards," he snarled to Anne.

The closest residence to Vergil's apartment was Axel and Lily's house. As Triste made her way over, speeding her bike through the narrow, interconnecting alleyways to save time, she prayed under her breath that Vergil would be there, that they had done something as banal as inviting him over for dinner. Deep down, she knew this wouldn't be the case. There was no way he'd go for something that ordinary... even the way he was now.

She emerged out onto the street running alongside the house and turned left... then slowed her bike down, the engine rumbling beneath her. Two police cars were parked outside the couple's residence, the lights on top of the vehicle flashing. Just to the side, a police officer was speaking to an old lady - a neighbour, Triste assumed. *What the hell's going on?* She stayed watching for another few seconds, her hands gripping the motorcycle handles hard enough to make them creak as she thought what she should do next. *Whatever's happened here, I can't draw attention to myself... But if this is something to do with Vergil...* It was worth taking a short while to see if she could gather what had happened. If it had anything to do with *him* then she could figure out what to do from there. Shutting off the bike's engine, Triste climbed off and moved closer to the small house, activating her cloaking augment.

Rio accepted the wet cloth from Foley with shaking fingers, wiping his face in a vain effort to try and clear the thick fog that was clouding his head. "I don't know, I.. I don't..." He craned his neck around, and some of the words written on his body started to clear. "*Torture* me?!" he gasped. "What the *fuck*?! Who did this?"

The boy flinched at Flora's shouts as she discovered Emilena was missing. He blinked at Foley. "Why the hell would you torture me, I don't know anything!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2014, 07:40:58 PM**

"*Aaauugghhh!*" Emilena let out a shrill screech that seemed to go on for over a minute. Tears welled in her eyes as she struggled in vain with her bonds. "Eeeurgghhh…" she coughed up another large swallow of blood which splashed on the stones below her and trickled down her chin. Her fur was slick with blood but her face was deathly pale from blood loss.

Then abruptly her heaving was laced with the vestiges of a chuckle. "You…" she panted, but couldn't finish talking without recollecting her strength. "You…you…couldn't finish…" she grinned weakly. "...You might be more like Nairda than I thought…"

"We can't pay you, we have no money and the police are watching our bank accounts. You can have what's in Axel's wallet when he gets back…" Lily accepted the cup of water and drank until her stomach hurt. "Can we call him? When will he get back? Is Soren with him? Where did they go?"

She could barely breathe she was talking so fast.

"I don't know, but that's not important." Foley lowered his voice so Flora couldn't hear. "What worries me is that it's implying they're still watching us."

"*I heard that!*" screeched Flora, eyes going wide. She raced back into her room and threw on as many layers of clothes as she could. "Oh my god we've got to get out of here!!!"

She raced to the front door and screamed again. "Oh my god! *Hal!*"

"Jesus, what is it now--" Foley groaned, but his breath caught in his throat when he walked in and saw the decomposing severed head staked to their door.

Flora stumbled backwards, babbling incoherently. "I we leave must god oh oh oh Emi Hal dead have help we've--!!!" she lapsed into gibberish, curling into a sobbing ball in the corner.

Foley went eerily silent. Then he left to his room and didn't return for ten minutes.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 05, 2014, 08:47:04 PM**

Soren swore as he ducked and backed away from the slashes. He snatched a garbage can lid to fend off the knife strikes.

He pushed forward with his improvised shield, hoping to knock the knife from his opponent's grasp. The Iguana dodged and stuck his foot out, causing Soren to trip.

"Shit!" Anne exclaimed. She picked up a garbage can and threw it at the man, knocking him down.

Soren saw the knife skitter by him. He dove for it at the same the thug did. He yelled as the thug stomped his hand to make him drop the weapon.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2014, 09:33:58 PM**

' We dont know where they are, they could be halfway across town for all we know. Rose said ' Look we'll eat the costs of having you two stay with us. we're friends. Yes soren and Anne are with him " Marita said ' Axel 's phone is bugged, so using it isn't an option. you'll have to use ours. Hold on, I'll call soren and let them know you're safe at the apartment and to come back.' Marie came into the kitchen' Lily! you made it! The guys will be relieved She said with a smile. " your bed is ready is case you want to take a nap.'
- Marita pulled out her phone and dialed Sorens number.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 06, 2014, 03:16:00 PM**

Axel's eyes widened as he saw the final thug stomp hard on Soren's hand, then make for the knife himself. Snarling, Axel sprinted up to the two struggling men, and just as the Iguana's fingers tightened around the knife's hilt, the rat jumped heavily onto his back, forcing him down onto his stomach on the hard cold ground.

As the iguana struggled beneath him, Axel tightened his legs around the thug's arms, pinning them to his sides. Drawing his arm back, Axel pistoned his fist forward, punching the iguana in the back of the skull. With a grunt, the thug's head collapsed forwards briefly. His lips peeled back in rage, Axel punched him again. As the iguana's struggles grew weaker, he grabbed the sides of his head, pulled it back, then slammed it down onto the floor. Again. And again. And again. When he heard a low *crunch*, Axel let his head drop to the floor with a wet splat. Winded, sucking in breath, the rat rolled off the thug's body lay next to him, gasping and looking at Anne and Soren. "I... fucking... hate Purifiers..." he managed. As his body started to shake, the adrenaline leaving him and the reality of what happened started to sink in, Axel heard the unmistakable wail of police sirens approaching - someone must have heard the commotion and dialed for the cops.

"*Crap*... we need to get... to get going. *Now*," Axel grunted, struggling to his feet. Right now, the cops were the last people he wanted to meet.

Rio heard Flora's screams, heard Foley retreating to his room. "What? Guys, what... what's going on?" Apart from Flora's babbling, there was no reply. Sliding from the couch, he wobbled on his feet unsteadily, then tottered across the room to a large, beaten up armchair on which was lying one of Foley's dark green hooded tops. Still unsteady on his feet, the boy pulled it over himself - it was much, much too large for him, the waist almost coming up to his knees, the sleeves hanging loose - then wandered across to the entrance.

"What is it?" Rio's eyes moved over the open door, and his mouth gaped open at the sight of Hal's severed head. For several moments, the boy stood there, staring at the gruesome scene, feeling horribly numb. That couldn't be Hal, he... he couldn't be dead... Rio had known him for years. How could anyone want to harm that harmless, nervous wreck? *Whoever took Emi...*

He started to move towards the entrance, to... do what exactly? Bury Hal's head? Pay it respects? Rio felt he needed to do *something*... but as he approached, the boy's stomach started to roil. The head might belong to someone he'd known for years - but it was still a rotting severed head. Trying not to throw up, his stomach coiling in disgust and shame, Rio pushed the door shut, leaving the last remains of his friend staked to the outside, and locked the door.

Trying to control his shaking, shocked tears blurring his vision, Rio stumbled across to the sobbing Flora, kneeling next to her and wrapping his arms around her as the tremors finally got the better of him. Someone had *cut off his friend's head...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 06, 2014, 03:33:16 PM**

Soren got up. "Thanks, I owe you!"

He looked around as he heard the sirens. "Good call."

Anne pocketed the dead mare's brass knuckles and trotted out of the alleyway after Soren and Axel left.

By now, the sun was up and the night shift oil farmers were heading home. Several other people were buying things at the many rough looking bodegas, noodle shops and corner stores in the area. Soren bumped into a Komodo Dragon dressed in a blue jumpsuit. "Sorry man," he said. The Komodo Dragon ignored him as he went into a grungy noodle shop. Soren didn't even want to think about how many health code violations there were in the place.

His phone rang in his pocket. Knowing that taking it out in the Algae Works District was an invitation to getting mugged, he ignored it.

The Human sighed as he sat down on a dilapidated bench. A sign pocked with holes and graffiti indicated he was at a bus stop. "So do we walk home or take the bus?"

Anne pulled her hands out of her pocket. "Unless you or Axel have some creds, we're gonna be walking."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 06, 2014, 06:13:37 PM**

Marita waited for a few seconds then hung up she then sent Soren a text " have Lily. shes safe at the apartment. get back here.-Marita" and sent it. " They arent responding, hopefully they get that text I sent.' she said turning to lily. " In the meantime, help yourself to whats in the pantrty.' she smiled.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 06, 2014, 10:26:51 PM**

Edited to avoid forum violation.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 07, 2014, 05:36:41 PM**

Emilena heaved as he kicked her in the stomach, gagging and choking violently. It's a good thing she'd been too tired to eat anything after her long plane flight or she would have certainly vomited.

She swallowed shakily, trying to catch her breath, but then the second kick came too quickly and her tongue caught in her throat. Her joints screamed in protest as she writhed feebly in her chains.

"You're going to kill my parents?" she gasped once he stopped kicking her. "Why didn't you… say so in the…first place? You need their address?"

Foley returned to the front room, lugging a large sack of clothes and electronics.

"What're you doing?" Flora uncurled just enough to give him a panicked look.

"I'm leaving. I'm done," he replied curtly. He opened the door to the outside.

"No, Foley, please don't--!" Flora sprang to her feet and rushed forward pleadingly, but he threw Hal's head in between them and she recoiled in horror. He slammed the door behind him.

Flora shuddered, and tears welled in her eyes. Dropping to her knees, she wrapped her arms around Rio and sobbed in equal parts disbelief and panic. "He left us! *He left us!*"

Lily shook her head. "I'm not hungry," She crossed to the window and looked with worry out at the streets below. "I hope they come home soon…"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 07, 2014, 06:44:17 PM**

"I already have their address... don't worry. Plus I know you go back there every time you need to... so don't act like you could do without them. Soon you and your own family will be nothing but a distant memory... but I've got a special toy for you. So just wait there... I'll be back in a few." He wiped his palms again, and headed for the only door in the room, leaving the knife stuck right where it was.

The moment the door closed, Vergil shifted his orange eyes upwards, and he began focusing. "Uggggh!" he groaned out, as the effort felt like he was trying to punch his way through molasses or tar, but suddenly, the bindings on his wrists and ankles snapped off, releasing him with four simultaneous snaps. The gecko tumbled to the floor, exhaling painfully and uttering a soft cry as he simply lay there for a second or two, trying to regain his strength. Panting heavily, the gecko groaned as he lifted himself up to standing, and began wobbling over to Emilena.

"You've got to get out of here." he barely managed to say as he fumbled with her bindings. "They pumped me full of something... made me tired as hell... I can barely move right now..." He undid one, then another, making sure to do one side first so her lower or upper ends wouldn't smack onto the floor when she was free. Unleashing the last of her feet, he didn't bother getting the last of her wrists, since he figured she could do that now that she had three of our four limbs free.

Collapsing back into a sitting position, he pointed weakly at the door, unable to say anything further.

"That oughta do it." Tony mumbled, having replaced the two flats with the two spares. "OK... now to get this baby rolling and see what I can do." Opening the driver's side door, Tony turned the key, pushed his foot on the starter switch, and listened to the straight eight come back to life. Shifting into gear, he turned the wheel and conducted a U turn away from the castle. Heading down the small road, he kept his eyes peeled for any side roads that might approach the castle from a different direction... or give him some sense of where in the hell he was.

His patience was rewarded, for a few moments later, he saw a road that led off to his left. OK... let's try this. Turning the Model J onto the new path, he slowly drove along what looked like a road that led deeper into the woods... well... it had to end somewhere...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 07, 2014, 09:41:48 PM**

Emilena groaned as she fell heavily to the ground. Relieving her imprisoned arm from its bondage, she gave herself sixty seconds to lay exhausted on the floor of the dungeon and catch her breath. "I was hoping you'd eventually make use of my distraction…" she panted. "I did my damnedest to command the bulk of his attention…"

She moaned loudly as she hoisted herself onto her knees and elbows. "You were in…South America, weren't you?" she muttered. She noted with disappointment that he was also unclothed; she would need to find something to bandage her knife wound or she risked bleeding out. "Had something of a temper."

Using the chains to pull herself to her feet, she staggered to the nearest portable torture device; she had to keep the knife embedded in her side until they found some cloth. Picking up a flail made of spiked chains and hefting it approvingly, she nodded at the door at the top of the stairs. "Get up. Magic the lock off and let's get the hell out of here."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 07, 2014, 09:53:10 PM**

"I don't remember you being there..." he said hoarsely, still sitting on the ground. "But I can't..." he answered. "I think that was my last... gasp. That thing they pumped me with... it's suppressing my powers... I'd love to throw that door off its hinges but... can't." he replied, shaking his head as he tried to regain what strength he could. The room suddenly spun around him. What the hell had they shot him up with? Bastards...

"I know you might not have the strength... but try removing the hinges... it's a medieval looking door after all... shouldn't be too hard to bypass." He was still sitting, still panting, but they were slower now... more spaced out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 07, 2014, 10:23:31 PM**

"You bloody slashed my hamstrings open!" she exclaimed. Staggering over to the door, she observed its thick wooden frame. Breaking it down would be too slow. But Vergil was right, the hinges were far more fragile. Swinging the flail at the top one repeatedly and taking care not to disembowel herself with the chains, she dented the metal until she could get her fingers between it and the door. Digging splinters away from the heavy set nails with her claws, she grunted and slowly got the top hinge off. One to go...

She took a break to pant heavily and glower at Vergil still sitting in the center of the room. "For Christ's sake, get up. You didn't just get raped and stabbed. You gonna be useless and cry about your missing magical powers or get your balls off the ground and help me with this door?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 07, 2014, 10:51:08 PM**

"Did I?" he asked with confusion. "I can't recall..." He got wearily to his feet. "Well... the drug... whatever it is... is making me feel like I should just lie down and sleep... physical torture yes... but chemicals acting on my body..." he then gave her a skeptical look as she asked him to help. "I'm a little over four feet tall and not exactly the most ripped guy in Corona. What do you expect me to do, strain weakly at the bolt while you sit there and laugh?" he asked.

But he could see she was in no condition to pull that second hinge out, so he tried with his hands. Straining, he felt even weaker than usual, and couldn't use his psionics to supplement his strength either. "Ugh! This isn't gonna work..." he replied, shaking his head. "Hold on..."

He turned to look around, and found the heretic's fork sitting on a table nearby. "This better work..." he mumbled, shoving the fork under the hinge now. "Urrrgh!" he groaned, starting to lever it up. It creaked and was forced upward, coming out of its slot. He reached down and now that he had a good grip, wrenched it out and flew backwards, landing on his back. "Ooof!" he uttered, lying there for a minute.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 08, 2014, 04:12:18 AM**

Rio blinked, tears shimmering in his eyes as he stared first in horror at the severed head now lying on their floor, a single maggot wriggling free from the decomposing flesh, then at the door through which Floley had just stormed. "What the fuck... Foley!" he choked out. "*Foley!*" Seconds passed, but the man didn't have a change of heart, throwing back the door and saying that they should stay together no matter what. He and Flora were on their own.

As Flora came back and hugged him, Rio held on to her tightly. How the hell had this happened?! Just yesterday they were all together... a team, a family... and now... Rio's breath grew ragged as thoughts of who could have done this rushed through his mind, terrifying him. Whoever it was, they'd had no problem butchering Hal - and, somehow, they'd been able to kidnap Emilena while the rest of them slept in the same area. If they came back to finish the job, Rio and Flora wouldn't stand a chance. *We need to get out of here...*

After a few minutes of struggling to get himself to calm down - the body part glaring blankly at them wasn't helping - he struggled to his feet and pulled weakly at Flora's shoulder. "Come on, we've... we've gotta go." But where? It's not like Rio had a huge list of friends who could help out. He and Flora *could* try and hide out in some dump in another part of the slums, but finding them wouldn't be hard if the person was looking hard enough. *We need people watching our back...*

Rio sniffed and pulled on Flora again. "I know where Lily lives. We can't stay here, but maybe she'll help us..."

Axel leaned on the bench and shook his head. "No... I've got nothing. *Goddammit...*" The rat swore, the side of his face a throbbing, swollen mass of pain from the repeated blows he'd taken to the face. Taking a short moment to catch his breath, he spat blood to the side and glanced between his two friends. "I don't know how much longer we... we can keep looking for her like this - and with the cops around..."

He swallowed then nodded at Soren's pocket where he kept his cell phone. "That didn't get busted up did it? Any news from Marita?"

Dead leaves crunched under William's boots as he took light, careful steps down the huge stone stairs leading from the castle to the grounds surrounding it. Reaching the bottom, he scanned the edge of the forest surrounding the property, sighing contentedly as the sounds of the sound of the trees whispering through the trees reached his sensitive ears, branches creaking, animals rustling through the undergrowth. An engine, very distant now, heading even further away... but not vanishing altogether. Whoever the intruder was, they weren't leaving yet.

The corner of his pallid, grey-hued face twitching briefly, William ran a finger delicately along his sniper rifle then slung it over his shoulder, feeling for the satisfying weight of his hunting knife sheathed on his hip as he did so. That done, he moved forwards, quickly, soundlessly, and disappeared into the forest.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 08, 2014, 10:02:25 AM**

Soren took out his cell phone. It appeared to be mostly intact. He tapped the screen and noticed the trio had texted him about ten times.

"Are they fucking kidding me!?"

He pocketed the phone. "Lily's back at our apartment. Would have been nice to know before we ended up in this shithole!"

Several *very* hostile stares came his way and a burly Human clad in the blue jumpsuit of an oil farmer began to stomp towards Soren.

"Hey asshole! You think your rich ass can insult my home and my workplace! I provide the oil you need to produce all your valuable shit!" He pushed Soren against the bus stop.

"Fuck off before you end up like the last guy who pissed me off." Soren replied between gritted teeth.

"Whyó"

"Hey! Cut it out!" Anne exclaimed, getting between the two. She turned to the man. "Sorry, he's a bit drunk."

Mollified, the oil farmer returned to his seat.

"What the hell's gotten into you!?" the Shetland Pony mare exclaimed. "Are you *trying* to start another fight!?"

Soren glared at her. "Well *sorry* for not being in a good mood after getting ambushed in a dark alleyway in a futile attempt to find Lily!"

Anne shook her head. "Let's just walk home." She hissed as her broken rib began to ache. The mare got up and headed down the now brightly lit but still grimy road.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2014, 01:54:45 AM**

"There we go…" panted Emilena, resting her hands on her knees. "That's what I'm talking about. Just use me as, like, a baseline for how physically competent you should strive to be."

She made to exit, then hesitated and helped him to his feet. Maybe she's being too harsh on him. "Look. I'm gonna be honest; I'm not the nicest person, especially to assholes, which is what you are. You may have lost your memory, but trust me on that. But right now I need…*we* need you to focus on what you *can* do instead of what you can't. You try to do that, and I'll try to stop belittling you for being a psionically-castrated one-trick pony."

Emilena led the way down the hallway. Probably not the most inspirational motivation she'd ever come up with, but she'd been having something of a bad day.

The hallway was very wide and completely devoid of light. It was also apparently slightly slanted; Emilena walked into the jagged stone wall several times, until both of her big toes were as bloody as the hole in her chest. But suddenly the wall was her best friend when the sound of a door echoed and footsteps approached them from the other end of the hallway.

Emilena glanced at Vergil and noticed that she could just make out his white skin in the darkness. Dragging him onto the floor, she pressed him into the wall, covered him with her body as well as she could and held her breath. She feared her heart was pounding so loud they would be discovered. *Hopefully Stryker's eyes haven't adjusted to the dark…*

* * *

Flora's eyes grew wide. "*Omigod you're right we need to get out of here!*" she leapt to her feet, grabbed him by the arm and barreled out the door. "Take us to Lily!" she screamed, not slowing down enough to actually give him the opportunity to lead.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 12, 2014, 08:46:51 AM**

"There's no comparison between us physically." he muttered hoarsely as she dragged him to his feet, the gecko letting out an exhale as he listened to her words. "Which would make you an asshole too, wouldn't it?" he asked sarcastically as she described how she treated others. "Only difference between me and you I see is I'm trying to curb those tendencies, nor do I feel I'm innately one. Also, belittling you'll quickly learn has no impact on me whatsoever." he stated curtly. "You won't get one further inch of effort out of me regardless. I know my limits... and right now... it's why I'm insisting you should probably go on ahead now that we're out of here." he stated. "I wouldn't hold it against you." He knew she had a point though... best stick together for now... at least until they could escape from... wherever they were.

He watched her leave, gathered his strength, and kept after her as best he could. Goddamn drug... whatever it was, it made him feel like he'd woken up after getting roughly two hours of sleep... where were the energy drinks when you needed them?

Struggling to avoid leaning against the wall to try and sleep, he stumbled along, hearing every time her feet ran into the walls. After a moment or two, he could feel her blood under his feet, and he knew she was stubbing herself to the point of breaking her skin. He only hoped Stryker would be clothed when he walked back down this way...

Speaking of Stryker, the door at the far end opened, and Vergil's eyes went wide. Crap... but before he knew it, Emilena was beside him, then pushing him into the ground, and he didn't argue, closing his eyes to conceal the bright orange they would undoubtedly give off in the dark. He dared not say anything, and held his breath as the sungazer lizard got closer and closer... and then passed them by. But he stopped about two steps beyond them, and Vergil was sure they'd been discovered...

Then a sneeze erupted from the lizard's snout, and he continued on his way. Vergil would've exhaled but kept his breath in check until Stryker was well past them.

Entering the torture chamber, Stryker stood there for a moment, staring at the empty chains. He then gave a derisive snort from his nose and grinned before pulling out his radio and buzzing William's ear. "Oh William..." he began. "You mind explaining to me what the FUCK you are doing? You sure as shit ain't watching the monitors, because I'm pretty sure if you were, you would've told me my birds have flown the coop. Quit jerking off and get your ass back to security... NOW!" he shouted, lowering the communicator slightly.

Turning around, Stryker's eyes blazed. He had no idea how those two had escaped... but they wouldn't be getting far... he'd make damn sure of that...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 12, 2014, 11:58:18 AM**

"Soren, just... just cool it," Axel said, nudging the human's shoulder and wincing at the throbbing in the side of his head. "You want to get beaten to death after... you know, you just *avoided* being beaten to death?" He nodded in the direction Anne had just walked off in. "Let's just get back in one piece, okay?"

"*Flora!* I can't... slow down!" Rio cried as Flora raced down the streets, trailing the boy behind her as his feet practically dragged on the floor. "You're going too fast! It's a left down here... *a left!*"

Almost twenty minutes later, they turned onto Axel and Lily's street. Rio glared up at Flora as they slowed their pace, grime smeared onto the front of his top and an old piece of lettuce stuck wetly onto the side of his head. "You didn't need to drag me through that pile of trash..." he muttered, pulling the leaf off. He opened his mouth to say more, then gaped. "Oh fuck, wait!" Grabbing Flora's wrist, he pulled her to a stop and pushed her into the shadows of a front yard adjacent to them, pointing up the road. Parked in front of Axel and Lily's house was a police car. The lights were off, but across the street from the vehicle two officers were engaged in conversation. Rio could see their breaths steaming in the cold air. *Crap... what the hell is this...* Had Axel and Lily been arrested? No, that wouldn't make sense, why would a police car still be here?

He chewed his lip, then glanced at Flora. "Maybe Lily's still there. We should go see..."

"What are you two doing here?"

Rio jumped slightly and turned around to look behind, to see who the low voice had belonged to. He couldn't see anything, just an empty front yard, shadows thrown across by the fencing and the shrubbery. That voice had sounded kind of familiar though...

Suddenly, a short shape materialized in front of him, as if from nowhere, and Rio flinched. It was some kind of... small lizard thing, staring at them with yellow, dead eyes. *Wait... she was...*

"You two were part of the group going through our vehicle in Bolivia," Triste said lowly, confirming what had been going through Rio's mind. She could feel the weight of her knife sheathed on her forearm - she didn't think she'd need to use it. Yet. These two didn't look like they'd be much of a threat, but if they were going to get in the way of her investigation here...

"What are you doing?" she repeated, switching her gaze from the child to the woman standing next to him.

William's brow creased in annoyance as Stryker's voice cracked through his earpiece, disrupting the peaceful sounds of the forest around him. "They've escaped you? They were chained down." The corner of his mouth twitched. "My, that *is* unprofessional."

Stepping over a dead, rotting log, William continued. "As much as I'd love to... assist you, it seems we have a trespasser. I'm tracking them now." His voice quavered slightly as he considered what he could do when he'd caught up with the intruder. He cleared his throat as he continued to move silently, almost ghost-like through the trees, his voice even again.

"Just focus on getting them back. They won't be able to get far. And if they manage to get out here, I'll deal with them," William muttered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 12, 2014, 07:46:55 PM**

Two hours later, Soren unlocked the door to his apartment. The scent of Marita's cooking made him smile. He rubbed a bruise on his cheek.

Anne went to her room to put her brass knuckles and studs away.

The Human poured himself a glass of water as he turned on the TV. He reached for the bottle of headache pills on the counter. He then saw Lily sitting on the couch.

He sighed and put his head on the table. "I go into a shitty section of town, almost get killed and Lily's right here!?" he exclaimed. "Fuck me! What's next?"

Anne munched on her hay and oat burger. The spicy avocado spread and algae and yeast "cheese" really tied the flavors together. "Hey, who made this?" she asked. "It's really good!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 13, 2014, 08:21:34 PM**

I did' marita said to Anne with a smiler ' As for Lilly we called you as soon as she came in. you didnt answer. I guess you guys were busy doing something and didnt hear the phone ring.' She said to Soren. "It happens. Now thwe question is, what do we do now that we're all back together?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 13, 2014, 10:04:40 PM**

Emilena exhaled once Stryker's footsteps echoed out of earshot. "That was close..." she helped Vergil to his feet. "Sorry for getting blood all over you." She kept holding onto his hand and increased her speed towards the end of the hallway; they didn't have any time to lose. This time, she was able to trace the path Stryker had made, which gave her toes a welcome break from percussive navigation.

Before long she walked headfirst into a heavy wooden door. Thankfully it creaked open with just a push, but standing on the other side was a heavyset mafia goon, whose pistol was in his hand the second he noticed she wasn't Stryker.

She buried her morning star in his face before he could fire and kneed his pistol hand so the shot went wide. Swinging her mace again as he fell to the ground, she shattered his skull and didn't let up until he was a bloody, unmoving mass.

She left the mace embedded in his skull and relieved him of his pistol. Then she ripped long stretches of cloth out of his shirt to bandage her knife wound. She gave Vergil the jacket, which was Kevlar-laced and might save him from a bullet in the future.

"I think we should head up." Emilena pointed at one of two directions they had to go; the stairs to the second floor, as opposed to further along the first floor. "Castles have big honking exit gates, and there's no way we're punching our way through one of those. We've got better luck reaching a second-floor window and fashioning a rope, and/or aiming for treetops to cushion the fall. Plus they won't expect us to head up, which could buy us some time."

* * *

Lily leapt up when she saw Axel. "Oh Axel, you're okay!" she ran over and hugged him happily. "What happened to you?" she gasped, observing his wounds. She quickly began siphoning the pain onto herself. "Did you really go looking for me? I'm sorry..." she whispered. "Oh, hi to you as well Soren and Anne!" she remembered the basics of politeness. "Did you all really go looking for me and stumbling into trouble? I'm so sorry..."

* * *

"Emi's gone!" exclaimed Flora, not keeping her voice down. A cop looked over but didn't investigate. "She'd been kidnapped, and the guy said that they were gonna torture her, and then Foley ditched us and we didn't know what to do 'cause Foley was the smart one, and so we came here to ask Lily for help! Can you please help us?" she begged Triste, getting to her knees and clasping Triste's non-knife hand. "I just want Emi to be okay. I'll do whatever you want to pay you back!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 14, 2014, 10:03:18 AM**

Vergil looked down as he was indeed lathered in Emilena's blood, and felt his feathers, noting they were somewhat caked in the substance now too... well... at least he'd look scary when confronting others now.

He watched as she swiftly dispatched a Mafia goon with relative ease, though cringed a little at the excessive force... but still... it wasn't like he was unarmed... which would've been worse. All the same... it wasn't exactly pleasant to behold. She handed him a jacket while she began bandaging up her wound, and Vergil regarded the voluminous vestment with contemplation, noting it was much too large for him at the moment so... easy way to deal with that.

Since it was kevlar coated, it was vulnerable to blades, and Vergil quickly searched the mangled corpse for such a blade while Emilena worked on her wound. Finding a combat knife, the gecko got to work cutting the bottom portion of the jacket off, and as she mentioned heading up and maybe even making a rope, he decided to keep the bottom of his jacket for now. "We can start stringing things together." he stated, holding the piece out for her to inspect. "This is a start." With the jacket now cut down to his size, he slipped it on, pulling his arms through the sleeves and testing it.

He nodded at her plan. "Yeah... we'll do that. Might I also suggest dropping ourselves away from the road they had to have brought us in on. Wherever this is, there's bound to be cover close by. If I recall correctly, Corona is either highly urbanized or else surrounded by water and forests. Since it's a safe bet we're not on the water, that leaves woods, since I don't recall any castles being in Corona proper. We reach the woods, we can at least rest up and regain our strength before gaining the road and either hijacking a vehicle or stealing an unoccupied one we come across." he outlined. He only hoped they hadn't been out for days, and weren't even in Corona's vicinity anymore... though he doubted that. It hadn't felt like he'd been sleeping for days. Chances were they were still in the general area...

Stryker scowled at William's idiotic response. "I'm going to pretend like I didn't hear that..." He began. William should've known better than to screw him with, but just in case he was having a momentary lapse of judgment, Stryker gave him another chance. "You're gonna head back to the castle and DO YOUR DAMN JOB!" he roared. "Unless of course you'd prefer to be dissected for some snot-nosed 9th grader's science project. Trespasser? Unless the trespasser is right outside our doors, it's not your concern. And don't you EVER forget to whom you're speaking... or you'll become my new target instead of the twerps that just escaped. I need eyes on the corridors, William! I'm not gonna sit on my ass and watch the monitors! That's YOUR job until they get out of the castle! So I'll repeat myself only once more: quit jerking off and get back to your post! I'll expect a status update in ten minutes." He cut the feed now and turned around, still scowling.

All right... so they had to have gone back the way he'd just come; would make finding them easier. They most likely had killed Christianson, so that left... three corridors they could be heading down. Heading out of the torture chamber, he began making his way back up the slanted hallway...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 14, 2014, 08:07:17 PM**

Axel winced as Lily started transferring his injuries onto herself. "Hey, come on. You know I don't like you doing that..." he muttered, pulling her hands away gently even as the throbbing on the side of his face started to fade. Brushing aside a strand of her hair, he kissed her on the forehead then leaned awkwardly against the kitchen table. "Yeah, we, ah... we ran into some trouble. But it's over now. And at least you're okay." His eyes flicked over to Soren briefly to see if he'd kick off again.

After a moment he sighed. "So I guess Em... er, Emma's place wasn't an option?" Axel shook his head. "Crap. We're really in it now..."

Triste narrowed her eyes at Flora as she knelt to her level, then twisted her hand out of her grip. "Keep your voice down!" she hissed, her gaze flicking up to the cops, but they didn't seem to think anything suspicious was going on. Triste looked back down at the other two, her expression flat.

Someone called 'Emi' had been kidnapped... That must be Emilena, the one that most of the rest of the team had... disapproved of back in Bolivia. Most... but Lily had seemed supportive of her. And this woman had just said they were trying to find Lily - so it stood to reason that they had a somewhat understanding relationship with one another.

"So you, and the rest of your group, have some sort of... arrangement with Ms. North. And, presumably, Mr. Whent," she said slowly.

"Ah..." Rio stumbled.

"I don't care what's going on between you and them," she interrupted. "But if it gets in the way of my mission, *then* we'll have a problem." Triste tilted her head slightly at Rio, and the boy gave a small gulp. Somehow, she didn't think this gang of Emilena's would be a threat to their hunt for the waypoints. However... just as Vergil had seemed to vanish without a trace, this Emilena had also been kidnapped. The link was extremely tenuous - for someone like Emilena, getting kidnapped was probably a daily threat. But a link *was* still there - and Vergil had to be found. If there was just the slightest chance this could be related... it might be worth looking into.

Triste sighed. "You said you were told she would be tortured. So you saw who took her?"

"No, the fuckers just... just left this," Rio grunted, lifting up the top he was wearing to reveal the message scrawled on his front.

She leaned in for a closer look, then shook her head. It didn't seem like something Kalis would have anything to do with... but at the moment, she had no other leads. "Where did she get taken from?" Triste demanded, looking between Flora and Rio.

William rolled his eyes as Stryker concluded his rather heated instructions. Threats tended to lose their efficacy when they came from someone who just allowed two chained, drugged and injured prisoners to apparently escape from their cells. If Stryker couldn't deal with two problems such as those, then that really was embarrassing.

And besides... whoever had snuck up to the castle was still out here, in the woods. *His* woods. An unknown variable - the kind that worried William the most. And as enjoyable as the hunt for their head would no doubt prove, William had to admit to a sour taste at the back of his throat. Whoever it was, they had the audacity to trespass in his territory - and that was something William couldn't tolerate.

Ignoring Stryker, he continued on.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 14, 2014, 10:23:34 PM**

Emilena nodded. "Fair enough." she limped over to the stairs.

She soon realized just how unsuited she was for stair-climbing at the moment. She had to hug the wall and use its stones as makeshift handrails. At least the dirty blood red carpet might disguise any paw prints they were leaving.

She threw Vergil the pistol. "You can…give that back to me…once we need to shoot somebody…" she panted. "I need both hands for this…"

After far too long she crawled over the apex of the spiral staircase. The first thing she noticed about the second floor was that it appeared to consist mainly of bedrooms…and one had light shining from under the door.

Creeping up to the door, she peered through the old keyhole and saw a series of unattended monitors. She swung the door open. "Gold mine! We found the security room!"

She noted where Stryker was; just exiting the hallway from the dungeon. She explored the room, looking for anything they could use to hinder him, but the room literally was just a hub of televisions receiving feeds from cameras. "Start busting the TVs. And shoot out that lock while you're at it," she pointed at a locker that might contain weapons or supplies.

Her eyes were drawn to a rusted trunk in the corner. She could have sworn she heard a noise come from inside it. Creeping forward cautiously, Emilena turned the latch and opened the lid.

(OOC: The pistol is an high-tech firearm that registers whether the correct user is wielding it. If Emilena or Vergil attempts to fire the pistol, it'll stab her in the palm with knockout spikes instead because she isn't registered to use the gun. Might be something Vergil could recognize since he has a high-tech military background.)

"No, but read it again!" Flora urged. "They wrote as if they could see what we did when we woke up! We think they could still be watching us back at the safe house!" Flora made the largest puppy eyes she could, and unlike Nairda she was quite good at it. "*Please* come keep us safe and investigate! You're so strong and powerful, I bet you could kill anybody! I'll swear a life debt to you, I'll steal any car you want from anywhere and give it to you, if you can help us bring Emilena home safely!" She began skipping back to the warehouse. "It's over here!" she sang to a bouncing tempo.

"I'm not as worried for us as I am for…" Lily cut off abruptly. She still hadn't told anyone on this team about Ejlert. After a few frantic seconds of deliberation, she took a deep breath and looked at Axel. "I'm going to tell them. They have a right to know the truth after everything we've all been through."

She crossed to the computer and brought up the Missing picture that adorned every news article on the missing boy. "This is Ejlert Sulus North. He's my son. I only recently found out that I had children before the Lanthae incident, and one of them has been missing for several months now." She debated whether to leave Emilena's name out of things and decided that would probably be prudent. "I…was able to find out that he ran away to join the Air Force, and after being rejected he became a pilot for Kalis." She hung her head. "That's the real reason I'm going along with Vergil and the rest of you. I don't care about the waypoints or whatever they lead to or even Kalis himself. I'm just trying to bring my son home safe…"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 15, 2014, 11:18:25 AM**

So you have a son?' Rose said taking a seat " why didnt you tell us earlier? Its only natural that you'd try anything to find him and we would have understood.'
_ She had her reasons Rose , like we all do, for being on this - mission, if you care to call it that' Marie said." How many kids do you you have Lily?' She asked.
- Marita took a look at the picture of Eljert " It was handsome, and his eyes sparkled with the light of a keen mind. you said he was a pilot for Kalas right? Well Its slim pickings, but its possible he may still be working for him. The Problem with that is we have no clue where Kalis is at the moment.' She turned to Axel ' You can stay with us at this apartment until you land on your feet, Rose has set up the guest bed in her room. you and Lily can use it while you are here, and dont worry about rent we make enough between the 5 of us to cover heating, li ultities and food.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 15, 2014, 01:30:06 PM**

Vergil looked at the monitors, which were curiously unguarded. Seemed quite the haphazard operation they had going on here. No one watching the monitors... but then that seemed to indicate why they hadn't been pounced on after escaping. Well whatever... maybe they were running a skeleton operation out of this place.

Vergil looked down at the gun in his hand, studying it as Emilena seemed distracted by a wooden chest. He then glanced at the locker, and shook his head. "They made this type of gun during Rex's Rebellion... Rex made sure to outfit his officers with it... impossible for anyone but that officer to use it. Palm signature gun." he sighed. "Efficient to ensure no personal weapons could ever be used against the officers. And before you protest... if you don't believe me, test it out yourself." he put in. "It'll jab you with a knockout agent and you'll be down for the count. But I can at least do this." He smashed the butt into the first monitor, cracking it before smashing the butt down again with the screen finally showering out a fine array of sparks that he backed away from and quickly averted his eyes.

He continued with the chore, hammering the next screen, and the next one, until very few remained. But he paused at one of the last ones, drawing in his breath as he saw Stryker heading towards the staircase now. "Um... we might have to get out of here... NOW!" he said, pointing at the screen. He saw no point in shattering this monitor, as he highly doubted they'd be retracing their steps now.

Vergil looked at the lock on the locker again, but wasn't sure banging his gun on it would produce any effect: that kind of stuff only worked in the movies after all.

Stryker decided that since William had been stupid enough to leave his post in the first place, he may as well head to the security room first to scan the monitors and see where they were. He had already decided he'd kill William later for dereliction of his assigned duties. He figured he'd set the example that you didn't get away with the kind of stupid shit William was pulling today.

Checking his gun, he could see it carried a full charge... good... the last one would be William's. He'd make sure of that... but first things first... find his quarry, since William was indeed being useless, and hunt them himself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 15, 2014, 02:26:09 PM**

"At least you're safe," Soren said as he slowly ate his catfish burger. He then heard Lily reveal as to why she was with the group.

A scowl briefly crossed his face. The Human then turned to Lily. "Lily, I wish you had told us about this beforehand. If we're going to be working together to find your son and stop Kalis, we cannot keep secrets!"

He threw his arms out. "Look what happened on Voltaic Station! Triste and Vergil kept secrets and it nearly got all of us killed!"

He took a breath to calm down. "First, let's plan." He swirled his glass of water, listening to the ice cubes clink.

Anne emerged from her room with a marijuana joint in hand. It was one of her custom blends from the plants she had on the windowsill. "Anyone mind if I light up?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 16, 2014, 04:58:15 AM**

Axel blinked at Anne. "Hey, it's your apartment. Go ahead." Looking at the others, his tail flicked uncomfortably. "I'm, ah... I'm sorry we didn't tell you before. About, you know, her son. We just... we didn't know if maybe you wouldn't want us around if you found out we had another reason. But you're right. When Vergil and Triste did their own thing... it was stupid. So no more secrets," he said, nodding at Lily and nudging Soren's shoulder.

Leaning next to him, Axel rubbed a hand across his ear - it was still slightly bent from one of Hania's blows. "Alright. A plan. Well, has anyone actually heard from Vergil? If we're going to keep going on this mission, the sooner we leave the better."

As they walked back, Triste frowned at Flora as she bounced along, leading the way back to the warehouse. She glanced sideways at the scruffy looking boy following nearby... although he seemed to be keeping his distance from her. "Right now, I think the best way she could repay me is by keeping quiet."

Rio scowled at her. "You were going to stick a knife in my fucking neck." He pointed at the side of his throat. "*There's still a mark!*"

Triste shrugged. "It just seemed like it was going that way. Nothing personal."

Shooting a glare her way, Rio picked up his pace, hurrying to join Flora's side. "Bitch."

A short while later, the grubby looking warehouse loomed up before Triste as they neared the entrance. They stepped through the front, and the pungent odour of rotting flesh forced itself into her nostrils. She glanced around the large, dark room but couldn't see what was causing the smell. She could see the silhouette of a couch, a mass of computers... "Nice place you have here," she said dryly over her shoulder.

Ignoring her, Rio walked over to the light switch next to the door and flipped it. Above them , the handful of bare bulbs flickered on, bathing the room in their dull glow. Hal's severed head was revealed, facing away from them.

Triste tilted her head. "Friend of yours?"

Rio swallowed, looking purposefully away from it. "He was nailed up on the door when we got here."

"And he decided to roll his way over there?"

"No, Foley was just kind of... angry when he left," Rio said, glancing at Flora.

Triste walked up to the head and knelt by it, ignoring the smell. "He's rotting pretty well," she noted. "He's been dead for a few days." Leaning over, she saw the flesh around the neck was ragged. "This was messy. Not a clean cut. So whoever did this, they either didn't know what they were doing... or they wanted him to feel it." Triste shrugged. Beyond hinting at the character of the person responsible, there was nothing else the head could tell her. "Where were you when you woke up?" she asked Rio, getting to her feet.

"Uh, just over there," Rio pointed to the couch on the far end of the room. "But I don't think they left anything there," he said as they headed over for a closer look. "All they did was write on me and take my clothes for some reason."

After a few more steps, William found what he was looking for. Tire tracks, the ground broken up, branches damaged. They'd been through this way, and they were heading... William focused his vision, and his surroundings snapped into a clarity far beyond normal human levels, every detail become abnormally clear. The path the intruder had cut through these trees had been messy, uneven. So the tires had still been shredded by this point - but when he's listened out for the sounds of the engine, it hadn't sounded like the driver was struggling for control. *He must have found time to change the tires...* William raised his eyes and followed the path that the vehicle had taken. It continued on for a time, then cut to the left.

William knew that in that direction a road led first away from the castle, then looped around, heading further into the forest. He hadn't heard any of his... surprises being activated yet, so chances were the intruder had found the road, and was now following it. If he was in a functioning car, on the road, then William knew even he wouldn't be able to catch him on foot. But he could be waiting when he returned.

As William turned to head back to the outskirts of the woods surrounding the castle, the wind started to die down, and the sounds of the forest became even clearer, more crisp. William smiled. The forest knew it belonged to him, and it would tell him everything he needed to know to hunt his prey.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 18, 2014, 12:04:00 AM**

(OOC: Description of the contents of the trunk provided by bushwhacked, just keep that in mind voting for the "Most Likely to Someday Write for *Saw*" awards next month)

"Yikes...well in that case you can keep holding onto the pistol--" Emilena's words caught in her throat as she beheld the tortured figure within the box.

It was a mutilated middle-aged woman. Along with numerous lacerations, puncture wounds and missing strips of flesh across her entire body, her eyes, legs, lips and teeth all lay beside her, rotting beside their former owner. She must have been in this box for months, and her shuddering and responsiveness indicated that she was still alive.

Emilena couldn't speak for several seconds. Finally, she wordlessly took the pistol back from Vergil and handed it to the woman. The woman immediately put the barrel to her own temple and pulled the trigger, sighing with a gasp when the tranquilizer injected her palm. In the suffering state she'd long been forced to endure, the numbness was the greatest gift Emilena could have given her.

Emilena used Stryker's knife to slit the woman's throat once she was fully unconscious. "...We really need to get out of here..." she murmured, feeling nauseous and once again grateful her stomach was completely empty. Grabbing the sheet off of the bed, she rat-tailed it as well as she could and returned to the hallway. "While there isn't remotely enough time to knot this into a rope, it might--*Eep!*"

She gave an embarrassingly surprised yelp as a large stone brick from the ceiling crashed to her feet and almost caved her skull in. This was an old castle, and it appeared it wasn't structurally sound. "We need to find a way around--" she started, before the floorboards beneath her, weakened by the impact with the brick, splintered and sent her dropping to her knees. As the hallway buckled, Emilena had just enough time to grasp the corner of the sheet and throw the rest of it at Vergil before her left leg punched through the rapidly-expanding pothole beneath her. If Vergil were to walk onto the hallway, he would only hasten its collapse.

"I didn't tell any of you because if Kalis catches and tortures us, I didn't want anyone spilling the beans and putting Ejlert in danger," Lily replied to Soren with the harsh truth. "*If you would keep your secret from an enemy, tell it not to a friend.*"

She slumped dejectedly. "But considering if it comes to that, Ejlert and the world are pretty much dead anyway, I guess there's not much to lose at this point." She sat down at the table with the others. "Vergil and Triste know the location of the next waypoint, and they didn't tell us where, or how they know it for that matter. I know y'all hate the two, but they're the best chance I have at finding Ejlert, and that's why I want to stick with them despite how little they care about our contributions or survival."

Flora was whimpering and cowering behind Triste when they returned to the warehouse. Keeping her frame small and footsteps muted, she looked around with wide eyes at what used to be the one place she felt completely safe.

Then her eyes noticed one interesting thing amidst the commonplace litter. "Look!" she whispered, dropping to her hands and knees. Fishing under Rio's sleeping couch, she came up with a soft plastic marker cap. "This is the same color as the writing on Rio's stomach!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 19, 2014, 09:16:34 AM**

Vergil stared down at the woman, pity and pain washing over him at seeing her. He didn't protest when Emilena mercy killed her; it was the right thing to do after all. Sighing, he nodded, and moved aside for her to take point. His head swam right as a brick crashed down in front of Emilena... most likely alerting Stryker below them too.

But there was little time to worry about that before Vergil reached out to catch the bed sheet that was flung at him. Crying out as he grasped it, his free hand shot out to the doorjamb and grabbed hold, preventing himself from being pulled down with her. Grunting, he tried to take a few steps backwards to pull her up, but his feet slipped at first until finally, he managed to get a foothold and backpedaled ever so slowly.

"Agh!" he cried out, managing to yank her up enough so her feet could do the rest. "There was a door on the other side of the security office... let's try that!" he exclaimed, knowing they'd lost enough time in here already, and that Stryker would be heading up that spiral staircase at the double quick.

He quickly ran over to the other door after releasing the sheet, his strength slowly returning to him despite his fatigue, and he yanked the wooden door back to reveal blinding sunlight which temporarily forced his head to jerk away. Keeping his eyes shut, he pried one open, and peered out, noting it seemed to be a parapet (the same one William had shot at Tony from). A walkway wrapped around the walls of the castle, and Vergil nodded at her now. "We could move around outside... using the battlements for cover!" he suggested, even as he could hear Stryker's steps on the stairs that led right up to their door...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 22, 2014, 05:27:50 AM**

Emilena shuddered as Vergil pulled her to relative safety, jagged splintered wood tearing huge stripes out of every side of her leg. She was phonating an endless guttural groan, beyond pronunciation or her mental control.

She limped after him, trailing splinters from her leg. "He's faster than us..." she panted. "He's armed..." Stumbling into the open air and shielding her eyes, the hugged the merlon of the nearest parapet and gulped desperate ragged breaths. Her stomach flip-flopped when she glanced down at the moat below.

"The moat..." she gasped at Vergil. "*The moat*...we could..." she tried to enunciate their most obvious escape route but her vocal cords failed her as she struggled to catch her breath. But she couldn't imagine they'd last long trying to dodge Stryker on the castle parapets, and he might not readily guess where they'd disappeared to.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 22, 2014, 02:55:58 PM**

Anne pulled out her hot-wire lighter from the kitchen drawer. The glowing red wire touched the end of her joint, quickly lighting it. She took a few puffs.

Soren chuckled as he watched her curl her upper lip back in the characteristic Flehmen of Equines. Soon, the smell of marijuana mingled with the scent of catfish burgers and spices.

He turned to Lily. "You have a point. It doesn't mean I like it."

The Human templed his hands. "I don't think the two ever gave us contact info. So we're fucked, bricked, hosed or whatever you want to call it."

(OOC - "bricked" basically means "screwed". It comes from the electronics slang that means "to render an electronic device inoperable". In this near-future 'verse, the term has extended to refer to any situation that had been rendered hopeless or otherwise bad.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 22, 2014, 07:25:53 PM**

"Hang on, I think I did get Vergil's home number a while ago when all this was getting arranged..." Axel said, his brow creased as he flipped open his phone and scanned through the contacts. "But since we were always together I never needed to use it... Yeah, here it is! Using my phone's too risky though..."

Crossing the room to the landline, Axel tapped in the same number as the one on his cell and waited. It rang once... twice... three times... Eventually, it just cut to the answering machine. Grimacing, Axel hung up and turned to the others. "No answer. I, ah... I guess we can keep trying until he picks up? Apart from that, though..." He shrugged.

Triste squinted at the pen cap as Flora brought it up, then swore under her breath. "*Shit*... Just stay like that, don't fiddle around with it!"

Rio moved up behind flora and peered around her as she held up the lid. "What? It's just the top of the pen he used, what's so special about it?"

Ignoring him, Triste twisted around, scanning the room. After a second, she darted across the room, pulled a sheet of plastic wrapping from one of the crates on the far side, and carefully tore a small piece from it. *It's not perfect, but...* Crossing back over to Flora quickly, she reached up and gingerly took the lid from her, wrapping it up in the plastic.

"What the fuck are you doing?" Rio complained again.

"Fingerprints," Triste muttered, distracted as she put the pen lid away carefully. "Or DNA. Something that we... *I*... could use to try and figure out who did this. It's a long shot, this probably got contaminated to hell, but... well, it's all we have so far. Whoever was here, there's a good chance they touched this. I'm staying somewhere that's not too far from here, where I could analyse this. Maybe it'll give us *something* to go on."

Rio blinked. "D what?"

"Forget it," Triste sighed. "You two need to come back with me. So I can protect you." *Or get rid of the two of you more easily if I think you'll be a problem.*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 22, 2014, 07:28:16 PM**

Vergil didn't need a second urging; he merely nodded at Emilena and prepared to jump. "All right... ladies first!" he said, giving her a soft push towards the edge. Not a moment too soon, as Vergil went to shut the door right as Stryker rounded the corner and entered the room. He heard an audible series of curses as the sungazer lizard discovered the now sabotaged and wrecked security room.

Heading back to the battlements, he gulped, then leaped from the heights, his arms and legs flailing as he plummeted the not considerable distance (perhaps 100 feet or so) into the moat. The water splashed around him as he landed with enough force to nearly knock him unconscious thanks to his weakened state. More asleep than awake, he struggled towards the shore, heading for a bank of reeds that were growing along the edge of the moat. It wasn't perfect, but he could at least conceal himself. He looked around for Emilena, wondering if she'd made it. If she wasn't visible... he'd have to assume the worst...

Stryker growled as he noticed the bank of smashed screens. Great... so... they were here? But where? He hadn't passed them on the way down so... they must've gone out. All right, time to find out. He headed for the door now, yanking it open and stepping out into the bright sun...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2014, 08:16:51 AM**

Do furries even have fingerprints? wondered Flora, but since Triste was finally seeming to warm up to them she just smiled and said "Yay! I was able to help!"

She rushed into the back room. "I just need to grab something before we go!" she called back. Pushing the mattress to the guest room aside, she withdrew the collective sums of money she, Emilena, and Hal stored under there. Emilena would kill her for taking her money...but at the moment, the image of Emilena alive and beating her to death was forlornly happy one.

She openly showed the stash to Triste when she returned. "I'll pay for any expenses incurred in the search," she said with resolve. "If I can't help with the detective work, I'll help fund it!"

Emilena hoisted herself over the merlon and ungracefully tumbled over the edge. She had just enough time to curl into a ball before hitting the water with a thud; as she was the one to break the surface tension, an uncontrolled fall would have felt more like hitting concrete than liquid.

Her lungs almost immediately filled with water; she hadn't managed to stop gasping since her climb up the stairs. She began to wonder if she'd punctured a lung at some point. Casting her arms out, she hit the sandy bottom of the moat and dragged herself towards the inner wall where she'd be less visible to Stryker on the roof.

Hugging the wall and breaching the surface, she looked for Vergil. *Hope he took off that Kevlar coat or he probably sunk...* She spotted him on the far side of the moat, hidden among the reeds. A high wall separated him from escaping the moat, but the mossy reeds growing along the edge still provided adequate protection from being seen.

Taking a deep breath, she resubmerged and dragged herself along the sandy bottom of the moat with her hands; her lacerated leg was not interested in swimming. Taking care not to break the surface and become visible to anyone who may be watching from the roof, she reached the reeds and caught her breath as quietly as she could manage given the circumstances.

"Can you see him?" she whispered, even though whispering was likely unnecessary. She glanced at the wall. "One of us is going to have to hoist the other up this, and I don't know if I have the leg strength to support you..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 23, 2014, 04:02:08 PM**

Triste was taking another look around when Flora returned. She hadn't seen anything else that could help them determine who'd taken this Emilena woman - this pen lid might be their only chance. *And maybe my only chance of finding where Vergil's gone...* She eyed the money Flora offered, then shrugged. "I won't turn that down. Just hang on to it until I can find a good place to store it." She looked around the large, grubby looking room then turned and started to make her way back to the front door. "If there's nothing else, we should go. This needs to get done as soon as possible. And the two of you probably shouldn't come back here again."

"What? Why?!" Rio demanded. "This place is *ours*!"

"I'm not saying you can't ever come back. But until we know who we're dealing with, staying somewhere they could come back to isn't a good idea." She tilted her head. "Just some advice. You can stay if you want, but then you won't be coming with me, and I won't help you. I don't want you revealing anything about me if... *when* you get caught." Triste shrugged and walked out the door. "Hurry up and choose. I'm not waiting," her low voice called back through the doorway, growing fainter.

Rio glanced anxiously around the warehouse, then looked at Flora. "Shit..." he muttered, hurrying out after her.

A short while later, the three of them rumbled to a stop outside Triste's rented apartment, atop her motorcycle - Rio's small frame allowing him to be wedged awkwardly between Flora and Triste. She'd driven fast, taking frequent detours to make sure they weren't being followed. Dismounting, she took a final cautious glance around, she lead the two of them up to the cold, bare apartment she'd been using. Flicking the light switch so the bare bulb flickered on, she crossed over to a box tucked away in the corner and started pulling it out. "Make yourself at home," she muttered over her shoulder as she started to open it up. "This won't take long."

Rio glanced around at the furniture-less room. It wasn't the sort of place that inspired comfort. Awkwardly, he sat on the floor, leaning against the wall.

William cocked his head when he heard a splash. It came from the castle, just a short distance up, yet to his ears the sound was as clear as if it had happened just next to him. *The moat... has someone been careless?*

Emerging from the trees, he crossed the short distance across the grounds, approaching the rear of the castle where the sound had come from, but purposefully heading for the far corner . Silently gliding up to the edge of the deep moat, he crouched and leaned over, scanning the water along the bottom.

There you are.

Much further up from him, he saw two figures struggling at the bottom. Leaning out, he shrugged his sniper rifle from his shoulder and peered through the scope. The two helpless individuals enlarged, and for a moment William just stayed still, enjoying their expression as they looked about themselves in panic. *Emilena...*, he thought, moving the sight over her, the crosshairs holding perfectly still on her head. *She looks perfect... a fighter. I'd have to work hard to break her in...*

Sighing, William lowered the rifle. Killing them here would be too easy, like crushing ant underfoot. There was no fun to it, no sport. Getting back to his feet, he backed away quietly from the edge. There was no point in giving himself away yet. Better to prepare. If they somehow managed to escape and make it into the woods, they wouldn't get far.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 23, 2014, 06:34:10 PM**

"Yes!" Vergil whispered, seeing Stryker peering down at them now... or not really. He was simply peering down and looking about at the expanse surrounding the castle. "Don't... move..." he urged, keeping his eyes trained on the lizard well above them. The only reason Vergil hadn't drowned was the moat had mostly run dry, and only the center was very deep... still... that's not to say Vergil could actually touch the bottom with his legs, which made Emilena's comment all the more poignant about not being able to hoist him up herself.

He looked around, noting the bank practically met the moat from where they were, in fact the moat flowed over it in this instance. "We can get out over there..." he nudged her, and pointed to where he'd been looking. As Stryker looked away and began heading along the battlements and eventually vanishing (no doubt looking for them up along the walkway), Vergil let out a sigh of relief. "We can go... let's go! Make a break for the woods!" He began paddling weakly through the reeds to the lower, marshy area of the bank. He kept his eyes above him, just in case Stryker decided to peek down from his perch.

Crawling up through the reeds onto the muddy ground, Vergil's white body was caked in brown slime as he collapsed face forward before looking behind him to make sure Emilena was still following...

Tony sighed as he seemed to be getting further and further away from the castle. "Dammit..." he breathed, slowing down and downshifting to first. Maybe he should just stop... but as he proceeded slowly, he noticed the road finally curving to the left just slightly. Hmmm... maybe he should keep going... and hope he wouldn't be driving forever.

He needed to find a phone or some way of communicating. Fortunately, he was in quite the powerful car. Even for 1929, the Model J was the most powerful car on the market. Capable of reaching top speeds of 120 mph, it was known for being extremely fast. Second gear topped out at 94 mph, indicating just how well built the engine was. The only thing Tony didn't like about this car was its unsynchronized gearbox. In order to shift into any gear, he first had to shift into neutral, then shift into the gear he wanted. It was one thing Duesenberg had NEVER improved on during their long production run. By the 30s, they were hopelessly outdated by synchronized gearboxes on most other cars.

Deciding to just go with it, Tony pressed the clutch, shifted into neutral, then pressed the clutch again and shifted into second gear, picking up speed as he accelerated. He'd just have to get used to this method of shifting. He had no idea if this road would take him anywhere... but just best to play it out and see... he really had no other choice right now after all.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 23, 2014, 10:58:27 PM**

Soren tipped out his glass of water. "Well, we could call Tonyó"

"A dead man doesn't answer his phone." Anne blew out a puff of smoke.

The Human then looked at the phone. "Shit! Why didn't I think of this before! We know that Vergil's phone is actually hooked up because it went to his answering machine. We may actually be able to trace it."

Anne smirked as she brought up an online telephone directory of everyone in Corona on Soren's laptop. "Way ahead of ya!" She turned to Axel. "Care to do the honors?" A blinking cursor on the screen was inside a text box labeled "phone number".

Marion fumed as she walked out of Zaloga's in-house augment repair workshop with an estimate for her repairs. Her bill for the repairs (and a new left arm) totaled an astounding 100,000 credits. And that was not counting the flying frame that had to be patched up.

She looked at her left arm. It was a hideous looking class 2 "augment". Instead of sleek composites and hybrid crystalline-amorphous metals, it was a ugly titanium pincer that looked like it had come off a cargo handling robot. Of course, electroactive metal actuators gave it enough strength to crush steel. Of course, she'd get to have her old arm back; it just took about a week for it to be nanolathed.

All around her were Zaloga employees casually milling about and chatting about the weather, sports or other boring subjects. Her stomach growled.

"Well, cooking's going to be a fucking pain," she muttered. "Might as well go to *Dai Wong* for dinner."

The Human Augment headed for the lockers to grab her belongings and clock out. But first, she'd go talk to Mace.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2014, 11:15:30 PM**

Emilena wasn't swimming; her body couldn't handle that at the moment. Instead she was using a reed as a snorkel and crawling along the bottom of the water with her hands. The water turned to mud at the same time her backside broke the surface, but by that point they were both thoroughly camouflaged and on basically dry ground.

"Why couldn't we have escaped at night?" Emilena shielded her eyes from the piercing daylight sun. She couldn't see anything approaching the road. "We can either strafe around the castle, which increases our chances of both finding a road and being recaptured, or take our chances with the forest. Personally, I'm more interested in starving to death in the wilderness before chancing Stryker regaining our trail..."

Flora bounced. "It's so homely!" she skipped from one side to the other. "Reminds me of where I grew up!" She tried the faucet in the kitchenette. "...except it has *running water!*" she gasped.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 24, 2014, 09:39:25 PM**

"Or..." Vergil brought up. "We could settle on a compromise: circle the castle whilst in the woods. That way we pick up the road, but can parallel it for awhile, since that's obviously the first place they'll be looking. We've bought ourselves time though... he thinks we're still in the castle... so... we cut for the woods, get deep enough to just see the castle from where we stop, and begin circling." he suggested. "Paralleling the road also gives us the advantage of being able to amply hide should any vehicles from the castle travel down it. So let's go while we have an opening..." he nodded back at the walls, noting Stryker wasn't visible just yet. It was about 100 yards to the woods... which of course seemed greater than a football field thanks to how weak Vergil felt but... no time like the present.

"You ready?" he asked, starting to catch his breath a bit.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 25, 2014, 06:05:15 PM**

"I think that compromise is stupid..." panted Emilena, "but I don't have the energy to figure out why so let's do it. Go!"

She burst out of the waist-high mud at a crippled limp, making less than stellar time. If she didn't give Vergil enough time to prepare, he should be more than able to compensate with his undamaged body. *This is giving me flashbacks to that Detroit sting with Agent Walters...* she thought ruefully. *Why am I always the one who gets the life-threatening injuries?*

She slipped on a wet patch of leaves inches from the forest perimeter and went tumbling into the darkness of the foliage. "Eerghh..." she grunted, gritting her teeth and getting to her knees. "You know what I want to know?" she muttered in Vergil's general direction, not checking to see if he was even in audible range, "They had a security room with cameras and everything...but how come nobody was *manning* it?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 26, 2014, 08:29:04 AM**

You're stupid Vergil thought but didn't say to her whole "compromise is stupid" line. *You didn't exactly serve under a world shattering strategist now, did you?* Still, when she bolted, he was ready, and got up after her, running as best he could and ignoring the lancing pain in his side as he stumbled along... that was new.

He tried to figure out where it was coming from, but came up short, finally chalking it up to the fall he'd taken into the moat. Emilena went down shortly after gaining the treeline though, but Vergil didn't see it, as he was looking behind him in that instant to see if Stryker was scanning along the walls... he didn't see anything, so that was good... right? Unless of course they'd already been spotted... Vergil briefly wondered if Rex and Kalis ever had to deal with a situation similar to this; probably, given their many adventures and misadventures.

Then Emilena tumbled, and Vergil slid as well trying to reach her to help her up, sliding in a somewhat split-legged position as he brought himself to a halt beside her. "Ouch..." he said simply to his legs being split. Pushing himself back up, he reached down to help her to her feet. "They obviously don't have their shit together here... as we might say. Stryker seems to have idiots working under him. Or perhaps no one at all save for that single guard we killed on the way out. While you might call our escape easy... I ain't taking anything for granted. We are quite literally not out of the woods yet, and nowhere as far from the castle as I'd like to be. So..." Having helped her up, he looked around him now, brushing leaves off his body before pausing, and figuring it was a good idea to just leave the rest on him in case he needed to flatten himself out.

He looked like quite the crazy creature now, with leaves poking out of his white feathers and mud caking most of his body from his midriff down; he could've been shooting a bad horror movie for all anyone knew. Panting a little bit, he nodded forward. "Well... let's go... get to so the castle is just barely in sight, then try to find a freaking road." he breathed. "Should stay alert though... they might have guard posts out here... or something." He said. As it turned out, they did have something... but not quite what either of them were expecting...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 26, 2014, 01:22:25 PM**

Staring at the pair through his scope, William smiled. Perched high up on an overhanging branch, he'd been watching as Vergil and Emilena ran... or rather, hobbled to the treeline. As they reached the forest, some distance away from him, William tracked their progress, slowly turning his head to follow them. Leaves crunched under their feet, branches snapped, the sounds as loud and crisp as gunfire to him. A gasp from the woman, then a crash as she lost her footing. He almost winced. *Don't they know how loud they are?*

His smile broadened as Emilena spoke. *They had a security room with cameras and everything...but how come nobody was manning it?* "Because I can't hear the screaming through the cameras," he said softly to himself. As the gecko spoke, William shifted the crosshairs to the side, pinpointing his position from his voice. *You won't get to the road that easily.*

He pulled the trigger. The bullet flew from the silenced barrel, rocketed across the forest, tearing through foliage as it traveled along its downward trajectory... and hit its mark, piercing the gecko's leg, the metal tearing flesh and ripping muscle.

Triste didn't say anything as she pulled the DNA profile machine free. Carefully, she took the pen lid from the plastic wrapping and gently swabbed the edges of the pen lid. "Come on..." *No way this is going to work...* Chewing the inside of her cheek, her sharp teeth almost breaking the skin, Triste inserted the swab into the profiling machine, and leaned back, waiting as it extracted the sample and began preparing it automatically. The machine was state of the art - whereas normal profiling would take some time, the Federation had enough money to develop the technology so it only took 5 minutes. Once it was complete, it would then compare the DNA sequence it obtained to a database compiled by the Federation... and it was extensive - though it wasn't public knowledge, most of the population of Corona and it's neighboring cities were on there... whether they'd volunteered it or not.

5 minutes later, the machine started to hum as its run drew to an end. "How long is this going to take?" Rio complained loudly from across the room for what seemed like the hundredth time. "I'm bored fuckless."

Triste gritted her teeth, picturing how easy it would be to toss him out the window. "I *told* you. It'll be done..."

The profiling machine beeped. "...now." Sighing, Triste wandered back over and leaned over the machine's display screen. Her eyes widened. There was a match. She pressed a button, and the individual it matches the sample to appeared on screen, with what information the database had on them. Triste's eyes widened, and slowly the pieces of the puzzle started to come together.

"What? Did you find something?" Rio asked, wandering over.

"*Shit...* If this is true, this is bad..." Triste stood up, and turned to face Flora and Rio. "It's matched it to... well, we don't know his real name. He goes by the name of Stryker, and he's... dangerous. Very dangerous." She shook her head. "This is bad. I have no idea why he might want to take your friend, but he's been known to work for a powerful family, the Stracci's." She stared at the two of them, her yellow eyes narrowing. "Tony Stracci was a member of our team. He was helping us in our mission when -" her gaze flicked to Rio - "You pushed him over a cliff." Triste shook her head again. "There's no way this is a coincidence."

Axel looked between Soren and Anne, then grinned softly. "Not bad." Nodding at Anne, he punched the numbers in, then rubbed a hand through his hair nervously. "Let's hope this works..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 26, 2014, 02:17:32 PM**

No sooner had Vergil finished badmouthing Stryker's hired hands when one of them sniped him.

"Now I realize why that was a stupid plan!" exclaimed Emilena as she dove for cover. "Because it's depressingly obvious!" She grabbed him and did her best to drag him down into the brush and out of the line of sight from the direction the bullet had come from. "We have to keep low and we got to be less predictable in the future; someone's onto us, and they've got a goddamn sniper rifle. I *hate* fighting snipers..."

She checked her wound. It was still bleeding badly, but Vergil's leg needed the wrapping more than she did. "And don't scream!" she cautioned as she tourniqueted and covered the bullet wound. "It's just a gunshot, take it like a man. You don't see me complaining about my knife wound, or my concussion, or my vaginal tract, or my leg or my feet..."

"Emilena had a run-in with the Straccis before!" gasped Flora. "She'd always brush it off when I asked, but Nairda told me the whole story!" Her voice hushed, as if telling a scary campfire tale, and she even dimmed the lights for dramatic effect. "Last year, the two of them were part of a group that had just rescued Tony Stracci from the Purifiers, and were bringing him home to his father's mansion in the forests outside Lanthae. When they got there, the don thanked them for rescuing his son, and offered to let them stay the night. The don promised hospitality...but delivered *death*."

Flora paused so her audience could supply a gasp, but they did not. "Just because they could, the mafia decided to tie them up as 'loose ends.' Nairda says they broke his knees with thumbscrews and strapped his eyelids open so he was forced to watch as Stryker tortured Emilena in all sorts of horrible ways. They were going to gouge her for information and then kill her. But then...Emilena just disappeared. Poof! Right out of the clutches of the mafia, from the most secure dungeon of the mansion. Nobody knows where she went...and nobody has *ever learned* how she did it."

Flora ended her story with spooky hushed inarticulate whispers, hoping to drive home the atmosphere of the thing.

Lily watched as the others messed around with their gadgets. Technology had never been a strong suit of hers, but she hoped Axel was enjoying himself. For a computer software support technician he'd had very little opportunity recently to spend surfing the web, she hoped he wasn't suffering from internet withdrawal.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 26, 2014, 05:27:21 PM**

"It wasn't stupid!" Vergil shot back through clenched teeth! "This was random! They have a perimeter NEITHER of us noticed! YOU could've said something ANYTIME!" he pointed out to her. "We don't find a road, we wander for miles in these stupid woods, which is way more of a stupid idea." He ground his teeth as she began bandaging him. "Don't waste your time..." his hand shot out, resting on her own as she got to work. "I can't move with torn muscles... or at least not as far as you can. Your muscles are still intact... at least the vital ones are. You don't like snipers? Best way to deal with snipers is live bait... get them to reveal themselves, and snipe them in return... but since we don't have a gun... the ground dips a bit here... you can get away. I'll stay behind... and before you say it's a one way trip, I'm well aware of that. Me limping or crawling after you isn't going to get us very far. You can move faster than I can right now. We've got this far... no reason for you to stick around and get killed on my account."

He looked at her seriously, not expecting she'd argue with her own self-preservation instincts. He was giving her a much better way out than she'd get by currently sticking with him, that was for sure. He wasn't exactly sure how he'd get out of this one himself, but better one life be saved than both lives killed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 26, 2014, 05:56:58 PM**

"Christ, you talk a lot!" Emilena grabbed a stiff branch and lined it up with his leg. "And like hell you get to lie back and relax after your first injury, you big baby." Grabbing the knife, she sliced long ribbons off of his coat and double-tied the thick branch to his leg, making the worst splint she had ever seen. "There. Your hip still works, right? Put your weight on that and don't bend your knee. Grab my back if you need to."

She glanced at the ground. "You're right. It dips. Bottoms up." With that she rolled him down the small ravine to further shield them from the sniper's line of sight. "I'm serious," she winced as she banged her elbow on a fallen tree trunk, "I'm revoking your whining and dying privileges until you have at least three life-threatening injuries. Start crawling!" She gripped the knife and covered the rear; with the trunk and the ravine behind them, the sniper would have to significantly alter his position to see them, and if he got close enough, she might have a shot of ambushing him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 26, 2014, 10:42:13 PM**

Soren yawned. "Excuse me," he said. he got up from the seat and ducked into his room.

Bypassing the shotgun that was leaning against the back wall of his room, the Human made his way to a small cabinet. He opened the cabinet and popped a moziafil tablet from its blister pack. He sighed. Three tablets left. He'd have to buy another pack soon.

Popping the tablet in his mouth and washing it down with a bottle of water on his workbench, he sat down for a moment. In just under thirty seconds, his tiredness melted away and he felt as if he had a full night's sleep.

"Hey Soren," Anne said. "You may want to look at this." She turned the computed towards him.

On the screen were the words "no match".

Soren rubbed his eyes and frowned, certain he had to be seeing things. "This thing shitting me!?"

He sat down with a sigh. "Well, any more ideas?"

Anne rubbed her horn and let out a breath of air. "Well, we could always go to the *Bak Long* Triads for info. I've bought drugs from a few of their low level gangsters; I'm sure they'll sell us info."

Soren sighed. He did not want to deal with more organized crime but the way things were going, he didn't have a choice.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 27, 2014, 03:27:35 PM**

William sighed contentedly as he heard the loud, pained shouts of the gecko he'd just wounded, as he argued with his companion. Loudly. *You're just making it easier for me...* More rustling now. William tilted his head as he overheard their hasty back and forths. The woman was right - he'd have to move. But...

Shifting his position, William slid from the branch and dropped to the floor, landing soundlessly on the forest floor. Focusing his vision, he caught a brief glimpse of Emilena before she dropped out of his sight, down the ravine. Licking his lips, he pulled the bolt on his rifle to load another bullet and started to follow. *But they're heading further into the forest... my forest. And that's where the real fun starts.*

There was a couple seconds of silence after Flora finished her tale. Clearing her throat, Triste crossed the room and turned the lights back on. "I know that place. But I thought the property had been abandoned since..." She narrowed her eyes. "Are you trembling, kid?"

Rio wrapped his arms around his legs to stop them shaking, a pale tinge to his face. "N... No! I'm just... It's..." He bared his teeth. "It's just really fucking cold, alright?" He blinked, trying to take his mind off Flora's spooky storytelling.

"Yeah... In any case, it's worth checking it out. But we've got to move as fast as we can." Turning her back, Triste started packing a few things into a small backback in preparation.

Standing, Rio moved close to Flora and lowered his voice. "So Emi just... disappeared? So she's like a wizard or something! I *knew* it!"

Axel swallowed as Anne mentioned the *Bak Long*. "Are you... are you sure that's a, ah, a good idea?" he asked nervously, putting the phone back on the cradle and turning to look her and Soren. "I mean, I like dealing with ruthless gangs who'll cut my throat while they eat their cornflakes as much as the next guy, but..."

His eyes flicked over to Lily. "I just want to make sure we're not just... stepping into the volcano over this."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 28, 2014, 06:55:00 PM**

"It's called knowing when you're beat." He grumbled as he started crawling. "There's quite literally NO point to keeping me with you. I'll slow you down from this point on... we both know that. You can run. I can't. Ergo you're the one who should escape instead of wasting your strength ensuring I keep up. I don't fear death... never have. I accepted I was dead the moment I enlisted in Rex's unit. I've been through some of the worst hells you could think up... including nuclear war... and I'm saying you're better off on your own now that we've escaped."

He decided to cut this short though, as she'd most likely chide him for talking too much again, in which case he'd probably kick her in the jaw to shut her up. He smiled at that though... every time she had something to stupid to say, she'd get a kick... he wondered how long she'd tolerate that. Anyway, he was leaving a blood trail, even despite the bandage (which was slipshod enough it was barely that), and he knew they'd be tracked quite easily. Still, he could see what she was going for, and decided to just let her attempt her ambush if it worked out.

He managed to make it behind a second tree, and kept going. Oddly though, his thoughts drifted back to his nuclear war comment... maybe that's why he was sterile... ah well. There was no point in worrying about it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2014, 08:26:43 PM**

"If you have enough energy to prattle on like you are, you've got enough to keep moving!" Emilena scanned the foliage. "Why do you care if I live anyway?"

She scanned the trees. "On the other hand...if you're that motivated to lie around and look pathetic we could use you as bait. You monologue at any guys to come close and I scale a tree and drop on them. I didn't see anyone on those cameras in the castle so we might actually have a chance of picking them off one-by-one. But we're going to need to get further into the forest where the trees are larger, taller and thicker."

She hoisted Vergil onto her back and dragged him. "You keep saying you're a highly-trained soldier," she panted, "so *act like one* goddammit! Were you the company water boy or something?"

"That's the mystery!" Flora exclaimed. "Nobody knows! Of course, she's got a soft spot for you, so maybe if you ask she'll tell. But you better tell me if she reveals her secret!"

She jumped up happily when Triste mentioned checking out the forest. "Yay, road trip!" she bounced happily to the door. "To rescue Emi!"

She grabbed her coat from the rack by the door and regarded Triste packing. She realized that the gecko was packing almost everything she owned into her backpack. "Not to jinx how lucky we've been in finding you," she said in a small voice, "but...why are you doing all this for us? Did you know Emi or something?"

Lily gulped. "Asking the Chinese mafia?" She wasn't sure why they would do that, but she didn't want to disagree with Soren and Anne. Lily had noticed that they tended to wind up on opposite sides of issues leading all the way back to when Lily invited Emilena to join their party at the parking lot outside the clothing store in Lanthae, and this was a good opportunity for her to side with them in a meaningful way that could enforce group solidarity. Especially since she'd just revealed a major secret she'd kept from them... "If you really know them that well, Anne, this could be our best hope for information. I'm willing to defer to your judgment, as you'd know far more about this than me."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 28, 2014, 09:20:06 PM**

Soren immediately picked up the tension in the air and let out a breath. "I don't like doing this any more than you do but what other choices do we have?"

Anne tapped her horn. "Well, I may be able to tap into a secured wireless network with my horn and project it to a radio but since there are terabytes of data flowing through government wireless channels...well, we'd be wading through a lot of useless shit. Or we can hack into the phone company's databases and swipe all their records and then browse through them at our leisure."

"If Marita or hell, any of us, get caught doing that, we're bricked. We can't afford bail."

Anne shrugged and snorted a bit, shaking her head and sending her mane flying in all directions. "The only other way that doesn't involve breaking into every house in Corona would be to repeatedly call his house from a cellphone. Then I could possibly use my horn to find out where the nearest cell tower to landline link is. Then we break in and we eavesdrop on every line inside. Once we find a hit, we can then look up where that line goes to. If everything goes right, that *should* lead to Vergil's house."

"That's assuming the nearest link to his house even services his house or if he even has a landline phone. Seriously, those things are fucking *old*."

Anne smiled and tapped her horn. "If his home phone's wireless, I can also use my horn to grab the signal it sends to the phone company. I can then use it to pinpoint his house."

Soren nodded. "What's the range of your horn?"

Anne took a seat and grabbed the instruction manual for her implant off the bookshelf. The book was rather beat up but it was legible. She opened the book and began reading. "It depends on signal strength. With something like that, I could probably get a kilometer. Maybe two."

"Not helping." Soren rubbed his forehead. "Fuck it. I don't think we have any choice."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 28, 2014, 11:25:43 PM**

It was at that that Emilena received a sharp whack on the back of her head from Vergil's elbow as he slid off her. "No... for your information." he responded bluntly. "Now then... first off, apologies. Second, I don't remember my role specifically, only that I was a soldier of some sort. Third, I care that you live because all life, even your own, is precious. Death is a part of life, yes, but right now, you're the fittest in our group. If one of us HAS to survive... better you than me. The cripple gets picked off... the non-cripple survives. That's just the way things go... I've seen it happen more times than I care to remember. Acceptable losses and all that... it's what Rex lived by. Anyway..." he looked around them.

"The trees tend to be thicker in the center of the forest... which judging from the direction we're heading, isn't this way. The older trees are off in that direction." he pointed to her left. "So we should be heading that way." He began hobbling forward, grinding his teeth as he did so. "Ugh! Sonofabitch! I'll have to repay that guy one for this..." he murmured. He looked quite the sight, half caked in mud with leaves sticking to him at odd angles. He certainly looked like a swamp creature of some kind.

"Shouldn't have hit you..." he said now, shaking his head. "It wasn't... necessary."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 29, 2014, 03:57:05 PM**

The ground was uneven, disturbed, and as William looked down, he could see the broken twigs and shifted dirt led up to the slope in the forest floor, the ground dipping down into the ravine and sinking into the darkness of the thicker foliage. William closed his eyes and took a deep breath, his nostrils flaring, pallid face creasing in pleasure. He could smell, *taste* the two of them, those who had been here only moments before. Of course he could detect the rich, copper of the gecko's blood, but more than that - their confusion, their fear, their panic and frustration was tangible to him. And it made William feel *alive*.

He felt a pleasurable shudder run through his body, and he turned his face upwards, feeling the light breeze on his skin. William let his breath out slowly. "Thank you," he whispered, feeling a rush of genuine gratitude towards the two that he was about to hunt down. After a moment, he made his way down the slope, and started on their trail. He didn't need to bother with his augmented hearing - the blood leaking from Vergil's wound was more than enough for him to go on.

Triste zipped up her bag and hoisted it over a shoulder, turning to look at Flora. "I'm not doing all of this for you. I don't know Emilena, and I don't care what happens to her. But the fact is, both her and Vergil, the person *I'm* looking for, were there when Stracci's son died. They went missing almost as soon as my team arrived back in Corona, close by to one of Stracci's old bases of operation. And now, we know that Emilena was taken by one of Stracci's men. This can't be a coincidence."

She tilted her head. "I can't afford to take my time on this, and *you* want your friend back. So we both stand to gain from this." She frowned. "What's confusing is why they'd take Emilena when *you* were the one to kill him," she said, glancing at Rio as she moved past and started for the door. "But I don't have time to think about it. And on the subject of you, you're staying here, kid."

Rio's eyes widened. "What?! But I've gotta help, she's -"

"No. You're about 7 years old. You could screw up the entire thing."

"I'm *12*!" Rio grimaced. "And I won't screw anything up. I'm not new to this kind of stuff, trust me. If you need someone to sneak into somewhere, to break into some shit, I can do it. It's what I'm good at. Flora can vouch for me." He clenched his jaw. "I *can* do it, and I'm coming. Emi's my friend, and I have to help save her."

Triste paused for a second, then sighed. "If you do anything, *anything*, that compromises us, I'm taking you out of the situation. However I feel is best." She walked out the door. "Let's move."

Axel's ears curved uncomfortably. "Alright then, I, ah... I guess we've gotta do it." He looked at Anne. "So... how do you contact them? What're you gonna say? It's not like you can just dial up the Chinese mafia advice helpline."

He glanced around at the rest of them. "And we should probably prepare for if something goes wrong because... I mean, our track record of things going smoothly isn't exactly, ah... well, it's non-existent."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 30, 2014, 08:43:59 AM**

"If that's what it took to get you moving again, you can hit me a few more times," groaned Emilena. "Hardly matters at this point."

She crawled forward and then yelped as she tripped over an almost invisible wire strung across two tree trunks. The ground in front of her collapsed instantly, greeting her with the sight of a spiked pit. The only thing that saved her was that she kept her foot locked inside the wire, which left her dangling precariously over the edge with a twisted ankle instead of with a dozen new perferations.

She didn't recatch her breath until Vergil had her back on solid ground. "The bastard *booby-trapped* the forest..." she panted. "We need to be more careful..." She tried to put her weight on her ankle and yelped. "Dammit, this is only going to help them catch up to us faster..."

Flora was not present, having already exited quickly to the parking lot. *We need the best car possible for this trip!* she thought resolutely. *Emi's life depends on it!*

Before meeting up with Emilena's gang, she had spent most of her youth breaking into cars, driving in random unknown directions until the gas ran out, and repeating. She may be partially responsible for some much fiercer automated detection systems that were being installed in newer models coming out in these areas of the country, but at a glance she saw a number of cars in the lot that were clearly still ripe for the picking.

Low mileage for the size of the tank...cannot handle off-road travel...no radio... As she walked past potential targets she noted to herself missing features that could jeopardize the success of the mission.

Then she saw a jet black Zwingz 381-hp V-8 SUV with remote reservoir shocks and coil-link suspension and got such a huge erection she almost passed out.

"Ohhh my god..." her hand shuddered as it caressed the massive 265/75R16 tires wrapped around beadlock wheels. The car was new, produced smack-dab in the middle of the era of tighter security, and she'd never tried to break into a car like that before.

First she checked under the SUV for a magnetic box containing a set of spare keys. Some people have those; this owner did not. Then she tested the back door to see if there was enough room for her to wedge a removed car antenna through and jimmy the unlock rod. There was, but before she inserted anything she scanned the dashboard. She noted a subtle black circle of glass embedded into the rearview mirror and recognized it as a motion sensor. She'd never broken into a car with a motion sensor, but she'd seen them advertised on TV, and she'd always wondered about the most obvious way she could think to fool them.

The sensor can't go off just because it's nighttime, right? she thought, borrowing the car cover (and antenna) from another vehicle in the parking lot and draping it over the SUV. Now in the dark, she bent the tip of the detached antenna into a hook and slid it between the door seal and the chassis. But after unlocking the car door she held it open only a crack; some cars have shock sensors that notify the owner because the interior lights turn on, simply due to the ease of the car checking for that status. Rolling the car window down, she fingered the inside until she found the button that, like the one inside a refrigerator, turned the lights on once depressed. She held it down with her finger until she could close the door behind her.

Now inside the car, she checked the steering column and quickly determined that it was safe-guarded against hot-wiring. After allowing herself a few minutes to sit in the driver's seat and imagine the sheer power of driving such a whip, she borrowed the jumper cables and maintenance kit in the glove compartment and left the car, taping the light button down. Popping the hood, she located the plug and coil wires at the rear of the engine and ran the jumper cables from a positive battery terminal to the wire leading the coil. This activated the dash-board, which let her locate the starter solenoid behind the steering wheel. Delicately connecting the solenoid to the positive battery terminal, she skipped with excitement when the 12 volt shock activated the solenoid and the starter cranked the car.

"Oh you glorious stallion, you're *mine...*" she moaned throatily, stroking the steering wheel and rubbing herself against the powerful vibrations of the engine. Then she realized Triste and Rio were standing beside the car staring at her. "Here we go!" she announced happily, whipping the cover off the SUV. "Check out the six-speed automatic transmission and locking differential on this thing!"

Lily yawned. "Let me know when we're leaving...I need to relax for a time..." she politely excused herself from the room. Physically, a night in a morgue rested the body but mentally it only exhausted her more. She knew they'd probably be leaving soon, but even five minutes of meditation can do wonders.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 02, 2014, 11:55:47 AM**

Vergil reacted quickly, his reflexes only marginally slowed by his pain. He lashed out, grabbed hold of her and preventing her from meeting her certain demise in the spiked pit.

"Ugh!" he groaned out, hauling her back up. "OK... well.... way I see it... two options..." he said, looking behind them now. "We keep going at potentially greater risk to ourselves trying to escape but possibly blundering into traps OR... we figure out a way to confront this guy, and kill him. Get him off our backs and that way... we can take our time with the escape." he outlined.

Looking down, he noticed he was already partly camouflaged from all the leaves and mud covering him. "I dunno... maybe I could blend in. He's gonna have to approach over that rise in order to see us... might be able to get the drop on him."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 03, 2014, 04:25:03 PM**

Reaching the bottom of the slope, William bent and ran a long, thin finger through a small spatter of blood on the ground. Smearing it between his finger and thumb, he smiled to himself. The gecko was bleeding nicely. He wouldn't be able to keep going much further...

He tilted his head as, from further on, he heard a cry of surprise from the woman. *So she's run into one of my surprises...* He could only hope she hadn't been hurt too badly. Or at least, not so badly that he wouldn't be able to play with her for a bit. William cricked his neck and stood up slowly.

"That's awesome!" Rio exclaimed, running up to join Flora. He climbed up and peered into one of the windows. "Fucking cool!"

"Yeah. It's a car. Good," Triste said flatly as she walked around the car and pulled open the front passenger door, climbing up. "As long as it gets us there, that's what matters."

Rio followed her. "Hey! I want to ride shotgun..." He trailed off when Triste turned around and fixed her eyes on him. "I'm sitting in the back," he stated after a moment.

Climbing in all the way, Triste pulled the door shut and called across to Flora. "You're driving. Get us there as quick as you can." She paused. "Actually... we need to make a detour. I'll give you the directions." *They've already shown they're somewhat dependable in a firefight... and it's better to be prepared...*

Axel sighed as he leaned back on the counter. Well, we've gotta make up our minds quickly, if -" The phone besides him suddenly rang, and he jumped with a slight squeak. Hesitating slightly, he glanced around at the others and picked up the phone. "Hello?"

"*Whent?*" Triste's voice came through, momentarily confused, but then returning to its business-like tone almost instantly. "*I assumed the police had arrested you. You and your wife must be taking refuge.*"

"Yeah, we... we saw that our house was bugged so we left..." Axel squinted. "How did you have Soren's number? Why're you calling? What's -"

"*Vergil's in trouble,*" she interrupted. "*I think he's been taken, and I think I know where he is, but if things go wrong, I need to know that I have back up I can rely on. Will you help?*"

Axel's tail flicked. "Wait... hang on..."

"*Good. Get down to the street as soon as you can. I've already got what you'll need. And there's only space for 3 of you, so choose who you want to come quickly. I'll explain more when you're here.*" There was a slight pause. "*And we've got some help.*"

The dial tone buzzed in his ear as Triste hung up. Frowning, Axel stared at the phone for a second, then put it down. "Alright, ah..." He looked at the others. "I guess that solves the Vergil mystery. That was Triste. She, ah.. she says that Vergil's been taken and she needs help to get him back. And there's only room for three of us to go. So... yeah." He blinked, his brain trying to process the information that had just been thrown at him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 04, 2014, 05:37:18 PM**

"The traps...changed things, I agree..." panted Emilena. "We could try an ambush."

She regarded Vergil. "You could blend into the ground, yeah," she nodded. "But I might need to be a bit more out-of-sight." Despite all the foliage they'd dragged themselves through, her blood-stained orange fur was still a bit too bright to easily blend in with the forest floor. But the setting sun was another matter entirely...

Her gaze steeled. "Let's do it. If he targets you, try to get shot in the coat." Grasping her dagger in between her teeth, she dug her claws into the tree trunk and hoisted herself up the first yard of trunk. Then she fell off of the trunk reflexively as a pressure-activated spike strip swung out of the tree and embedded itself where she'd been seconds before. "Always spikes with this bastard..." she gritted her teeth, but the strip also gave her the handholds she needed to assume a hiding place in the canopy. She kept the sun behind her so that anyone approaching from the castle would find it even harder to spot her.

"Quick as you can, got it!" Flora switched the radio to a heavy metal channel and popped the car into gear with a wild whoop.

The SUV peeled out of the parking lot before anyone even the chance to even look at their seatbelts. Grinning, Flora revved the engine and careened through a red light directing traffic in the wrong way. A tow truck swerved to avoid her and she flipped it off as she pumped the brakes and sent the car spinning in a perfect bootlegger's turn to hop an island and face the freeway.

Cutting off of the road and barely making a 270 degree spin onto an off-ramp, Flora took a bridge just long enough for it to level out with the highway below and allow her to drop onto the traffic flow in the opposite direction. "We'll be there in five minutes!" she announced, when even the most optimistic GPS would predict a 25-minute drive at best.

Lily returned, yawning. "Who was that on the phone?" she asked, before the shredding scream of tires outside made her jump.

A jet black SUV went from peeling into the parking lot at 60mph to an almost perfect parallel park in the closest space to the apartment. "Hiiii!!!" waved the fuchsia folf in the driver seat, rolling down the window so the heavy bass could reverberate the parked cars in either direction. "Did Triste warn you we were coming? C'mon c'mon we gotta go, Emi's counting on us!"

"Flora?" gasped Lily. She looked at the other occupants of the apartment. "Why is she here?" Another part of her brain realized that because Flora had mentioned Emilena, it would be in the rescue team's best interest to distance themselves from Soren as quickly as possible, so she wasted no time booking it to the car.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 04, 2014, 05:50:45 PM**

I'll come too ' Marita said ' there hadnt been really time to absorb the info about Vergil's capture when the loud music announced the SUVs arrival, and since there was only room for 3, Marita figured that she volunteer.' Hold down the Fort girls ' She said giving Marie and Rose a Hug and kiss each before throwing on a coat from the rack near the door . ' Hopefully We'll be back soon, although with our luck to date, i doubt it.' she pulled her phone from her pocket and checked, it was fully charged. " I'll call you guys when we get more information about what exactly is going on. " She said before heading out of the apartments front door. Within a few minutes she was outside. the SUV was parked close to the curb, so it was a simple matter of walking up to it.' She cast Flora a smile as she got in. ' Hi I'm Marita' she said as she got in the back seat." I'm friends with Lily." she paused as she got in.' nice car." She moved into the middle of the seat, to give enough room for the third member of the rescue group to squeeze in.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 06, 2014, 11:50:57 AM**

The sound of another trap activating reached William, and he smiled again. It sounded higher up, not like the previous one... *Trying to climb trees? They usually try that last...* As he approached the source of the sound, the smell of blood grew stronger, almost overwhelming. Either they were slowing down, or the traps had killed them.That would be a shame.

The ground started to slope up. William followed, tracking the stumbling footsteps and disturbed dirt left behind by his new friends. Higher... and then the ground dipped down again, leading into a small clearing. There, almost in the middle, one of his floor traps yawned open - and inside, nothing. On one of the trees creeping into the clearing, a spike panel had been activated. But again, no body. William stopped at the top of the rise and took another deep breath. The blood was thickest here. *They* were here. Even their tracks stopped, and he couldn't hear any more movement... He paused, then looked up slowly at the spiked tree. William winced. The sunlight bore into his sensitive eyes, blinding him. Looking away, he shook his head to clear the pain shooting through his skull, then crouched down.

"Clever," he whispered. *But it won't be that easy.*

Reaching a hand back into the small pouch around his waist, William pulled out a fist-sized metallic canister, then pulled back the pin on its lid. Sliding his sniper rifle off and propping it in the crook of his elbow, he tossed the can lazily into the center of the clearing - listening and watching closely for any movement as the tear gas started to leak out, spreading out in a noxious cloud.

"Alright... crap." Axel looked at Soren and Anne. "I'll go as well, but... well, if this turns out to be a waste, we might still need our friendly neighborhood yakuza. It might still be worth trying them..." He rubbed his ear. "Alright, we'll be back as soon as we can. We'll let you know if anything comes up. Be careful guys."

When he emerged out of the building, he didn't exactly need to take a long hard look to see where the others were. Approaching the car with the booming music pouring from it, wincing from the noise, Axel squinted as he saw who was in the driver's seat. She looked familiar... wasn't she one of Emilena's gang?

"What's going... Rio?" Axel grimaced as he climbed in next to Marita.

"Hey fucker," Rio called back, squashed on the other side of Lily.

Shaking his head, Axel pulled the door shut behind him and look up front at Triste. "What the hell's going on? How do you know Vergil's been taken?"

"It's almost certain that he's been taken by a member of the Straccis," she shouted back, struggling to be heard over the heavy metal music.

"What?!"

"I said..." Giving up, Triste slammed her palm on the radio's off button, shooting a glare at Flora before glancing back at Axel. "I'll explain it on the way. Just get us there quickly," she instructed Flora.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 06, 2014, 02:38:07 PM**

Emilena's eyes grew wide as she recognized the unmistakable sounds of a gas grenade. *God, I'm glad I'm not Vergil right now...* Luckily, since she was off the ground she had a few scarce minutes to possibly escape the cloud radius. Plus the cloud itself might provide the cover she needed.

She leaped from her current tree to the next one and bit her tongue when a razor sliced through her bicep. This tree was filled with razor-sharp wires to dissuade attempts at hiding in them. Only her thin frame gave her the area she'd already obtained. *Who the hell booby-traps a forest to this degree?* she thought in amazement. With no other options, she tumbled out of the tree and went crashing into a bush. A bear trap smashed shut on her tail and she almost bit her own tongue off in a teary attempt at keeping silent.

As the vestiges of the gas sent tears running down her face, she blindly tried to free herself from the bear trap and recollect her senses.

"M'kay!" Flora pressed the pedal to the floor and sent the car squealing out of the parking lot.

Lily yelped as her forehead smashed into the headrest of the shotgun seat. "Could someone explain to me how the three of you wound up in the same place?" she asked bemusedly, staring at Rio, Flora and Triste.

"The hands of *fate*!" Flora pulled up to a red light and revved her engine suggestively at the muscle car beside her. The driver revved his engine in response, and the second the light turned green they sped out of the city limits. The muscle car soon found itself outmatched as Flora cut him off during a turn and he had to hit the brakes to avoid plowing into a chevron.

"Flora, your turn signal!" Lily suggested meekly.

"Turn signals are giving information to the **enemy**!" Flora gained a few seconds of air time when she bounced off the paved road and began plowing through a cornfield. "Lanthae forest in exactly fifteen minutes!" she announced, hitting the radio back on and increasing the volume as high as it went.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 06, 2014, 03:11:02 PM**

Would you please turn down the radio?' Marita called out . the loud noise making her ears hurt. " its hard to talk and get acquainted if you can't hear each other>" the suv bumped through the cornfield, sending jolts though the vehicle to the passengers. it was not fun, and marita was quickly forming an opinion that flora was not a very good driver.' ' Could you .. please,.. slow.. down?' she called out, her teeth chattering as the combination of the loud music and bumpy driving surfacte was starting to make her nauseous.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 07, 2014, 06:27:43 PM**

"Triste wanted to get there as soon as possible!" Flora shouted back, swerving the SUV and shredding a scarecrow with her back tires. "This is the quickest possible way!"

Lily grasped Marita's arm and instinctively began healing the ringing in her ears. It was practically a free heal considering she was suffering from them herself.

"We have to decide what strategy we're going to use when we find them!" Flora shouted, sending the car off a small precipice and flip-flopping everyone's center of gravity. "Stealth or loud! Personally, I vote for stealth!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 08, 2014, 09:15:49 AM**

While the tear gas was certainly a nuisance as it began to drift out of the grenade, Vergil had been through far, *far* worse on Rex's campaigns, and had endured greater torture than a little burning of the eyes and tears streaking down his face. While it would be a hindrance for sure, Vergil knew it wouldn't be a major stumbling block.

He was below Emilena, trying to hold in his breath and avoid from choking on the gas. He had to keep low, but he also knew keeping stationary was the best thing during a gas attack; the wind would soon blow the gas over and beyond them, so staying still was the best bet in times when there was even a slight breeze, which there was this day; gas attacks were far more effective indoors after all.

Waiting it out patiently, the gecko closed his eyes, even as he felt Emilena fall to the ground somewhere off to his left, and the snapping of what sounded like a gruesome bear trap going off. Cringing, he fumbled his way through the now dissipating gas to where Emilena was struggling with a trap that had seized her tail. The cloud had drifted more toward her, so Vergil was crawling back into it, but he dealt with it as he kept his head low, and began pushing on one of the springs to release the trap enough for the fox to free her tail. "Go!" he urged, pressing it down. "And try to stay stationary... the gas will be over us soon!" he whispered heavily, the fumes stinging his tongue as he spoke.

Tony noticed the road had to be taking him back to somewhere around the castle. He was heading in what he thought was the general direction, and was cruising along at a leisurely 40 mph, not wanting to come up on the castle without warning and risk getting shot at again. As it was though, his path was taking him closer to where Emilena and Vergil had run into the woods, though he wasn't close enough yet to see the tear gas through the trees.

But someone else was close by now as well: Stryker had left the castle and was heading into the woods. With no way of being able to track the escaped targets, the sungazer lizard figured he'd murder William first, then hunt down the other two, who would be too badly injured to move far. He was decked out in forest camo gear, his body painted thanks to a device they had in the castle, and his gear reflecting the shades and shadows of the nearby wood. Besides... his two targets would be making for these woods eventually... and since there was only his Cord in the parking lot, he knew they hadn't taken that, as it was still sitting safely in its spot.

Having retrieved a high-tech sniper rifle from the trunk, the lizard was also carrying combat knives, throwing knives, his laser pistol, and flashbangs. He also had a handy set of goggles that would allow him to track William's trail through the forest... but as it turned out, he also picked up a good deal of blood on the leaves, so he knew William was hunting them. Very well... perhaps they could pool their efforts... or of course let William take care of it, then shoot William after he was done. There was no way Stryker was being denied his revenge after all...

Right before the sungazer disappeared into the treeline, Tony just barely made him out as he approached the castle from the rear. He slowed the Duesenberg, and narrowed his eyes. Stryker heading into the woods fully dressed in combat gear? Had Emilena escaped? Finding no other explanation for the lizard's behavior, Tony decided to pull over to the side of the road. Shutting the Dusey down, he exited the car, tentatively reaching for the Glock in his waistband.

Pulling the pistol out, Tony began approaching Stryker at a right angle, but paused when he saw the lizard wearing some sort of goggles. Trackers most likely... the ferret stood stock still, waiting for the lizard to pass ahead of him before he slowly started following, but even then waited until Stryker had advanced quite a ways ahead of him. No sense giving himself away too soon...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 09, 2014, 09:40:10 AM**

Stealth requires quiet!' Marita shouted as the drop caused her to float in the air for a brief second before falling back down. ' which means 1: you turn the music off and 2: you dont drive so fast through a cornfield. try and get back on the road Flora.Please! We need time to come up with a strategy and having half the passenger throwing up from being nauseous isnt a good way to form a plan. Please? I'm asking nicely."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 10, 2014, 07:31:41 PM**

As the light breeze started to blow the gas forwards, washing it over the clearing below him, William heard light, urgent whispering, coming from the same area where he'd heard the bear trap snapping shut. Drawing the bolt back on his rifle, he waited as the last wisps of the tear gas drifted away... then frowned as he made out Vergil trying to free Emilena from the trap.

His pale, watery eyes hardening, William aimed at the spring just as Vergil started to push it down and pulled the trigger. The bullet slammed off the metal, causing the bear trap to snap back down on Emilena's tail, the teeth biting back through her flesh and crunching the bones in her tail. A split second after, William turned the barrel back on the gecko and fired again, this time putting a round through his left shoulder.

"I like her where she is!" William called out, an ugly, amiable smile stretched across his face as he took a step down the slope leading to the clearing.

Axel nodded, a thrilled grin on his face as Flora flung the car around. "Yeah, I - *ow* - vote we go stealth too - *ow*," he winced as he was thrown repeatedly sideways, his head slamming into the window.

"Agreed," Triste said, tight-lipped as she clutched the backpack tightly. Unzipping it, she pulled out a small, silenced handgun and tossed it back to Axel when the car was relatively level. "That's why I brought these." As she reached in and pulled out another identical gun, Triste tilted her head at Marita. "And agreed." Turning the handgun on the radio, she pressed the barrel against it and fired, blowing it apart in a shower of sparks. The booming heavy metal tones faded away to a whimper then died away. Triste tossed the gun over her shoulder to Marita, and another to Lily then nodded, staring ahead as the countryside started slowly giving way to forest. "We're getting closer."

Rio stared expectantly up front, then frowned when Triste didn't pass him a gun. "Hey! What abo-"

"No way."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 10, 2014, 09:54:08 PM**

Thank you' Marita said as the radio died and Triste Tossed her a gun. " both for the gun and er.. 'turning off" the radio. And as for you" she looked at Rio, and her eyes narrowed as she recognized him' After what you did in Bolivia, theres no way in hell i'd ever trust you with a gun, unless that gun was a squirt gun .there are certain things 12 years old should never possess. guns are one of them. She then turned to check the gun she had been given " so how much ammo do each of these guns have? Are we talking 5-6 shots each?' she asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 13, 2014, 07:07:38 PM**

"My stallion!" gasped Flora. "*Noooooooooo!*" she howled just as loud as the radio had previously been.

"Oh, I...!" Lily fumbled and dropped the pistol, where it bounced to Rio's feet. "No no no, I can't. I'm sorry, I can't fire a gun..." she held her hands up meekly and blushed.

"Now how are we supposed to return the car without the owner knowing we borrowed it?" Flora asked angrily. "If you don't do that, the cops will start investigating! I might as well just drive this straight into that tree!" She pintailed and beelined straight for the tangled trunk of a towering oak.

"Noflorapleasedon't!" Lily grabbed Axel defensively, but Flora spun the wheel and braked so deftly that they stopped an inch away from the tree.

"Relax," Flora stuck her tongue out. "I had complete control of things the whole time. I'm the best driver your eyes have ever seen!"

Lily stumbled queasily out of the car. She was so focused on not vomiting that she didn't notice the deep dark forest that had haunted her nightmares for months since the Lanthae incident.

Emilena cried out as she heard several of the vertebrae in her tail snap. "Goddammit..." Pulling the jaws apart by an inch, she dragged her tail out slowly and bloodily, leaving a trap full of skin and lumps of fur.

"Vergil, get up." The Kevlar coat deflected the bullet. She hobbled behind the tree. "Keep the trees between us and him!"

Her pace was far slower; she'd never realized just how much she relied on her tail for balance.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 14, 2014, 02:55:47 PM**

marita   slowly got out, and bent over. ' ok.. next time I'M driving' She said as she slowly gathered her wits and glared at flora ' in the meantime i suggest we get looking for vergil. she said and looked at the gun in her claws.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 14, 2014, 05:35:17 PM**

Flora crossed her arms in defiance. "Girlie, I drove a sixteen-wheeler down the Yungas Road while high as a kite. You drive when I'm *dead*!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 14, 2014, 06:12:39 PM**

high as a kite huh? well I think Flora you'd be a very interesting dinner companion..But.. try hacking into a top flight building security while fighting the effects of biproxytol...? not fun, not easy, but the pay was real nice, so I took it..' Marita said shooting Flora a smirk. after this is over why dont we get acquainted over drinks, my treat? Girls like us need to have some fun after all."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 14, 2014, 10:12:27 PM**

As it was, the shot this time did nothing to the kevlar jacket he was wearing, and the gecko managed to stumble back to his feet after Emilena yanked him upwards. He'd have a bruise, sure, but that was the worst of it. "Yeah, yeah!" he replied in a hoarse voice, getting behind a thick trunk even as she said that. Their hunter had exposed himself when taking his step down the slope, though that mattered little since they had nothing to shoot him with.

Behind William and closing fast was Stryker, who took up a position behind a tree once he spotted William's form standing on the slope ahead of him. Inhaling slowly, he steeled himself, calming his heart rate, and slowing his breathing by forcing himself into the technique he'd learned in the Scorched Earth War. The two were certainly making enough noise down in the dell, which was providing enough distraction to fix William on them. He'd kill them after he took care of the human.

Activating the digital cross hairs on his scope, he waited patiently. He'd shoot him as he moved down... or if he stood still. No way was he exposing himself early... just in case...

Behind him, Tony was forced to freeze and duck behind a tree as Stryker flattened himself out against one as well. He was looking back towards the ferret now, so Tony was pinned until the lizard shifted his gaze. Stryker was quite hard to see, mashing up against the tree like that with his insanely good camo. The ferret panted and gripped the Glock tightly in his paws, sweat accumulating on his paw pads the tighter he held the gun.

He'd only get one shot at this... Stryker was far too good to miss more than once... though Tony briefly questioned why he wasn't just approaching the lizard. He was his father's employee after all... but still... he was clearly after someone in these woods, and Stryker was the shoot first, ask questions later. Hell that castle wasn't even owned by his father... which seemed to indicate the lizard was acting alone regarding Emilena... so something was fishy here. He intended to find out just what... then get to the bottom of everything surrounding her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 15, 2014, 02:09:19 PM**

Emilena was so focused on getting Vergil forward she only had a split second to leap back when a Happy Birthday trap swung a board of spikes at her head. As she dodged backwards her foot stepped into a noose which quickly cinched her and swung her through the air, away from Vergil and dangling from her ankle.

"Son of a..." Grasping the rope, she sliced through it with her knife and crashed to the ground. Said ground instantly revealed itself to be hiding a greased ramp that sent her skidding towards what she could only guess was another death trap.

With few other options, she slid the few feet of rope off her ankle and lassoed a tree branch sliding by. As her slicked hands tried to find purchase to get her off the ramp, she hardly had time to catch her breath and figure out whether her slide had delivered her closer or further from William.

"Well, I'm not a hacker, I'm a driver!" Flora stuck her tongue out. "Hacking is easy, Foley hacks shit all the time. Bet you a blowjob you couldn't get us back to the apartment as quickly as I got us here, nerd!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 15, 2014, 03:50:17 PM**

Nerd? i take offense to that..' marita said her face showing a smirk nonetheless. :' Still a challenge huh? alright. how long did it take you to drive us here, in minutes? she asked, ' because getting out of here will probably require driving really fast, especially if vergils captors are on his trial.. now come on. we need to go find him.." marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 15, 2014, 04:27:48 PM**

William tracked the two of them as Emilena dragged Vergil into cover. He hissed in irritation as they disappeared behind the thick protection of a tree trunk... but his scowl twisted into a smile as he heard several of his traps being activated at once. Emilena suddenly swung back into view, upside down, her foot twisted up in a rough coil of rope that stretched up into the trees. Licking his teeth with a slug-like tongue, William was preparing to put a bullet through the kneecap of her caught leg when she suddenly sliced through the rope, falling to the ground and tumbling out of sight down an adjacent slope, crashing through the leafy undergrowth.

Resourceful... William was about to start after her when he heard a slight whisper of movement behind him. Only one person was skilled enough to get that close without him knowing. *But you aren't as quiet as you think you are.* "Nice of you to turn up, Stryker," he called lightly over his shoulder, not turning around. "The lizard's behind that tree," William continued, waving a hand absently towards where Vergil had been taking cover - before suddenly dashing forwards, the trees obscuring him from Stryker's view. *The woman's mine.* Leaping over the edge, he slid down the slope after Emilena.

"There'll be no blowjobs until we get this done," Triste snapped, hopping out of the car and staring into the woods.

Rio smirked at Flora as Marita invited her for drinks. "Go on, why don't you show her how... girls... have fun?" His eye caught Axel trembling as he exited the vehicle. "What the fuck's wrong with you?"

"That was *amazing*!" Axel gibbered excitedly, still shaking as he looked at Flora, his face twitching slightly. "You need to drive more, you need to..." He trailed off as the adrenaline started to wear off and he remembered where they were. Taking a deep breath, he blinked at Lily and put a tentative hand on her shoulder. "Are you... okay? This probably isn't your favourite place in the world..."

Clicking the safety off on her pistol, Triste glanced back, her jaw tightening impatiently. "She'll be fine. We've got to get moving. *Now*. Before it's too late." She tilted her head. "The property should be in that direction."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 16, 2014, 02:06:54 PM**

Emilena saw her captor skidding down towards her. Realizing she had no possible chance of eluding him, she decided to instead tank the percussive damage and wrap herself around him, pinning his weapons to his sides. "Let's see what trap you built at the end of this slide," she growled in his ear, letting go of the rope and sending them both sliding to an unknown fate.

"Oh don't worry," Flora flashed Rio a smirk. "I'm going to leave her *gasping* from all my girl love."

"Come on now, let's stay civil," Lily protested. "We're all on the same team here."

She quaked, looking at the forest. "It's okay..." she whispered to Axel. "I'm all right." She took a deep breath. "Some scary things happened to me in this forest...but I focus on the one thing that was wonderful." She wrapped her hand tightly around his. He knew what event she was talking about.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 16, 2014, 04:29:50 PM**

William and Emilena continued skidding downwards, splashing through patches of wet dirt and mud as they hurtled towards the bottom of the slope. She was *stronger*... stronger than any of the other women he'd entertained. Why hadn't he met someone like her earlier?! He giggled, a high and reedy sound, as she leaned in to growl in his ear. "I hope you like it!" Still grinning, he suddenly lunged his face forwards, his teeth clamping down on her cheek and biting through, tearing away a large strip of flesh.

The end of the slope was fast approaching... along with the concealed, spiked pit. Spitting out a mouthful of blood, William felt Emilena's grip loosen briefly from around his arms. Taking advantage, he slammed his forehead into her nose, then shot an arm out to catch the side of a tree that was shooting past. Pain jolted up William's shoulder as he managed to swing himself free from the slide leading down to the trap... although, as Emilena was still gripping him, she was also dragged free. Together, they tumbled to the bottom and landed with a crash - just to the side of the pit.

Rolling over, William quickly crawled towards Emilena, grotesquely insect-like, grabbed a handful of her hair and dealt her a savage blow to the side of the head with his knee. Clambering on top of her, he wrapped his fingers around her throat and started to press his thumbs inwards, hand shaking from the force he was applying. "*Thank you... so much... for this...*" William panted, his pallid, grey face still stretched in a wide smile. "*Haven't enjoyed myself like this... in so long...*"

Axel gripped Lily's hand back and pulled her into a hug. "Yeah, it was... it was really something. First time I climbed a tree in 15 years!" He smiled and kissed her nose. "And the rest was pretty amazing too." Over Lily's shoulder, Axel saw Triste starting to edge her way into the forest, the shadows thrown by the trees swallowing her up. "Let's get going. The sooner we get this done..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 16, 2014, 05:26:05 PM**

" Is she always this feisty?' Marita asked Rio, before she noticed Trieste heading into the woods. " Better not answer that until this is done with. Need to rescue Vergil after all.' She said as she began walking towards the edge of the forest, her paw now gripped tightly onto the gun Trieste had given her. She followed after Trieste trying to make as little noise as possible as she entered the woods.' the sounds of wildlife were few and far between, this place had the feel of a forest that had been there a long time, and there was somewhat of a dusty smell to it.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 16, 2014, 05:39:21 PM**

Emilena shrieked as his teeth dug into her cheek. With a horrible tearing sound she suddenly felt the wind whistle through her tongue from the wrong direction. Blindly she headbutted him just to clear some space, her hands being too occupied blocking his arms and weapons.

Then abruptly he broke free from her embrace and Emilena cried out as her center of balance shifted and suddenly she was airborne again. A second of free fall and she slammed into the solid dirt with a bone-jarring thud. "God...dammit..." she crawled blindly, disoriented with blood from her wounds stinging her eyes.

And then he was on top of her again. Her vision was filled with stars as he kneed her in the head and jammed his fingers into her windpipe. His guttural hisses sent hot breath across her face, and as her vision transitioned from red to black she got a brief glimpse of his stretched sneer centimeters from her face.

Desperately she clawed his face, but she wouldn't be able to get a handhold before suffocating. She lashed her leg out, but the angle wasn't right for a kick and as the last of her strength ebbed, her foot sank back onto the ground.

...or, onto the wall of the pit beside them. She realized she had one last hope.

Quickly wrapping her arms around him again, Emilena jolted him over and rolled both of them into the pit. William was on the bottom when they crashed into the spikes, and Emilena winced as his blood stained her fur.

"Hope you...enjoyed it...while it lasted..." she panted in his face, fighting to keep him balanced. He was the only thing keeping her from meeting a similar fate among the second layer of short spikes. "Though you should know you got Stryker's sloppy seconds..."

Lily smiled back at him. "Hopefully this time there will be fewer interruptions from German doctors..." Abruptly she realized they were moving out and followed along nervously behind the others, as this wasn't exactly in her skill set.

Maybe... an odd idea played across her head. Before, when she was in this very forest, her mind connected with Emilena's. She could feel her pain, and used it like a beacon to locate her. Perhaps she could do so again?

She cleared her mind and focused. She tried to feel every soul in the forest. Searching for a soul she'd touched before. Searching for a soul in pain...

After roughly fifteen minutes of walking she gave up. "Well, that didn't work..." she muttered to herself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 16, 2014, 10:03:59 PM**

Anne had led Soren to a rather grungy looking Chinese eatery in Corona's Chinatown section.

A battered neon sign glowed dimly in the chilly rain. It read "Big Wong's Authentic Cantonese Eatery" in both English and Cantonese. The area around it was best described as "unclean" with bags of garbage ready to be hauled off to the processing facilities to be recycled and reprocessed and rivulets of dirty water running down the streets. Other neon signs advertised stores selling Chinese herbal medicines, food and cybernetics of dubious quality.

"This is the place?" Soren asked as he shivered from the cold air that sliced through his thin jacket.

Anne, wearing a light hooded windbreaker (all of her tops were button-down or had zippers to compensate for her horn implant. Of course, she could just have a horn that she could unscrew from its base) nodded. "Yeah."

The door jingled as she entered the eatery. All around her were various patrons enjoying the filling and cheap Cantonese fare that Big Wong's served.

"Seat yourself," a Panda waiter said as he rushed a large plate of lobster to a group of rough looking Chinese men.

Probably Triad members, Anne thought.

She led Soren over to a battered wood table. In the corner was a shrine to the Kitchen God.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 17, 2014, 08:40:14 AM**

William coughed, warm specks of blood spraying out and across his chin. As Emilena lay on top of him, pushing the spikes even deeper into his body. A strange dull feeling started to spread over his chest, numbness that slowly started to give way to an aching burn.

So this is what it feels like to fall in one of these. He opened his mouth to laugh, but his lungs flooded with blood, and all that came out was a choked gurgle. William let his head flop back as the strength in his neck went, red bubbles foaming through his grinning teeth. The sounds of the forest started to grow clearer, more crisp. The wind rustling through the leaves, branches creaking, insects buzzing and clicking... William closed his eyes and let them wash over him - and then everything went black.

Waiting by the trunk of the tallest tree they'd come across, Triste folded her arms and stared up into the thick, leafy branches as the sound of twigs breaking drifted down. A mist of detritus from the tree rained down, and suddenly Rio stuck his head down through the foliage. After 15 minutes of walking, Triste had sent the boy up into the treetops to scan for any point they should head towards. *No point in wandering around aimlessly.*

Rio nodded his head. "Yeah, I saw something. Some big fucking castle thing. To the..." He waved his hand to the side. "What's the thing between north and west?"

"Ah... north-west?" Axel chipped in. Glancing over in his direction, Rio nodded again enthusiastically.

"Alright. Good. We need to pick up the pace." Gesturing to the others, Triste resumed the trek, moving faster now. Looking over her shoulder at Rio as she walked, Triste pointed up into the trees. "Follow us, but stay high. Come down if you see something else - movement or some other sign of people."

"Got it." Disappearing back into the branches, Axel could make out the sound of Rio scrabbling higher up, the slight groaning of the branches as he used them to swing between the trees monkey-like. The rat cocked an eyebrow at Lily as he started following behind Triste. "That night would've been a lot easier if I could climb stuff like *that*."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 17, 2014, 11:22:37 AM**

At Least we have a direction to head towards' Marita said as she followed after Trieste. 15 minutes of walking had been fruitless, so the only thing she could figure to do was stick close to the others and not get lost. hopefully the folks at this castle are friendly..' She muttered to herself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 20, 2014, 05:21:35 PM**

Vergil was unable to affect the events that unfolded before him. He'd have ran after Emilena, but it was pointless... they were on a slope leading into a trap, and if he chased them, he'd have fallen in as well. He looked around for a way to stop this or save her but it was too late... they rolled over the side. Flinching, Vergil began edging towards the pit, but stopped as he sensed something off...

Tony suddenly spun around from behind the tree, but found his target had 'deserted' his post. "Shit!" he whispered, panning around for Stryker. Where was he... where was he...? His heart pounded in his chest as the ferret desperately sought his quarry. Darting forward, he hoped he wouldn't get shot... but stopped as he saw Stryker taking aim a bit ahead of him, pressed up against the side of another tree as he lined up what looked like... wait was that Vergil? What was he doing out here? Oh shit! He knew what this was!

Bringing his Glock up, the ferret cringed, and fired, striking Stryker squarely in the right backside and most likely puncturing his lung... except for his bulletproof vest. Throwing the lizard against the tree with his shot, Tony fired again, this time hitting the reptile in his throat, blood spurting out even as he whirled in Tony's direction, firing wildly with his rifle, which of course missed (though it did whiz uncomfortably close to Tony's ear). The look of shock on Stryker's face as he saw his assailant said it all before Tony fired another round right into his face, turning his expression into a mangled mess of gore as he fell back against the tree... then collapsed into a sitting position, clearly dead.

"Vergil?" Tony called, running up to Stryker and kicking him to make sure he was dead.

Vergil's eyes widened upon hearing the voice. "What...? How?" he asked, glancing upward to see Tony.

"I've got a car a short distance away on a side road! We should get out of here... like now! We shouldn't stick around! Stryker rarely works alone!" Tony insisted.

Vergil glanced behind him, and finally managed to jump up onto a ledge overlooking the pit, holding onto a branch for support as he searched for Emilena. "You here that?" he asked. "One of my friends has a car we can use! I'm not sure I can reach you... but..." He worked on breaking off a longer branch, hoping it would be sufficient as he held it down for her to grab onto. "Can you get it?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 20, 2014, 07:47:12 PM**

"You have *friends out here?*" exclaimed Emilena. Nevertheless she wasn't going to complain; William's body had sunken through the spikes to the extent that the tips were driving into her hands and knees.

Her feet got some free acupuncture as she staggered to a precarious standing position. Knowing she'd only have one shot, she leaped off of William's body and dug her claws into the branch. She almost slipped off as Vergil staggered under her new weight, but once she was flush with the pit wall she could use her feet to aid the climb.

"Jesus..." she gasped, catching her breath at the top of the pit. "I heard the gunshots and figured Stryker had killed you...who the hell are your friends?" Not wanting to keep whoever it was waiting, she stumbled forward, using Vergil's large branch as a walking stick. She also grabbed Stryker's torture knife and laser pistol from where they had fallen on the ground; even among probable allies she'd prefer to be armed.

Lily jumped as she heard gunshots. "Over there!" she gasped.

"Emilena!" Flora dropped down onto all fours and sprinted as fast as she could, leading the team at a breakneck pace towards the sound of the gunfire.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 20, 2014, 08:40:26 PM**

The sound of gunfire drew Maritas attention, then she saw Flora run off " flora! Hold up! you have no idea where you are going!' She called before running after her' " If you fall into a trap or something " I'm reaklly going to give yiou a lecture Flora! She said as she broke into a run to try to catch up with the folf.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 21, 2014, 04:56:29 AM**

Axel flinched at the sudden cracks in the distance, his eyes widening. "What -" he started to say... but then Flora rushed past him, almost knocking him to the floor in her eagerness to get to the source of the gunfire.

High above them, Rio suddenly dropped into view, holding onto a branch one handed. "I saw a flash! I saw a flash!" he announced, pointing frantically. "Flora, wait for me!" Pulling himself back up, the leaves started to rustle and shake as he quickly followed her in the treetops.

"Flora!" Triste hissed as the folf dashed off, but she didn't stop. "*Shit...*" Rushing at this pace would almost certainly alert any potential enemies in the woods of their arrival. Flora was way too far ahead for Triste to catch up, but she could at least try to get there in time to deal with the situation if they did wander into a trap. Cloaking herself, she started to give chase to Flora.

Watching the others dash off, Axel pulled out his pistol and gulped, looking at Lily. "Why... why are we *running* towards the sound of guns? That's... ah..." A nervous noise escaped his throat as he could see they were being left behind. "Ah crap... be careful, alright?" he muttered, pulling out the pistol Triste had handed him and struggling to click the safety off.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2014, 11:26:11 AM**

Tony moved up to them now, shoving his pistol in his waistband. "It's him... one of my erstwhile companions. I'm afraid we don't have much time for chitchat though because he's right... others could be coming. Say... did you encounter any traps on the way in?" Vergil asked the ferret.

"No." He shook his head. "Nothing back the way I came. My car isn't too far off. Come on!" he said, waving them on.

"How are you still alive?" Vergil asked him, taking the sniper rifle as they passed by Stryker's corpse.

"I don't know." Tony confessed, heading through the trees, leaves kicking up under his feet. "I woke up in this priceless classic, saw Stryker driving by, and decided to follow. That's when I saw him basically kidnap Emilena and wondered what he was up to. Was shot at upon arriving at the castle, but uh..."

"Wait... you have no memory after your fall from the cliff?" Vergil asked, pausing, causing Tony to stop as well.

"No..." the ferret replied. "Just pain and... darkness... but I knew I was alive..."

Vergil furrowed his brow. How was this even possible? What if it wasn't really Tony? But then again... why question the ferret who'd just saved their asses? There wasn't time for this. "Let's just get to this car of yours and get back to the others."

Tony nodded, and continued on, and Vergil could indeed see a beautiful black and red vintage automobile just becoming visible through the treeline now. Memory loss... just like his own... were Tony's circumstances similar though? What exactly was going on here? Whatever it was, they could get their answers later... they needed to distance themselves from this place as soon as possible.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2014, 11:13:20 PM**

"Tony?" Emilena repeated, puzzled. The stuffed shirt from Lanthae whose father has tried to have her killed twice now? "I'm sorry, but how do I know you're not just here to rescue Vergil and drop me right back into a mafia dungeon?" She kept a tight grip on her weapons, but did not hold them in a threatening position.

"Emiiiiiii!" Flora came bursting into view, waving her arms wildly. Then she sprang a net trap which bound her tightly and left her in a hogtie at the top of a tree.

Lily and the others soon came panting into view. Lily quickly worked on freeing Flora while Emilena backed into Vergil, nonplussed. "You weren't kidding when you said you had friends in this forest..." she muttered, observing the sheer number of people that had just arrived.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 23, 2014, 11:41:07 PM**

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marita caught up to Flora right after she triggered the trap. " always look where you are going flora, and that way you wont fall into a trap like that. " She sighed , then stopped as she saw Tony. Marita's eyes widened, and her mouth fell open. for a few seconds she was speechless then finally managed to get some words out ' t-TONY? how -- how the heck did you survive that fall? You fell like 5000 feet off a cliff! Look i've heard people have survived falls from ridiculous heights, but thats usually just dumb luck. Ok I want answers.. when we get out of

here, i suppose.' She then turned away from Tony and looked at Emilena, and she recognized her. her eyes narrowed, and the emotion on her face evaporated. " so part of this was rescuing... HER? Great.. just great. a rather big detail you left out Flora' she said looked up at the entrapped folf ' But well i guess we can sorta all this out once we get the heck out of here'
.
Suddenly a voice came out of the forest around them." My my ! what wondrous news ! I have guests' a thin reedy voice cackled. ' Just give me a second.." a figure dropped out of trees in front of Tonys parked car. It was a decent-sized wolf, wearing an odd assortment of clothing. ' Rags mixed with leaves, with moss for 'boots, his eyes moved moved back and forth , a grin plastered on his face. "Well well. welcome to my forests! Shame Sryker and william used about half of it to torture or kill people, but hey I managed to grab some stuff from thier bodies " He cackled. " Forgive me, where are my manners? Kojjurro, at your service' He did a mock and flamboyant bow. "

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 24, 2014, 04:55:45 AM**

Her eyes passing disinterestedly over the newcomer who'd dropped from the trees, Triste pushed past Lily as she attempted to cut Flora down and stopped in front of Vergil. She started to speak, but then her breath caught in her throat as she saw who was standing beside the gecko. After an almost indiscernible pause, she mentally shook herself, regaining her composure. *I can find out how he's alive later...*

"Tony? What... how are you..." Axel whispered, his mouth dry, eyes wide as he stared at Tony.

"Are you okay? Are you hurt?" Triste demanded, turning her attention back to Vergil. She saw his bloody leg and frowned. "You've been shot..." *We need to treat this now.* Triste looked over her shoulder. "Lily! We need you here!"

There was a rustle of leaves, and suddenly Rio dropped through the branches, landing lightly on his feet in front of Emilena. "You're okay! Did you kick their asses?!" Rio hugging Emilena's waist. As he did so, he caught a glimpse of Tony, and the boy froze. "What the *fuck?!*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 27, 2014, 09:59:42 AM**

Vergil ground his teeth as Triste mentioned his wound. "Don't have her waste her energy and cause herself pain... I can heal myself just as easily once the drug they shot me up with wears off. Have her save her strength... and her pain centers. No sense putting her through needless pain." he said, wincing a little as exhaustion and fatigue once again started to overtake him, now that his adrenaline rush had worn off. He began swaying a bit, trying to hold himself upright. "Just... just get me into a car so I can sleep..."

Tony shook his head as he gazed at the others, indescribably pleased at seeing them again. "I can't answer that." he said to both Axel and Marita. "I woke up in that car..." He hooked a thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Duesenberg. "Isn't one of my father's, no idea how I got there... saw Stryker, so decided to follow him. Had to make the choice... I made it." he said, nodding back in the direction of Stryker's mangled corpse. He was keeping things short... in case the others didn't trust him, and also because they needed to move.

He raised his gun as Rio dropped from the trees, almost panicking, as he expected retaliation from the castle at any moment... but relaxed if only slightly upon seeing it was his "executioner." He smirked at the kid, then shrugged, before violently pistol-whipping him across his face. "THAT'S for throwing me off a cliff! It takes more than a little shit-head like yourself to kill me! You try that again I'll blow your brains out!" he waved the gun in Rio's direction before a throaty alarm began roaring from the direction of the castle, penetrating the trees and heralding further doom for them if they stuck around.

"Shit! We don't have time for this!" Vergil groaned. "We have to get out of here NOW! They must realize Stryker's vital signs have stopped so..."

"Right!" Tony nodded and jogged over to the Duesenberg, clambering in behind the wheel. He turned the key, pushed his foot on the starter switch then depressed his heel on the accelerator, letting the big engine rumble to life, causing Vergil to jump a little at the sound.

"I hope you don't mind but... we should ride with him... I don't know if he's genuine yet or not... but I can't freaking walk more than 20 feet right now." Vergil wheezed to Triste. "I need to just... rest... I can scan him when I'm back to full strength..." he muttered, knowing Tony couldn't hear them over the roar of the straight-eight. "I think he's genuine... he killed Stryker after all... so..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2014, 05:11:56 PM**

The second Tony pistol-whipped Rio, Emilena pointed her laser pistol at him and fired. It didn't work; Emilena had no idea how to cock a laser pistol. So she drew her knife instead approached. "Nobody treats a member of my crew like that and gets away with it," she growled, but then Flora tackled her in a full-body hug that sent her sprawling.

"Emi oh my god you're safe and we helped rescue you I was so worried!!!" She cried openly. Emilena pushed Flora angrily, but the Folf refused to let go. "I was so worried I don't know what I would have done without--"

"Flora! I've got things to deal with that aren't you and your insipid fourth-grade act!" Emilena smacked Flora in the arm with the blunt of her blade in order to free herself. "Get ahold of your hormones and let the adults talk."

Flora staggered back, nursing the new bruise on her forearm. Her eyes widened in shock and her lips tremored. Lily didn't look too pleased as she stepped forward to defend Tony. "Emilena, let's not stab anybody," she said hastily. "Tony just had a score to settle, and now it is, so let's all be on the same team here and just get in the car..."

Emilena glanced at the vintage Dusenberg and a wicked smile played across her face. "You're right..." she leered. "Let's go to the car."

Lily gratefully climbed into the backseat, and Emilena took her knife and scratched a long silver gash in its elegant chassis from trunk to hood making sure to hit the door as well "*That's* for holding Rio over the cliff side in the first place! Since apparently schoolyard hazing is the level you consider for settling grievances."

Lily pursed her lips. "Honestly, is everybody on this team twelve?"

Flora was the last to enter the car. Her eyes were glazed and unfocused, and she shivered with the dull pain completely unrelated to the growing bruise.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 27, 2014, 06:15:30 PM**

It wasn't the scratching that pissed Tony off... it was Emilena. He'd never liked her in the first place, and liked her even less now. He didn't own the car, so he couldn't give a shit what happened to it but this... he elbowed her violently in the face and shoved his pistol there a moment later. "All right you know what? I'll fucking kill you right now you damn bitch! YOU were the reason I held him over the cliff in the first place!" he snapped. "YOU were the one going through our shit and throwing it over the edge WITHOUT explaining yourself. YOU were the one coming after us! So yeah! I'll blow your fucking head off and do the world a favor!" He shouted, preparing to fire if she tried anything... the slightest twitch.

Vergil had limped into the backseat next to Lily by now, but he grimaced at the exchange, then gave her a soft smile. "How you been, Lily?" he asked.

"I came here to save your ass." he heard Tony saying. "But as usual, it wasn't an ass worth saving... so you can just do me a favor and fucking walk. Good luck with the mob." He said, throwing the car into gear and moving off down the road now.

"Hey wait!" Vergil called. "Aren't we...?"

"They clearly came in a vehicle. They can go back to it." Tony snapped. "I'm not taking any shit anymore. She can walk. Or get shot by the goon squad. I don't fucking care." he said, shrugging here.

"Right..." Vergil murmured, resting his head against the back of the rather comfortable seat and closing his eyes.

"We're getting the hell out of here first and foremost... then we'll talk about what comes next." the ferret snarled, up shifting to second and increasing speed as the speedometer climbed rapidly.

"You want to tell us WHERE your vehicle is?" Vergil asked Flora. "We'll drop you off wherever it is."

"No promises though... I don't know this area well... and no funny business you got it? I hate your boss, not you." Tony added.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2014, 07:18:15 PM**

"Hate to break it to you Tony," Emilena smiled and folded her arms. "We're on the same team now. Vergil and I just survived some shit that would have left you on the dungeon floor, and since his last team couldn't handle a 13-year old without a teammate stumbling off a cliff, it's not world-saving material right now."

She sat defiantly in the backseat behind Lily. "You can harbor a grudge, god knows you're not the only one. But if you're spending your second life saving the world, you're spending it with me and my gang."

Lily glanced at Vergil. "You want Emilena on the team? I mean...I know your old team kinda failed you...but Soren won't be happy."

She wrapped her arms around Flora. "But you aren't dropping Flora anywhere, Tony. I need to talk to her."

"I don't wanna talk..." Flora muttered hollowly.

"Yeah, could we get some heals please?" Emilena interrupted Lily. She and Vergil were getting blood all over the upholstery. "We've been stabbed, shot, and manhandled all night."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 27, 2014, 07:27:02 PM**

"I'm on the fence about that in all honesty." Vergil muttered, looking at her here. "Nothing personal, but just because we survived an ordeal doesn't mean I want you on the team. Hell I don't even know if I want a team anymore. As you so pointed out, Tony fell off a cliff, but you're little better. I can't trust you, and that's just something that doesn't come with escaping together from a castle." he stated bluntly. "The only way NOT to get anyone else killed is if I don't take anyone else along, it's that simple. You didn't exactly explain WHY you were looting our stuff. Or what you were doing there in the first place. For all I know... you're a Kalis plant."

He held up his hand. "No healing. Save your strength and pain. I don't want you to suffer over me. I'm not worth it, so I'm going to have to insist. Heal her... don't heal me." Vergil shook his head. "I'll manage... once I'm back up to full strength."

The car tore through the woods, Tony pushing it up to 75. "Yeah it's like you said. As for me well... I simply hate you. No way I'd work with you anyway. And fine... you wanna cut me loose?" Tony asked acidly, looking in the rear view mirror now. "Go right ahead... hell I'm used to it by now."

Vergil said nothing to this, feeling nothing further needed to be said. He kept his lips pursed, and his eyes forward.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2014, 07:42:07 PM**

Emilena scoffed. "Yeah, because a Gecko with no powers is going to get really far on his own."

"I have an idea," Lily suggested. "Vergil can read Emilena's mind and find out everything he wants to know. She can't hide her true loyalties from a mind reading."

"Yeah, but he doesn't have his powers right now," Emilena pointed out.

Lily grasped Vergil by the hand. "I can fix that." Closing her eyes, she found the chemical blockade restricting his psi abilities and broke it down into inactive elements. "There. Now there's no hiding the truth."

Emilena shrugged. "Read away. I got nothing to hide."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 27, 2014, 08:18:14 PM**

Triste stared at Emilena, then gave a slight shrug and looked across at Vergil. "Do it. If she's really not thinking of going against us, then it might not be a bad idea to keep her around. She's shown that she's at least capable of surviving... and that's something our team desperately needs right now." She tilted her head, her eyes passing dismissively over Axel. "Vergil and I are the only ones on the team at the moment who have the necessary skill set to deal with whatever the mission might throw at us."

"Hey! I'm not *that* helpless..." Axel spluttered.

"And once you've read her, you need to take a look at *him*," Triste continued, switching her attention to the driver's seat. "Because, right now, Tony's the one who's worrying me the most. Nobody should have survived what happened to you." Her eyes narrowed. "And yet, here you are. In perfect health. Right next to where Vergil was being held captive. That didn't just happen on its own -someone or something had a hand in that. But who? And why?"

"Guys, just... look, we shouldn't be pointing fingers. Not right now, anyway! We just... We need to focus on getting ourselves out-" Axel attempted.

Rio interrupted, his voice nasally from the hand he had clasped over his bloody, swollen nose. "Yeah! What the fuck is up with that, huh? *You fell off a fucking cliff!*" The boy glared daggers at the adult ferret who'd pistol whipped him. "If someone's a... a kasis plant, it's probably *you!*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 27, 2014, 08:20:23 PM**

"That's not necessary." Vergil murmured, almost recoiling from Lily, but allowing her to do her thing. He nodded, feeling a flood of abilities streaming back to him. He closed his eyes, pretending to rest, but scanning Emilena while doing so. A sudden revelation caused him to pause, and open his eyes. Her son? That's what this was about? But... Why not tell everyone?

Narrowing his eyes, he watched the trees whiz by, Tony not slowing. He saw a vehicle coming up through the trees, and started to finally slow. Downshifting, he pulled the Duesenberg to a halt, frowning. "All right, everybody out. This it... Since I'm clearly being whatever it is."

Vergil pursed his lips, and thought a moment. "I'll ride along." He stated.

"To where?" Tony asked with disdain. "I'm dumping this car and disappearing."

"There isn't going to be room." Vergil said simply, waiting for the others to exit.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 27, 2014, 11:39:49 PM**

The squeaky tones of a badly out-of-tune erhu played by a poor musician drifted through the greasy air like the incense smoke from the shrine in the corner.

Soren's stomach rumbled. The menu he was reading was in English but it was obvious the translator just shit out a copy as fast as possible. How else could "Explosively Fried Black Cod With Dried Pineapple Sweet and Sour Sauce" be turned into "Exploding Black Fish With Fucked Pinapple"?

"Who translated this menu? Some drunks?" the Human muttered.

Anne was reading the Cantonese menu. "Soren!" she hissed. "You don't want to go saying shit about this place!" She indicated with her horn to a group of serious looking Chinese men who were busy enjoying glasses of *baijiu* (a potent Chinese liquor made from sorghum) and playing majjhong.

Soren looked around the grimy eatery. Seeing as most of the customers and staff were rough-looking individuals, he wisely decided to shut up.

A Dhole came over to take their orders and replenish their mugs of tea.

Not waiting for Soren to order, Anne spoke up: "*Goi haw, bak jaam yui. Ei nea Yep Bun bat gok.*" ("I want white-cut fish with Japanese star anise.")

The waiter nodded and gestured for the two to follow him. They were then led into the back of the eatery, past the kitchen and pantries until they had arrived at a bland but clean banquet room. Brushed stone Chinese dragon and pheonix sculptures provided the only decor.

Soren took a seat at the table as did Anne. A few minutes later, six men walked (or in one case, slithered) into the room. One of them, a large Chinese man with gleaming metallic hands, took a seat. This was Ruozheng "Rory" Zhao, one of the *Bak Long*'s enforcers. His fellow Triad members seated themselves after he did.

"I assume you both are here for business?" Rory Zhao said. His voice was calm and cool. He had a noticable accent but his words were still understandable.

Soren opened his mouth but Anne roughly elbowed him. "Let me do the talking!" she whispered.

Anne nodded. "Yes. But I am not here for my drugs or anything. What I am looking for is information."

Rory templed his metallic hands. "I see. That doesn't come cheap but I'm a reasonable man.

I'm willing to negotiate."

He turned to three of his associates. "Jin, Geeming, Leishing, get the chefs to prepare some *dim sum* and *haing pen cha*."

The three mentioned associates left the room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 28, 2014, 04:29:18 PM**

In the pause that followed after Vergil finished speaking, Axel glanced at the others then started to reach for the door handle.

"No." As Triste spoke up, Axel paused, his hand falling from the handle. Triste gave a slight shake of her head. "You seem very eager to leave us all of a sudden, Mr Stracci. Almost as soon as we mentioned using Vergil to check you aren't... different." Her jaw tightened. "I don't like not knowing how you got here without a mark on you. After falling over the edge of a *cliff*. You could have been tampered with, or if not that, then cloning isn't especially hard to accomplish." She leaned forward, her hand settling in her lap. Her silenced gun glinted in the fading light.

"If you *have* become an informant for whoever's responsible for your... timely reappearance, then I can't risk you running back to them." She nodded her head in Vergil's direction. "And I'm not leaving Vergil alone with you. So until we find out if you're genuine, I'm not going anywhere."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2014, 05:09:51 PM**

"Yeah, seriously." Emilena folded her arms and followed Triste's lead at not leaving the car. She spared an appreciative glance at the gecko. It was nice to see other competent females who didn't screw around, especially ones who gave Tony a hard time. "We all saw Tony die, Triste is right to think something fishy's going on. But the part about Tony wanting to run off is just him being him. Did he ever tell you about his short-lived Purifier career?"

"Did you read Tony's mind?" Lily asked Vergil quickly, cutting off Emilena before she'd continue her story. "What did you find?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 29, 2014, 12:11:58 AM**

Marita sat in the back , next to flora. "flora, if you need someone to talk to, i'd be willing to talk.' she said softly as they were driven back to the SUV that Flora had stolen and driven them here. ' If i may say a few things Tony ' she spoke up, not yet leaving the car.. ' the truth is, regardless of our personal animosities towards each other, we find ourselves on the same side at the moment. Emilena isnt exactly my favorite person on earth, but unfortunately we're kinda stuck with her for now. our teams.. have merged for lack of a better term. We don't have to like it, and clearly you dont. but.. for now we are going to have to work together. Besides, you and I have some unfinished business between us. before your incident with Rio, you asked me out on a date. And.. I'm holding you to that now. just pick a place for us to go, your choice.' she finished.
_ Kojurro jumped down from the top of the Dusenburg. He had jumped on top of it as the others had climbed in and had ridden on top along the way.' you lot arent getting rid of me that easily ' he cackled. ' yes, yes, not that easily ' he laughed as he made his way towards the SUV and climbed in, a trail of leaves in his wake.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 01, 2015, 03:08:10 PM**

"I didn't die..." Tony quickly corrected Emilena. "I was still alive after I hit... THAT I know... you weren't there, moving on." he said, brushing aside her uninformed comment. He stayed silent as Marita spoke before Vergil chimed in. A date? That's right... he'd asked her out that day hadn't he? Well then...

"Yes. I didn't find anything. He's not a clone, he's not a someone else, and he's not hiding anything. As far as his health, he's in near perfect physical condition, from what I can tell. Someone with say... my abilities could've easily healed him... but we don't know many like that, do we? The second option is he was subjected to advance gene and nanotechnology therapy, which is quite expensive. And that's not to say either of you is off the hook." He looked pointedly at Emilena here. "A skilled psionic can easily mask their intentions. Since we know Tony isn't one, and I'm pretty sure you're not, you seem to both be in the clear, seem being the key word... as for anything out of the ordinary with our ferret friend, I detected nothing, but I'd need something specific to look for." he stated.

"If I were say looking for something the size of a cell... I'd need considerably more time. Anyway, he's clean, so far as I can tell. However, it seems SOME of us..." he glanced in Emilena and Lily's direction. "Had ulterior motives they did not immediately make clear to this group that endangered the mission... to say nothing of the needless and stupid conflict that occurred on the North Yungas Road." Something in Tony's recovery made Vergil wonder about things though... like why couldn't the gecko remember his own past? What was blocking it? Why were his memories... incomplete? Why did he feel like two people sometimes instead of one?

"So... rather than waste times in pointless debates while the castle's forces surge on towards us... I suggest we get out of here and unite. It's worth our time instead of what happened in Bolivia." he stated bluntly.

"Wish I could double back to the castle..." Tony murmured, staring at the chrome dashboard. "I'd love to have that Cord and its semi-automatic transmission, as opposed to having to double clutch."

"But you CAN double clutch, yes?" Vergil asked now.

"Yeah, sure I can. I'd just prefer not to." Tony answered.

"So long as you CAN... but I mean... my knowledge of this is like nil but... why is it a problem?"

"It's not." Tony responded now, shaking his head. "Forget it! I just remembered you DON'T have to downshift if you come to a stop. So forget it. It's fine." he said quickly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 01, 2015, 05:49:37 PM**

Plates of steaming hot catfish dumplings, *ha fun* (rice noodles wrapped around shrimp and covered in sweet soy sauce as well as a large plate of Buddha's Delight were carried into the room along with plates for everyone. A standard metal teapot and porcelain mugs were next.

Geeming, a large Taiwanese Habu spoke. "We hope you enjoy the meal." He took his position back in the seat.

To show the food wasn't drugged, Rory poured himself a some tea and grabbed some steamed fish balls. He ate the fish ball and drank the tea, loudly swallowing as he did so. "Now then, what information do you want?"

Soren tentatively used his fork (since both he and Anne where non-Chinese, forks had been provided instead of chopsticks) to spear a fish and shrimp ball.

Anne sipped her tea. "We're looking for someone." She reached in her pocket for a picture of Vergil.

Rory swallowed his mouthful of Buddha's Delight. He examined the picture and passed it over to a short but muscular Jinhong Horse. Interestingly, his emerald colored corundum subdermal armor was slightly visible underneath his skin (though that may have had to do with the cosmetic LEDs implanted with the armor. Coupled with the twin "horn antennae" (looking more like Deer antlers than unicorn horns), the equine looked remarkably like the *Qilin* of Chinese myth.

The stallion examined the picture and then spoke. "What are you exactly looking for?"

Anne refilled her teacup. "We want to know his phone number and address."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2015, 10:53:50 PM**

Emilena shrugged. "Getting out of here and uniting with the rest of the team sounds fine to me. Flora says they're at an apartment or something." She glanced at Lily for confirmation.

To her surprise Lily had turned away from the group, trying to conceal a flushed red face. She was doing everything in her power to mask her anger at how flippant Vergil had just behaved toward the topic of Ejlert. Ulterior motives? That's how he chooses to describe an attempt to save her son's life? But she knew Vergil would just insult her passive-aggressively were she to try talking to him, like he always does.

Sometimes she wondered why she's placing all her trust in him...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 01, 2015, 11:11:38 PM**

They are at the apartment I share with Soren and the girls Marita said. " speaking of which i need to call them to let them know we've found Vergil and are bringing him back. we'll hash out everything over supper. When was the last time you guys ate?' she added turning to Tony, Emilena and Vergil " Rose makes a mean pot pie,big and filling. we should have enough of them to feed everyone. there's about 20 of us... on second thought, we might have to run to the store to grab some more.. anyway, dinner is on me tonight.." Marita offered.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 01, 2015, 11:17:35 PM**

"Ahem ANYWAY..." Tony said, idling the car as he pushed the choke in. "We're overcrowded in here as is. That's why I kind of drove up to the SUV you guys arrived in. Those staying can ride with me... otherwise like I said... we're just wasting time and allowing more time for the search patrols to find us. As for when I last ate... I have no idea. I only woke up in this car a few hours ago."

Vergil stayed put, as he'd already stated his intention to ride along. He could sense Lily's... uncertainty bordering on anger over his statement, but knew she'd recklessly endangered his entire team by hiring Emilena in the first place, which did absolutely nothing but contribute to their woes on the North Yungas Road. It was tactically unsound, and given his viewing of looking at the bigger picture, needless. He couldn't fault her of course for wanting to save her son... but not telling them put them all at risk... and nearly cost one of them his life. Trading one life for another was not acceptable, at least not to him. Besides, she should've come to him first and foremost regarding this matter, seeing as how he'd had the only connection to

Kalis in this entire group.

He didn't look at her anymore though, instead choosing to rest his head against his hand, the elbow on that arm resting against the door. He stared blankly ahead, knowing this was quite possibly something Kalis could use to full effect against them later on, which made her more of a liability than an asset but... he'd worry about that when and if it came up. Kalis could just as easily kill Eljert as use him against the group... either way, he'd do everything in his power to prevent that... and ensure a mother wouldn't have to see her son suffer grave consequences... he had to protect them all if he could from this point on... no more deaths... everyone had to come home satisfied...

"This morning." was all Vergil said in response to Marita's question. He wasn't feeling particularly hungry though... more nauseous than anything else.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 01, 2015, 11:43:42 PM**

' fair enough' Marita said getting out of the car ' I'm driving the SUV. Whos coming with me? First call, gets the passenger seat.' She smirked as she headed over towards the SUV, not noticing that Kojurro had climbed onto the top of the vehicle and was holding on to it.

Marita opened the drivers side door, climbed into the seat and pulled out her phone and called the apartment, and in a few seconds Marie picked up the phone and answered ' Hey Marie, its Marita. We managed to find Vergil. hes safe, we're on our way back. picked up a few guests as well, could you and Rose make some pot pies? We'll need about 20 or so.. Run to the store if you need to, just put it on my credits card. And call Soren if hes out, to let him know we've found him."Marita said Will do ' Marie replied ' I'll do that right after you hang up. Soren's out, where i dont know, but i'll call him. he has his cell phone." See you in a bit" Marita finished the call and put her cell away before starting the engine and waiting for those coming with her to climb in.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2015, 12:16:16 AM**

Flora didn't answer Marita's question, just continued staring blankly into space. Lily, however, answered firmly, "I'll drive with you Marita," and left the car without another look back.

Emilena rolled her eyes. "What's her problem?" She scooted over so she could take up two seats and stretch out. "Seriously, let's get this show on the road. Never seen a car escape this slow. You guys clearly have never done a drug run."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 02, 2015, 04:11:07 AM**

Following Lily into the second car, Axel pulled the door shut and put a hand on her knee. "Hey, look... don't worry about it, alright? We'll find Ejlert. It doesn't matter what he says." His ears prickling uncomfortably, he glanced out the window at the other vehicle. *Something's wrong...* He was elated at seeing his friend alive again, but...

He shook his head. "Get us out of here Marita."

In the first car, unconcerned at Lily storming out, Triste slowly pulled her pistol back, not quite confident that Tony was completely safe, but satisfied that he probably wouldn't try anything at the moment. Still... she'd be keeping an eye on him.

"Anyone got a smoke?" Rio complained. "I could kill for a joint right now."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 02, 2015, 12:27:05 PM**

Tony immediately threw the car into gear, accelerating rapidly down the road. "And YOU'VE clearly never raced a Duesenberg Model J before." Tony replied. "This thing can STILL run up with some of the best modern vehicles. Anyway no smoke... I woke up with nothing on me." he explained. "Though believe me... if I had one I'd gladly surrender them." He smiled to himself here. *Anything to kill you faster and shorten your lifespan* he thought.

Vergil leaned over the seat to look at what Tony was doing. "So... how do you double clutch exactly?"

"I'll show you..." Tony stated, increasing speed now to the point he'd need to up shift. "So like... it basically means you need to shift into neutral than shift into your gear. So press the clutch once... shift into neutral..." He demonstrated as he began to move into second gear. "Press the clutch a second time, shift into second... and there you have it! We should be good for the rest of the trip since these babies can go up to 95 mph in second gear alone... unheard of even with some more recent cars." Vergil nodded, noting they were cruising along at about 60 for now, as this road wasn't exactly straight, but did bend and curve every so often.

"You know funny you asked... you bring up an interesting point... you can tell a lot about a car like this if you wake up in one suddenly after a month of sleeping. Like for example... when I started it up, I didn't need to use the choke... meaning someone had driven the car recently before I woke up in it." Tony explained.

"How do you mean?" Vergil inquired.

"Well you only need to choke your car if it's a cold start... if the engine's warm, no choking is necessary. So... I didn't just get set in the car... someone drove it with me inside to the alleyway, and left me there."

"I see... any way to check this vehicle?" Vergil asked. "Like trace it?"

"Um... probably not, given that they're rare, but that means they're easy enough to conceal. You pay with cash, forget it. Plus you don't need to register these cars anymore... they're relics. My dad never had to register any of his. So... doubtful, unless it was like a museum piece or something." Tony shrugged here.

"Wonder if I should keep this..." Vergil murmured.

"Eh?" Tony asked.

"I don't have a vehicle at present. I take public transportation."

"It's probably more trouble than it's worth." Tony chuckled. "You have to have a real appreciation for it, and well the gas too isn't cheap. AND you need to know how to drive a manual."

"I'll think about it..." Vergil stated, glancing out the window again as the trees suddenly ended and green fields stretched out on either side of the car.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 02, 2015, 05:28:27 PM**

Marita pulled the SUV out from where Flora had parked it and drove off , aiming to get back to the apartment in a decent time. the SUV rapidly gained speed as Marita shifted it into higher gear. Marita tiore through the cornfield ans was soon back on the road. ' How are you guys doing? she asked glancing at the mirror in the middle of the front row of seats which showed Axel and Lily. " well, i didnt expect to run into Emilena or Tony again, but i figure we'll get explanations and stories once we get back to the apartment. Rose and Marie are cooking dinner, hope you guys like pot pies. they're big, flaky and full of big chunks of meat.' Marita grinned.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2015, 09:24:18 PM**

Lily took a few deep breaths. "I'm doing...fine Marita." She looked away. Her eyes met Axel's and she flushed red, knowing he'd see right through any attempts he made to mask her anger.

She needed to get things under control. She wasn't sure why she even lashed out like that, it was just...a buildup of her frustration at a seemingly endless pattern of failed attempts to accomplish anything. Emilena's unpleasant behavior riling teammates up didn't help.

She grabbed her husband's hand and silently debated whether they should both just run away and leave Vergil and his team to their fates. After all, who would miss her? Nobody on the team had ever expressed anything beyond ambivalence towards her. Vergil had even denied her the opportunity to heal him, pointing out that he was more than capable of psionic healing himself. To her, that remark was yet another slap in the face.

She was silent for the majority of the car ride. Near its completion, it was only the sour acceptance that she would be leaving Ejlert to his fate that kept her from storming from the car into the night and never looking back.

"We get it, you have a hard-on for vintage cars..." Emilena yawned. "If I ever start caring I'll go watch *Antiques Roadshow*. Though I'd definitely watch Vergil try to drive stick shift, *that* would be legitimately entertaining."

She glanced out the window as they neared the apartment. "So, who on the team hasn't managed to get themselves killed yet? We had a betting pool among the gang, I've got two hundred down that Soren didn't survive Bolivia."

She shifted in her seat and winced painfully. She needed to get Lily on healing her up as soon as possible...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 02, 2015, 10:07:42 PM**

marita looked back at lily, and a frown spread on her face ' You ok lily?' you've been awfully quiet. is there something wrong? I'm not a psionic like you, i cant tell what people are thinking..you have to tell me ' she added, as she pulled down a street which was close to the apartment. She hadnt gotten back as fast as Flora had gotten them to the forest, and Marita supposed she'd have to spend some credits on the folf to pay up for losing their bet. marita turned into the parking area in front of the apartment.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 03, 2015, 10:09:35 AM**

The stallion tapped his chopsticks against his chin. "So all you know is his appearance and first name? By the way, that cell phone number you gave me is a prepaid one. It won't lead you to him."

Anne nodded. "That's all we know."

The Equine templed his hands. "Well, with what we have, I may be able to get some information. However, it won't be cheap and I can't garuntee success. If you'll pay the upfront fee of 75,000 credits, I can try. If I succeed, I expect an additional 115,000 creds. If I fail, half of upfront fee will be refunded."

Soren's eyes widened at the cost. What the Triad member was asking was almost literally half a year's profit from him and his roommates."

"50,000 up front. And 95,000 if you succeed," Anne said.

The equine shook his head. "70,000 up front and 110,000 or no deal!"

"64,000 up front. And 100,000!"

The "*qilin*" smiled. "69,000 up front and 105,000!"

"68,500 creds up front and 103,750 creds for success. That's my final offer!" Anne exclaimed.

"Very well, I accept. Now the cred vouchers."

Soren turned to Anne. "Anne! We can't afford that! That's like half a year's income for all of us!"

Anne's ears splayed in embarrassment. "Oops. Sorry. I just realized we can't afford the cost."

Rory then spoke up as waiters cleared the dishes away. "I see. Then this meeting is over. Please pay for the meal at the register. The Taiwanese Habu passed the duo their checks.

Anne and Soren exited the back room and passed by the patrons. In front of them at the cash register was a Giant Panda with an order of white-cut catfish with scallion and ginger.

Outside, Marion was eating some rice and soy sauce catfish. A partially empty teapot of pu-erh tea was next to her.

She scowled as she saw a Human and an Augment Shetland Pony pass by her. She discreetly snapped a photo of them with a camera concealed in her clothing.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 04, 2015, 07:18:00 PM**

Axel saw Lily flush red as she looked at him, and he squeezed her hand back, trying to offer what comfort he could until they were in more of a position to discuss things. *He had no right to say that...* he thought grimly, remembering what Vergil had said before they'd changed cars. *It's not like he's been the perfect teammate...* The rat's stomach tightened. Somehow, they were all going to *have* to talk things over - there was no way they could continue like this, with all these barriers being thrown up between them. Axel swallowed. *Damn it... Since when did this become so hard?*

He felt the car slowing, and as he snapped out of his thoughts and looked out the window, he saw they were pulling up outside of Marita and Soren's apartment. "Thanks Marita."

"Mr. Almaya is still alive," Triste said distractedly. "At least, he was the last time I saw him."

"Ha!" Rio crowed triumphantly. "I told you! Pay up, Emi!" Glancing over at her, the boy saw that she really looked like she was in pain - what the hell had happened up at that castle? "Actually... Forget about it. I can just beat you at something else," he said, trying to make her feel better, as ineffectual as it might be.

Trieste leaned forward towards Vergil as they neared the apartments. "The people who kidnapped you... Do you think they could come for you again? The last thing we need on top of everything else is the mob tailing us."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 05, 2015, 03:01:41 PM**

Tony got onto the highway and drove the roughly 35 minutes it took to get back to Corona proper, though fortunately none of his long term memory had been affected by whatever it was that was holding him in its grip, and he knew the way to Marita's.

"How should I know?" Vergil responded to Triste's question. "I wasn't expecting to get grabbed by them in the first place, nor did it make any sense for them to grab me. I can't answer that." He shrugged, really not knowing what the mob's interest in him was.

Tony took the shortest freeway to the apartment, wondering what he should do with the car. Probably dumping it was the best option... just in case. Who knew where it had come from, or if it was "hot" or not.

He pulled up in front of the apartment, looking up at it pensively. Vergil raised a brow, then exited the vehicle. "I honestly have no vested interest in a group dinner, to be quite frank with you." he told Triste. "But I since I have no alternate plans... unless you can come up with something, I suppose it's unavoidable. To be honest though, I still feel like vomiting."

"I think I'm gonna go dump this car then get a cigarette and go for a walk or something... head over to my father's and tell him I'm alive." Tony stated, staying in the car for now as he waited for the others to exit.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 05, 2015, 09:08:06 PM**

"I'm sure Marita's cooking will help you in that regard," Emilena remarked over her shoulder to Vergil; she was first out of the car and already bee-lining for the door.

The inhabitants of the apartment were no doubt surprised when Emilena was the first person to march through their door. Wasting no time with pleasantries, she opened their cupboards and began eating whatever she felt like, trying to keep herself from passing out.

Lily, still in the car with Marita, took a deep breath. "I'll talk to you about it later..." she told Marita. "Let's just get inside and recover from tonight."

She walked into the house at roughly the same time Emilena had finished her meal. "You," Emilena jabbed her finger at Lily as soon as she saw her. "Medical. Now."

Lily sighed. "Let's get some privacy." She led Emilena into the back of the apartment, Marita's computer room. "This is going to make you feel sleepy," she warned. "Your body is running almost entirely on adrenaline, and once I level that out..."

"Hold it," Emilena said hastily, glancing around the guest room. "I'm not sleeping with the others." After rummaging through Marita's boxes and locating a superheating conductor plate, she climbed out onto the balcony, hoisted herself onto the next floor down and burnt a small hole in the sliding glass window.

"What the hell are you doing?" Lily hissed, precariously following her patient into the uninhabited apartment. The lack of living materials beyond standard furniture indicated this apartment wasn't currently rented out. Emilena had already stumbled into the shower, quickly turning the water to maximum heat and rinsing her entire body of as much of the grime, blood and filth as possible. She sighed as the scorching water rolled down her fur and numbed her nerves.

"Hellooo?" Lily tapped her foot impatiently. "Emilena, you can do this *after* I've healed you and gone back to the others! I'm really not interested in your crap right now!"

Emilena poked her head out. "Jesus, what the hell's eating you?"

"I hired you to locate and rescue Ejlert, not drop off the face of the Earth and mess around with Vergil!" Lily ripped the curtain aside and wrenched the shower off. "Get on the bed;" she ordered, jabbing her finger, "you get bare minimum heals because I don't feel like looking as if I went through a wood chipper. Not for you."

"Hey, I was following the best lead I had!" exclaimed Emilena angrily, crossing to the bedroom and flopping onto the bed. "You said Vergil was trying to relocate Kalis, right? That means my best chance at reaching Kalis was Vergil! And still is, by the way, why else would I be wasting my time with these--"

"--*No!*" Lily shouted, face turning red, "There's tailing someone for info, and *then* there's raiding their cars and getting someone killed, drugging them on a cruise ship for shits and giggles, and then acting like a prick after they rescue you!"

"Hey, nobody rescued me back there!" Emilena sat up angrily. "Not Tony, not Vergil! *I* saved my own hide from that mafia dungeon!"

"Yeah?" Lily glowered. "What about the time before that?"

Emilena grew silent. Lily pushed the vulpine onto her back and leaned in close.

"Back in Lanthae, you told me that you had a life debt to me," she muttered darkly, face millimeters away from Emilena's. "Well, I don't think you're pulling your weight. As of right now, you better stop all the attitude, stop horsing around because you like pissing people off, and start focusing on the thing I hired you for." Her hand shot out around Emilena's neck and she sucked the remaining energy out of her body. Emilena gasped but she literally couldn't even lift a muscle.

"If Ejlert dies because of your actions," Lily threatened at barely a whisper, "I'll kill you myself." With a flash, Lily stemmed Emilena's bleeding and reset the sprain in her ankle, but offered no recovery beyond that. Leaving the fox gasping for breath on the bed, Lily crossed to the apartment door, unlocked it, and returned upstairs.

As she approached Marita's door, she regarded her new open wounds, hidden under her layers of clothing. Why didn't they feel like they were healing...?

Flora tiptoed into the kitchen. "Wh-where's Emi?" she asked nervously.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 05, 2015, 10:33:00 PM**

marita entered the apartment after Lilly and Emilena. " Hi girls ' she said tired. ' we're back.
are the pot pies ready?'
_ almost done' Rose said from the kitchen. " they'll be ready in 5 minutes."
- Marie looked at flora.' Is Emi the fox that just went through here? i think shes in the guest room ' she said giving Flora a smile. " dinner should be ready in a few minutes, and if you need the shower, theres one in each of our rooms. So if you need to clean up, go ahead. I'm Marie" she smiled.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 07, 2015, 05:24:59 PM**

Triste shook her head. "No, I don't have any other ideas. I don't exactly want to play happy families either but..." She shrugged, looking up to study Marita's apartment block. "At least this'll give us time to get our heads together. Come up with a plan for our next move." She glanced at Tony, her eyes settling on his. "Make sure you aren't followed," she warned.

In the apartment, Rio was busy rifling through Marita's cupboards. "Don't you have any pop-tarts?!" He looked across incredulously at Rose. "The fuck is this?!"

Axel popped his head in the doorway. "Rio! Stop that, they said we'd be eating soon!"

"Goddamn it..." Rio sighed, straightening. "No pop-tarts... *Your* shitty cigarettes..." He waved an accusatory finger in Axel's direction.

"My..." The rat patted his trousers, ears drooping, then started when he saw the corner of his cigarette packet poking out of Rio's pocket. "Jesus, give those back! If Lily knows I've started again..." Darting forward, he snatched them out of the boy's pocket then held them up, far out of the reach of Rio's grasping fingers. "And apologise!"

Rio stopped trying the snatch the cigarettes back and frowned. "What the fuck for?"

"For acting like a jackass to these guys when they're about to cook you a meal! For them letting you in! They didn't have to."

"So fucking what? I..." Rio stopped, his face frozen mid-scowl. As he looked around at the others, his expression slowly slackened. He sighed, then looked in Rose's direction, his eyes fixed on the floor. "I'm... sorry." The word felt alien coming out of his mouth.

Nodding, Axel turned and grinned at Flora. "You know, he tries to act tough, but the night he stayed with me and Lily, I saw him sucking his thumb in his sleep."

Rio blanched. "I knew you were there, I... I was pretending..." he trailed off, unsure what he could say next.

The front door clicked open as Triste let herself in. Her head was tilted disapprovingly. "This building has extremely bad defences," she stated.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 07, 2015, 07:05:54 PM**

if you want pop tarts we can get you some " Rose replied to Rio. ' I'll go in the morning and get you some. What flavor do you want?'

_
 this place isnt built for defense. Marita replied to Treiste. "if you want top end security and defense systems, well we dont have nearly the creds for anything approaching top of the line. if we made more creds, then we could worry about that. In any event, dinner is the more pressing matter."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2015, 07:40:02 PM**

Lily walked in just as the timer dinged, indicating the pot pies were ready. Normally she'd ask if there were any vegetarian options, but at the moment she couldn't bring herself to care.

"Let's get this dinner going..." she said wearily. "Some of us have had particularly long days...and I have some things I need to talk about with the group."

Flora shook her head in response to Marie's statements. "I just want to see Emi! Where did she go?" She made to retreat into the back, but Lily grabbed her firmly by the shoulder.

"Flora just sit down!" Lily commanded, easing the folf into a chair. She almost messed with Flora's chemical levels to make her easier to convince, but caught herself in the nick of time. *Jesus, I'm starting to get a little trigger-happy with my powers, aren't I? I need to get ahold of myself...*

"Vergil," she said, as one of the girls placed a pie in front of her. "Where were you and Triste on the cruise ship when we were getting drugged, or in Voltaic when we were given absolutely no communication or direction, not even what room we were staying in? You basically left us all out to dry...and I want to know why."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 07, 2015, 08:18:04 PM**

Marie and Rose put pies in front of every seat. before sitting down in the available chairs. "dig in everyone!"Marie said cheerfully as she sat down at her spot. " we've have Turkey, white meat and vegetable. if you would like a particular one of those just let us know."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 08, 2015, 02:53:23 AM**

The door to the apartment clicked open as Soren and Anne entered.

The Human bit his lip as he saw Vergil sitting at the dinner table. Keeping his anger under control, he sat down. He helped himself to a small fish pot pie. His abnormally tight grip on the fork hinted at his anger.

Anne helped herself to a vegetarian pot pie. Her ears were pinned back -- a clear sign of her anger.

"Vergil," Soren said, trying to keep his voice neutral. "You said we would be working to find the waypoints as a team. I want to know why you dumped us at Voltaic Station. We were *very* lucky that no one died there."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2015, 04:57:33 PM**

Vergil took one look at the dish, felt his stomach shoot into his throat, and gagged it back down. He stared at it as he listened to Lily, then Soren repeat exactly what Lily had said needlessly. "Ahem..." he cleared his throat. "I was with Triste the night you were drugged. I saw no point to a group dinner after Tony died, for a very specific reason... and that reason is you mentioned 'team' Soren... that's precisely what I thought we were... until of course one of us decided to keep something of vital importance to this group from the party, and not only that, but execute extremely poor judgment and hire someone who's a complete danger to herself and everyone around her regardless of whatever your personal feelings of Emilena Echo might be." Vergil stated bluntly, fixing his orange eyes on Lily.

"You SHOULD have come to me with this first. I'm the one who organized the group. I'm the one responsible for making sure we operate effectively as a team. But when you start doing things like hiring drug-addicted thugs who have a track record of being jackasses just for the sake of being a jackass, that's when I start to question your sanity and whether or not you really have the well-being of the group in mind. Since you seemed more keen to enlist the help of someone who's done nothing positive for this group from the start of this quest, I figured you no longer wanted to be a team player, so I gave you exactly what you wanted: a night out with your hired hand in which she proceeded to drug all of you and land you in the infirmary while I spent the night with someone I know I can trust." He glanced at Triste here.

"Anyway, if you wanted to know your room numbers, they were on your tickets... you merely had to glance at those to find that out... you needn't my help for such a thing. I felt I could no longer trust you after Emilena all but looted our vehicles and set off a chain reaction that got Tony killed. As said, you could've come to me first... I would've handled and supported you regarding your son but... after that, I didn't know what you were up to, bringing such an unpredictable card as Emilena into the fray. After that, well... it was incidental. The fact everyone else happened to be in the infirmary made them collateral damage. I had a job to do, so I was going to do that job. The fact the entire party got drugged is on you, not me, so if you want to start pointing fingers Soren, I suggest you do so away from me." Vergil said pointedly looking at the human now.

"Had you come to me first, I would've helped, even at the expense of our primary objective. So... I'm not going to say I'm blameless though... I have been rather spiteful... but ever since Tony died I've been feeling different... feeling out of sorts... not feeling like my usual virtuous self. I feel darker... more like... more like Rex probably had me feeling when I worked under him. I nearly lost it on that mountainside, and I don't know why. I'm having this strange suspicion that my memories... can't be trusted." he said, looking around the room now.

"I don't know WHO I am, what I'm supposed to be, or why I feel like this. I've tried to fight it, but the more shit that gets thrown our way... the less in control I actually feel. Tony, like the rest of this group up until that point, was relatively innocent, and seeing him get killed sparked something inside my mind. I don't know what it is... or where it came from... but it conflicts with who I was before. I felt more like... if Lily wasn't going to be a team player, why should I rely on her at all? While I had no idea you would end up drugged that night, it did seem to justify my own point of view later on: that hiring whackjob morons we can't trust is stupid and dangerous... and compromises the integrity of our mission. So... we can hit reset... and try and get along... though of course that means addressing Ms. Echo... if she IS joining us... she'll have to follow orders... or she's not on the team, and no, it's NOT your decision." Vergil said sternly, looking right at Lily. "It's mine. I was ordered by the Federation to beat Kalis to the Cataract, and that's what I'm going to do. I chose to bring you along because I trusted you and liked you... you betrayed that trust so now... where are we?" he asked, looking around the room again.

"A whole lot of bitter resentment swirling about. You guys hate me, I'm not exactly thrilled with Lily's choices, and ever since Tony got killed, I'm feeling like two different geckos. Like I don't even know who the fuck I am anymore." he said, practically spitting the words out. "Never felt this way before until now... anyway, that's about all I have to say on the matter. I will of course try and rein this other side of me in but... as said, it's been getting harder and harder... I seemed to be at my best ironically when I was escaping the castle... but having the drug suppressed has brought it all out again." He sat back here, clasping his hands in his lap, as if he were settling down to a nice fireside chat with everyone, though there was of course no fire present.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 08, 2015, 05:17:23 PM**

I'm all for hitting the reset button" marita said, looking at Vergil " recriminations arent going to help any of us. we can point fingers all we like, and it wont get us anywhere. its not just Emilena joining us however, its Flora and Rio as well.I'm willing to let bygones be bygones Vergil, but communication is key. a simple note saying ' Trieste and i are in Room X, we'll be around if you need to talk" could have saved us a lot of trouble.We spent a lot of time looking for you and Treiste on the ship, knowing what room you were in would have made it easy on us.we were not intending to get drugged, by the way, that was.. well Emilenas doing. but like i said I'm letting bygones be bygones, with everyone. going forward we need to trust each other. thats ALL of us' She said looking at the others sitting at the table. " the goal is getting to that final Waypoint before Kalis does, otherwise we can kiss our butts goodbye. thats means we communicate better and work together better.Tony managed to survive his fall- how exactly i have no idea- but as long as hes alive we try and get back to the group we were before the North Yungas Road."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2015, 05:26:00 PM**

Vergil glanced over at her and raised a brow. "I think you're a little confused. Triste and I were together on the ship while you were being drugged by the wonderful new addition to your team." he said sarcastically. "I had no obligation to join you at dinner. You spent hours looking for us on the STATION... not the SHIP..." he pointed out. "We'd docked after all. I was finding the waypoint on the station, and I already explained why I was doing so. You all had ended up in the infirmary, something I didn't find out about until later. My plan was get off the ship, check in, and do my job. As I ALREADY stated, what happened to all of you was incidental thanks to what Emilena did. By that point I didn't really care because I felt I couldn't trust Lily anymore. I was going to find the waypoint, pick you all up when it was done, and get the hell off the station. I only ran into you after we had gotten back to something I hadn't been expecting." he explained, rubbing his forehead here and closing his eyes as he tried to focus on who he was initially... and not lose his grip on that...

"Also..." he said, remembering what she'd said at the end there. "We have two more waypoints to find... well... we know the location of one... or more correctly Triste and I do... the final one will be revealed at the next stop."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 08, 2015, 06:17:20 PM**

So, just because you no longer trusted Lily, you let everyone else hang" Marita replied. " its one thing to no longer trust her, quite another to lump everyone else in with her. We are a single group, Vergil, there's no " My team" or ' your team', there's simply "our team'. which is bigger now then it was when we started. Tonys returned and now Emilena, Flora and Rio have joined us for lack of a better term. We find the last two waypoints, find the Cataract , and use it to destroy Kalis. thus well saving the world in storybook fashion.Now, where is the location of the next Waypoint? You mentioned that you and Triste know where it is, but the rest of us do not. if you wuld kindly fill us in, we can all be on the same page.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 08, 2015, 06:23:08 PM**

Axel poked at his food, left almost uneaten as he listened to the gecko explaining his situation. "Vergil, we don't... we don't hate you," he sighed, putting down his fork with a light clatter. "We just wish you guys hadn't just left like that. After the ambush on the North Yungas road, we had no idea what could have happened to you when we woke up on the station and you weren't there. For all we knew, *they* could've gotten to you. Just... we've got to be more open with each other."

Across the table, Triste finished her plate. *No sense in not keeping your strength up.* She leaned back slightly and leveled her eyes at Axel. "If only you and Mrs. North had had the same sentiments when you hired someone we didn't know about to go behind our backs," she said flatly. "Didn't you think it could go badly?"

Axel's jaw clenched, his mechanical hand tightening into a fist. "It *wasn't like that*," he said back, the rat's voice slowly getting louder. "We were..." He stopped. Raising a hand to rub the bridge of his nose, Axel sighed again. "No. We can't argue. If we do that, we get divided, and he wins." He folded his arm back on the table in front of him, his lanky body hunched over the surface. "I'm with Marita. We start new, no looking back. We *have* to. Okay?"

Triste shrugged. "I just care about the mission. As long as we succeed, I'll be happy."

"Fair enough," Axel nodded. "Alright... so where's the next waypoint?"

Triste glanced sideways at Vergil, then looked around at the others. "It's in Egypt."

Sitting next to Flora, Rio looked confused. "What the hell's a waypoint?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2015, 06:28:18 PM**

"You haven't trusted me since the cruise ship because of something you didn't know until thirty minutes ago in the forest?" Lily crossed her arms. "I don't think so. You may be psionic, but you're not a time traveler. Not to mention I'm not the only one you've treated like dirt. Why exactly did Soren and the girls get the cold shoulder despite doing nothing but serve as reliable and trustworthy teammates?"

She pushed her pot pie away. "You want me off the team, just say the word. I was only invited as an afterthought; the real invitation was to Axel because he's friends with Tony. You wouldn't have helped me rescue Ejlert and frankly you *still* aren't going to, because I've never met an individual less capable of empathy than you. Your apologies are hollow and laced with stealth insults, and I can't find myself trusting a single word you say. The fact that you've decided to keep the next waypoint secret and expect us all to just stumble along behind you like blind mice on a leash is just further evidence that you're not going to change."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2015, 06:38:20 PM**

"I never said what I did was right." Vergil responded to Marita. "I only said I didn't care." He looked at Axel, and rather admired the rat's restraint. Best things said all night in all honest. She knew nothing about him, clearly from her stupid comments, and didn't even address the fact that she had endangered the entire team. Fortunately, while Triste had said Egypt, she hadn't exactly said WHERE the waypoint was located. It could be Egypt or the Sudan for all Vergil knew, since they hadn't looked up how far south it was. It was somewhere in the Sahara, that's all he knew.

"Fine..." Vergil said after Lily had had her little rant. "You can't trust me we can't work together. I'm not going to sit here and defend myself in front of you. Axel I'm sorry but your wife clearly DOES hate me... so while you may not... I'm not working with people who hate me... NOR recklessly endanger the mission." He got up from the table, not having touched his dinner in the slightest. "Goodbye all, I'll be requesting a new team." he said bluntly. He then turned and headed for the door, opening it and walking out. "And for your information, I suspected it had been you from the start... who ELSE would hire Emilena? Tony? Soren? Marita? They all hate her... that left you... the only one who doesn't." He paused before leaving.

His stomach was roiling now, and he struggled to hold it in. He clutched it, and began heading down the stairs. She was a moron... he would've helped her from the start... she was too stupid to see it though... but he wasn't surprised. She'd made poor choices since the start of this entire mission. Heading outside into the gathering darkness, he waited to hail a passing cab, looking out at the street.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2015, 07:02:11 PM**

"I like Emi!" Flora protested.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 08, 2015, 07:09:58 PM**

((done with permission of LB&T))

Vergil hardened though, even as the taxi approached. No.... wait... this wasn't right...

He turned around, marched back up the stairs, and reentered the apartment. "Wait a minute! You're right! I'm in charge, you're off the team! The rest of you are still on... if you're down... let's go find that damn waypoint!" He said with determination. "Also... Emi's hired... much as I hate to admit it... she's useful WHEN acting in concert with a team. So yeah! Lily's off, the rest of you are on, cause I got NOTHING against you! You're all awesome, and there's no reason we SHOULDN'T be working together! I acted like a total dickhead, yes, I apologize. But right now... this is my team.. anyone who doesn't want to join... can stay but.... I'd really like all of you on... you included." Vergil said, eyes landing on Axel. "So please... I'd really appreciate it if you could all join me and we NOT let Kalis win... like he said." Again he looked at Axel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 08, 2015, 07:22:47 PM**

Marita's face hardened ' alright Vergil I'm in. But if I can find Eljert for Lily, i'm going to do that as well. Defeating Kalis could be the key to finding him."

_
I'm in " Marie said " we need to do whatever it takes to stop that lunatic Kalis.
-
You can count on me' Rose said looking at the others. " We're"
the door opened Rose stopped as she saw who had just come in. the newcomer strode up to them trailed leaves in his wake "Don't forget about ME old friends" Kojjurro cackled. 'I'm raring for some action!" he grinned sghowing some weathered and stained teeth. " he was apparently completely unaware that the leaves covering his privates had all fallen off.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 09, 2015, 04:54:41 PM**

Shocked by the demand Vergil had just made, Axel didn't react to Kojuuro's entrance. He stared across at the gecko, wide eyed. "Wait. Wait, no, she's *with* us, she can't..."

"Vergil said he didn't want her on the team," Triste interrupted. "And I can't blame him. I wouldn't want someone like that on our team."

"She-"

"Someone who could have put all of us at risk. More importantly, put the mission at risk."

"If you just-"

"*No.*" Triste stared at Axel, then slowly looked over at Lily, her eyes hard, her voice cold. "*She's. Gone.* And that's it."

Axel's jaw set in the few seconds of silence that followed. "We can't just leave her behind." Glaring at Triste, he reached over and put his hand over Lily's. "We can't."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 09, 2015, 09:22:16 PM**

Lily pulled her hand away from Axel. Her face was etched and she couldn't make eye contact with anyone.

She didn't trust herself to speak, so she stood up and silently left the table. Every possible emotion was swirling through her mind, and she needed to leave before she did something she regretted.

She knew Axel would try to follow her, so she sent him a message. *Don't. Stay in their good graces. This is for the better. I'll be all right. I'm serious,* she added, sensing that he was fully ready to ignore her. *We'll talk soon. But if you get yourself kicked off the team, neither of us are good for anything. Please.*

The warm night greeted her, the temperature giving her something to focus on other than herself. Everyone she considered a friend was behind her, the city offered her no more options. She didn't know what to do. Despite all the endless choices she had right now, she chose to boil them down to two; left or right?

She chose left.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 09, 2015, 09:41:21 PM**

Soren templed his hands. He did have to admit, Triste had a point. But then again, Lily was the one who had helped him back in Voltaic Station. "We do not have anyone with medical training. Lily's healing powers are the closest we have. If she does not join us and someone is seriously injured, there is a good chance they could die. So tell me the truth, would you sacrifice someone -- maybe even yourself -- for stability?"

Anne put her now cold pot pie in the refrigerator. "Look, Lily was a great help to us during the Purifier Crisis. Right now, I actually want her to come with us because she has proven to be nothing but helpful during that incident and I'm sure she'll help us again."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 10, 2015, 01:24:38 PM**

"It's not stability." Vergil said, turning to Soren. "It's so we don't get compromised in our objective. Big difference. And I can actually heal if need be... plus we have modern conveniences as well we can take along. She's not necessary. And that's final." Vergil stated firmly. "If you like, feel free to go grab her and form your own team, but you don't have the coordinates of the next waypoint, and you'd have to go back and get the one we got... provided it's still even usable given what we saw down there. No I'm putting my foot down here. She risked compromising us, and it won't happen again." He'd rather liked Triste's heavy-handed way of dealing with it. Normally he was averse to such methods but... in this instance, why not? Sometimes you just needed to be reminded of things.

He backed away from the chair now, having stood next to so everyone could see him. "Speaking of healing... I'm going to go and heal myself. My injuries are extensive so... it's not going to be quick. Few hours probably but it's a lot faster than doing it the old way. I'm too sick to eat right now so I think I'll pass." he said, to Marita. "Thanks anyway."

It was at that moment that Tony walked in the door, looking around. "I dumped the car... much as I wanted to, there was no way I was going to keep it. And don't worry... I'll get you whatever you want." he said, turning his gaze to Vergil. "IF of course you really still want one."

"I'll think about it." Vergil said, looking around. He chose a chair in the corner, sat cross-legged in it, and closed his eyes, appearing to focus inwardly.

Tony looked around awkwardly. "So... what did I miss?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 10, 2015, 02:44:28 PM**

Quite a bit actually" marita said as she moved the pot pies away from where Lily and Vergil had been sitting " If you're hungry Tony we have pot pies. " eat as much as you want. "

Kojurro went up to the stove and swiped a pot pie. ' not wasting time on unnecessary things like manners. he began eating with his fingers.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 10, 2015, 06:55:42 PM**

Axel sat in silence, stone-faced. He hated what was happening, but if this was a way to increase the chances of finding her son, and bringing him back safely then he'd have to put up with it. *At least she'll be out of any immediate danger... and she's right. If both of us get thrown off the team, the odds of getting to Ejlert...*

After a moment, he let out a sigh and looked up at Tony. "Lily's staying back here, she's... she isn't coming." He swallowed, then continued. "We're heading to Egypt next... right?" Axel glanced across the table at Triste.

She nodded. "And we'll need to leave quickly. Too much time's been wasted already."

"Fine." Axel drummed his fingers, his mind apparently distracted. He paused, blinking at the ferret. "Tony, I'm... I don't know how it's possible but I'm... I'm glad you're here."

"Who the fuck is *this* guy?" Rio asked, his face twisted in disgust as he watched the naked Kojuuro rummaging through the cupboards.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 10, 2015, 11:40:34 PM**

"...so, is dinner done? Can someone tell me where Emi is?" asked Flora nervously.

She carefully slid out of her seat and tiptoed into the back room. She didn't feel comfortable around these new people, they all seemed to yell a lot.

Her heart skipped a beat when she didn't see Emilena in the back rooms. "Calm down, don't panic..." she hyperventilated. "calmdowndontpanic*calmdowndontpanic*--!" Suddenly she spotted a bloody handprint smearing the outside balcony. Quickly she scampered over the railing, dropping onto the next floor and sighing in relief as she spotted her leader passed out on the bed in the lower apartment.

"...Emi?" she asked quietly, tiptoeing over to the figure. Her pulse raced as she realized the vixen had washed herself clean and fallen asleep above the covers completely nude. Her clotted wounds were black pockmarks contrasting with her sweat-slicked pale skin.

For what felt like an eternity Flora stared silently, fidgeting and catching her breath. Despite the cool night breeze she felt overheated. Finally, ever so timidly, she crept closer and gazed intently upon Emilena's curves. At the clammy dimples of her inner elbows, the pallid stretched skin of her inner thighs, the murky bruises misshaping her breasts. Flora lay a hand delicately on Emilena's forearm.

"How asleep are you?" Flora whispered as loud as she dared. "*Emi!*" Pained but regular breathing was the only reply she got. Emi wasn't going to wake up...

She felt her erection strain against her waistband but couldn't bear to take her focus off of her current grasp. Emi's fur clung tightly to the muscled flesh underneath Flora's hand, leaving cold sweat soaking into her fingertips. Slowly, gradually, she traced Emilena's arm up to her breast and, with one final trepidatious gulp, cupped it.

She let out a low moan as her fingers pressed into the swollen skin. What little fat there was caved immediately under pressure, but its sharp crown dug unyieldingly into her palm. Flora grabbed the other and fondled both, unable to stop herself.

Then he ran her fingers down Emi's flanks, brushing over clots and scar tissue, before ending on her inner thighs. Her heart skipped as she pressed her thumbs into the gluteal folds. Then she traveled further, leaving her fingers wrapped around Emilena's battered and calloused feet.

As Flora grew bolder, her breathing got faster. Looking away from her prize for only a second, she urgently tore her clothes off and crawled onto the bed. Wrapping Emilena in a hug, she nestled her muzzle into Emilena's neck and sighed as she rubbed her girlhood between Emilena's legs. Years of pent-up tension built itself to a breaking point as everything Flora had ever wished for came true, one spasm at a time.

Suddenly, already, her abdomen tensed up and her eyes flew open. Squealing uncontrollably, she dug her claws into the mattress and arched her back as an unrelenting tidal wave climaxed through her, splashing messily along her prey's stomach and chest.

Panting, Flora collapsed onto her object of lust. Emilena grunted but still didn't wake up. Flora gasped for breath, shuddering from the aftereffects of the wave. As her breathing regulated and her senses returned, she slowly realized something.

She was still hard.

Wrapping her arms around her love, Flora pressed her flytrap against Emi's lower folds, took a deep breath, and forced her way in.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 11, 2015, 11:02:42 AM**

Vergil remained in his meditative state on the chair, apparently unresponsive, though how true that was was anyone's guess. Tony looked over at Axel here, and gave a small smile and nod. "Yeah... I'm... I'm glad to be back in all honesty. I don't know how either but... maybe we'll find out, maybe we won't." he said, shrugging.

He was soon interrupted by Rio, who was asking just who Kojuuro was. "Oh... that's... Kojuuro." the ferret said. "Without a doubt the strangest member of our group... if you can even call him a member..." Tony muttered that last bit.

He took a seat at the table, sighing. "It is good to be back... I... missed everyone." he said, looking around the table and picking up his fork before digging in. "I'm glad to see you're all alive, truth be told. I was worried that after that... well I wasn't sure what to expect. So... we actually encounter this bastard Kalis yet?" he asked, looking around again.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 11, 2015, 04:28:56 PM**

No, Not yet " rose sighed as she took kojurros pie away from him ' ' we'll run into him soon enough I'm sure' She said as she took a seat at the table. " Kojuuro, please sit down" Kojurro grinned and did as requested. 'good to be with you lot again.. i.. guess i went to seed after our last parting.' he said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 12, 2015, 08:40:50 PM**

Nairda lay in a dazed stupor all night. When the morning sun shone over the horizon and the nocturnal mold crops closed up their spores for the day, he continued to stare straight ahead at the stucco ceiling, his mind still several hours behind from the marathon of impossibly kinky sexcapades he'd just experienced.

What will I do now? he wondered, *now that I've experienced the best day in my entire life?*

As the daylight shone through the open window, Emilena found herself rousing from a dreamless sleep. But it was going to take a lot more than consciousness to get her out of bed, she decided. She was perfectly content to lie here for the rest of her aching, miserably sore life.

Last night was a dizzy blur, and not the good kind that came from tripping on multiple drugs in the privacy of one's safe house. Slowly her brain mentally pieced together the events involving Stryker, Vergil, and something with Lily at the end...

I'll worry about that all later, she thought wearily. Got to make sure she was still in one working piece first.

She tried to raise her arm and hissed. Her joint was **not** happy to be disturbed. Slowly she shifted onto her side so she could face away from the window, and realized that she felt...crusty.

What the hell? She scraped a dried film off of her stomach, confused. *That* was certainly not part of her memories from last night...

She became aware of the sound of running water. Someone was in the apartment shower. Combat instincts flaring up, she rolled off the bed and creeped to the bathroom door. Grabbing the clothes iron from the empty closet, she listened for a few minutes, hoping to gather some information about the intruder's gender or weight.

Then the shower turned off, so Emilena threw caution to the wind and kicked the door open. Swinging the iron reflexively, she barely prevented herself from braining the startled fuchsia blur that flailed backwards screaming. "Flora?"

"*Please don't kill me! Oh god I'm sorry!* I didn't mean to!" Flora tried to dive out of the shower, got tangled in the curtain and wound up sprawled on the floor cowering in a ball. "Please don't!"

"You didn't mean to what?" Emilena took a few mental steps backward and tied some clues together. "Flora, did you..?"

"I didn't-- I-I shouldn't have, and I'm so sorry!" Flora sobbed hysterically, backing up into the corner and viewing the clothes iron with wide open eyes.

Emilena set the iron aside. "Flora, look, could you please calm down? I have a really bad migraine already and you're not helping!" When the folf couldn't stop panicking and babbling apologetic gibberish, Emilena pinned her and wrapped her hands around Flora's snout. "*Flora,*" she said sternly. "I'm not. Going. To hurt you. Do you understand?"

Flora nodded her head, still shaking uncontrollably.

"Good. Now, I'm going to let go, you're going to sit down with me, and we're going to talk about this. Okay?" When the folf didn't object, Emilena grabbed her by the arm and directed her back to the bed.

Tears were still running down Flora's face. "I know it was bad," she whimpered, "I knew you would kill me, I don't why I did it, I just..."

"Quiet." Emilena sighed as blissful silence reasserted itself. "I don't want to hear what you have to say. I probably already know. Just let me talk."

She took a few moments to collect her thoughts. "Now, first of all, I don't really care that you raped me. So stop apologizing. I've been through much worse in the past 24 hours, and I would have loved if some of them had let me fall unconscious before doing their thing. Okay? But that said, this isn't happening again."

"I know," Flora nodded quickly. Her face was bright red and she was short on breath. "It won't, I promise. I'll never do it to anyone again!"

"Don't promise that," Emilena rolled her eyes. "You're a teenager, you're going to keep doing dumb shit. But maybe this is a good opportunity to for us to talk a little. I haven't been paying you the attention you deserve as a member of the gang." Emilena sighed again. "It's all been taken up by Nairda and his worthless problems."

Flora sniffed and finally met her eye. She was only now realizing that she wasn't about to die. "Okay, if you want to..."

(OOC: Converstion got long so I split it into two parts. If you had things to do last night, you can put them in your next post, just nobody seemed to protest a timeskip in the Skype chat.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 12, 2015, 09:32:16 PM**

Marita stretched and yawned from her bed. The full weight of lsast nights events were finaly starting to sink in. ' they had gained 4 3 new members to the group ' Emilena, Flora and Rio) Regained two old members (Tony and Kojuuro) and lost one member (Lily). It had been close to midnight by the time she had gotten to bed, and marita did not get the quality of sleep ashe normally got. Thus it was around 8 am when she got out of bed and chaneged into a fresh set of attire, before heading to the kitchen to make hersellf some toast for breakfast. Wasnt much of a breakfast, all tings considered, but marita needed something, ANYTHING to get the cobwebs out. Marie came in the kitchen about 10 minutes latter in her nightgown' You're up early.." Marie said stifling a yawn. ' Yeah couldnt sleep very well. we've got a lot of work to do, to become a more cohesive group..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 13, 2015, 01:50:00 PM**

Rio blinked and groaned, woken by the sound of murmured voices, turning over as the dim light of day washed over him, the sunlight forcing its way through slightly grimy windows. Rolling over again, he blearily sat up and rubbed his face, having to take a moment to remember where he was. After Flora had left the table to find Emilena, he'd stayed behind, watching the others talk. It was boring as hell, sure - most of it was talking about the things they'd done before, stuff he didn't understand... but somehow, he hadn't minded. It had even been kind of nice, the last time he'd been able to just sit down at a proper dinner like that was... well, never. Still, he had his limits, and after a few hours, he'd slipped from the table and flopped on the sofa, exhausted.

Where he'd just woken up. Sitting up, he stretched... and realised with dawning horror that his thumb was planted firmly in his mouth. "*Son of a bitch*..." he muttered, pulling his thumb out hastily with an audible pop. Standing, Rio yawned and padded into the kitchen from where the voices were coming from. Stepping through, Rio paused as he saw Marita, Marie and Axel sat at the kitchen table. He crossed his arms over his wrinkled T-shirt. "Hey."

Axel looked over, his conversation with the other two interrupted mid-sentence. "Hey," he replied. His voice was slightly husky. It looked like the rat hadn't slept at all, dark circles casting shadows under his eyes. Axel indicated towards the fridge. "There's juice if you want it." The corner of his mouth twitched. "No cigarettes though."

Triste stared up at the slowly lightening sky, and with a despondent heave of breath, gave up. In the early hours of the morning, unable to sleep, she'd gone up to the roof of the apartment building, and set about trying to contact someone at HQ. Anyone. But of course, there'd been nothing.

Shit. Scowling, Triste retreated back down into the gloomy apartment building, her expression remaining just as dark as she made her way silently down the corridors towards Soren's door. *We really are on our own...* she thought, letting herself in.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 13, 2015, 03:40:42 PM**

Morning Rio" Marita said, as he came in ' we' have milk and juice in the fridge. what do you want for breakfast? We have eggs, if you like them.."

_
 rose entered the kitchen and took a seat ' morning everyone ' she said sitting down at the table.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 13, 2015, 04:21:13 PM**

Vergil had spent the night rejuvenating himself. The meditation also acted like rest, so it had quite the powerful effect of healing his injuries and resting his mind, and allowing him to recharge. Vergil had to admit... it was better than any sleep he'd had recently, that was for sure!

Opening his eyes, the gecko was finally cognizant of people being at the breakfast table, right as Rio walked in. As there hadn't been enough room for him to spend the night, Tony had gone off somewhere overnight (Vergil assumed home), but the ferret reentered shortly after Vergil opened his eyes.

"Hey guys..." the ferret said, looking around before taking a seat at the table, though he turned his chair around so he could rest on the back of it. "I didn't grab breakfast on the way over..." he sighed, his face looking a little heavy for some reason... but he put a smile on shortly after.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 13, 2015, 07:19:40 PM**

Soren said nothing as he sipped his morning glass of hot tea. Anne was munching on some oat cereal.

The Human looked at the gathered group. The scent of Marita's scrambled eggs made his stomach growl. "So what's the plan?"

Anne's ear twitched slightly as she sipped her cup of water. "Don't ask me. I know jackshit about this expedition."

"Then why are you coming?"

Anne smiled and tapped her metallic horn. "Someone with electronic warfare capabilities will prove to be quite helpful!"

Soren gave the mare a quizzical look. "Since when did your implant let you do that?"

"Since yesterday night. I just decided to do a little reprogramming on the software. It's got a range of about maybe five meters, tops."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 13, 2015, 08:43:41 PM**

"Now, despite your overly flirty attitude I know you don't normally talk much about yourself," Emilena started, "so how about instead I tell you what I've noticed over time, and you can tell me if I'm wrong. I'm not a psychologist, but I was a criminal investigator." Emilena consciously reminded herself to keep from settling into police-interrogator mode. "For an exhibitionist who's decided to make sex a huge part of their identity, you're oddly something of a loner. During all your time in my gang, I've never seen you actually get someone in the sack."

Flora looked at the ground. "That's because I'm so weird-looking..."

"No, it's because you act stereotypically feminine right up until you whip your cock out at the worst possible time." Emilena wasn't interested in sugar-coating things. "You're intentionally sabotaging yourself, and I know you're not dumb enough to be doing it on accident. I think it's because you secretly have a deep-seated fear of actually committing the deed." Flora didn't say anything. "That's also why you picked me to channel your romantic desires towards, because then you could act on them indefinitely without fear of reciprocation. Does any of this sound right?"

Flora's lip quivered. "I...don't know..."

"Well, think about it and let me know. I've got nowhere to go." Emilena folded her arms. She was starting to feel sleepy again, but she needed to wrap this up so Flora could forever bother somebody else with her hormonal advances.

Flora sighed. "I...guess that sounds a bit right..."

"Uh huh. Now look," Emilena forced her to make eye contact. "We all have weird things we do to try and feel unique, but acting like a walking dichotomy is just going to leave you unfulfilled. Go find someone and actually get laid. Get over it."

Flora's eyes went wide. "Really?"

"Yeah, have sex with lots of people, as many as you want. Admit what you're packing from the getgo and find people who'd actually want that. Just give it a shot, okay?"

Flora nodded. "Okay Emi! I'll do that!"

"Great." Emilena yawned. "You should start with the trio of dogs upstairs. They're simple-minded, they're polyamorous and they won't charge money."

"Okay!" Flora bounded out of the room, leaving Emilena to gratefully lay her head back on the pillow and enjoy the silence.

Emile stirred, and sat up with a yawn. He noticed Nairda was awake and smiled lopsidedly. "Morning, son. How you feeling?"

"Absolutely fine," Nairda still felt dazed. "No, that was amazing..."

"See?" smiled Lena sleepily. "I told you, mother knows best."

"How about you come with your old dad and lay the moisture tarps on the mold crops?" Emile slipped his work pants on. "It'll be like when you were young."

Nairda hesitated. "That would be fun, but...after that, I need to go find Emilena. We need to patch things up."

"At least stay for breakfast!" Lena stretched before picking her bathrobe off the ground. "Your father had an amazing haul last night, and the autostove makes great slow-roasted seal breasts."

"Well, okay," Nairda submitted, climbing out of bed. "We can do all those things. But after that I have to leave. I left my true love somewhere in South Africa, she could need my help."

"We'll miss you Nairda," Lena hugged her boy. "It's so hard to see you all grown up. But I'm so glad you've grown up with all your limbs still attached."

"I'm proud of you son," Emilen patted him on the back and handed him a baggy coverall. "Here, you'll want to wear this before we visit. Unprotected exposure to the mold crops can cause dermal mycosis."

"And when you do find this Emilena girl again," chuckled Lena as her two men left the house, "make sure to put what we taught you to good use!"

Flora burst through the apartment door and pointed directly at Marita. "I want *you*!" she declared. "To get fucked by *me*." The finger shifted to pointing downward. "With my penis."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 13, 2015, 09:00:25 PM**

Coming through the door just as Flora entered the room, Triste was treated to a loud statement of Flora's intentions. It didn't help her mood. "Nobody's fucking anyone," she muttered, slipping into the kitchen and leaning against the kitchen table. "We need to figure out our next move."

Axel stared at where Flora was pointing. "You have a penis?" he asked slowly, his expression dumb-founded.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 13, 2015, 09:24:44 PM**

Marita gaped at Floras almost absurd frankness and it took her almost a minute. " Well.. Flora.. thats not something you come out and tell people in public.. especially when said people are trying to eat breakfast.." she added looking at her plate
 - Yes" Rose nodded. " thats a bit too much info. besides there are kids present.' she motioned at Rio. " even if he really doesnt act like a kid ...
_
i would say good morning to you Flora, but after that.. outburst.. i don't know where to start' Marie said " i mean.. its good you've taken an interest in Marita.. but usually you go out on dates first before proceeding to the bedchambers. i .. think you have the order mixed up..
 marita looked at her plate a for couple minutes in thought then go up, and walked over to Flora, and took her by the arm "Come along with me to my room.. and we can.. straighten some things out.. I do owe you a favor. since you beat my time getting from here to the forest by 8 minutes ' she added. " So pretty much anything is fair game... but we do need to have a chat first..," she said to Flora, but her face was not showing any or displeasure. She stopped as Trieste interjected " But first things first.. we have to plan for when we leave.. which will be very soon..' she pulled away from the folf and returned to the table..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 13, 2015, 11:08:23 PM**

Soren spat out his drink at Flora's blunt exclamation. "What the fuck!? Shit, I'm blunt but at least I don't go flaunting my junk around. Seriously. What. The. Fuck." He shook his head and then facepalmed. He then got up to get a dishcloth to clean up his spilled tea.

Anne started laughing at Flora's bluntness. She pushed her empty bowl of cereal aside, not caring she knocked over some spam USB sticks that she had planned to disassemble. "That's the most unsexy pickup line I've heard since 'I want to be the charger so I can plug into you'."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 14, 2015, 07:29:54 PM**

Flora flipped them all the bird. "Y'all just jelly."

Then Emilena trudged into the kitchen and pegged her with the undergarmets from her outfit. "Clothes. Civilized people wear clothes when in the presence of others," she murmured grumpily.

Emilena had quickly found it impossible to fall asleep without taking a shower, and after the shower she was awake enough to feel how impossibly hungry she was. For some reason Flora had been wearing almost two complete outfits, and Emilena had helped herself to the larger of the articles.

She collapsed in a chair, grabbed the cereal box and began eating handfuls straight out of it. She spared a glance at Vergil, who appeared far healthier than she remembered. "Well damn, somebody's looking peachy. Lily gave you a better heal than she gave me..."

Then she noticed Kojurro and could only emote dull surprise. "Never mind what I said about civilized, Flora. Apparently they're letting *anyone* in here..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 14, 2015, 09:56:48 PM**

marie put some eggs on a plate and gave them to Emilena ' hope you like them scrambled ' She said.
-
Yes clothes would be proper Flora' Rose said ' You can take some of mine. I have plenty'
_
 Well well, Officer Emilena. Long time no see' Kojuuro smirked in reply. ' still working for old whatisname. eh?' he laughed "it had been several months since Kojuuro had seen Emilena, but at least he remembered her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 16, 2015, 06:05:14 PM**

Tony looked over at Anne, and nodded. "yeah... that'll be useful for sure. I doubt many would know you're capable of doing that... and it'll be good to have you along." he said softly, smiling at her. He'd been worried about her the whole time, but then a portion of his life had been stolen after he'd blacked out, and he'd lost it. Still... it was good to be among friends again.

Vergil began eating. "Well... it's either Egypt or the Sudan... I haven't had time to check the coordinates yet what with me getting abducted and all." he stated flatly. "So when I do, we'll head there. It's the second to last one so... after this, one more to go and we find the warship. Somehow I get the distinct sense that Kalis already knows about that one in China so... makes me wonder if he'd only need this one, or if he's got none of the others either. Still, I suppose he doesn't have the full picture, since we aren't dead right now." he half joked.

Tony nodded solemnly. "The home stretch then." he exhaled. "Egypt or the Sudan... can't say I'm a fan of the desert but... we gotta do what we gotta do. I'll fund our flights of course... anything else we need if we need to restock."

"That'd be a good idea." Vergil nodded. "We need to covertly get weapons into the country..."

"Yeah well that won't be a problem... pretty sure my dad's got contacts over there." Tony replied.

"All right... I think I heard Anne mention something about electronic warfare... that'll come in handy. We've got the hacker with Marita, the muscle with Soren, Emilena, and arguably Axel, and yadda yadda yadda. Also Emilena's former law enforcement... she can navigate that kind of stuff. Anyway, I figure we'll take stock of what we need... book our transport, and get over there. The sooner the better cause I'm all for wrapping this one up and taking Kalis down!" Vergil stated adamantly. "He's messed with us long enough!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 16, 2015, 06:47:33 PM**

Triste nodded. "Agreed. Kalis needs to be taken down. And fast."

"Right, let's show Kalis that he screwed with the wrong people," Axel said, a slight smile playing at the corner of his mouth for the first time since last night. *And I'll find Ejlert, Lily. I promise.*

Rio frowned. "I still don't know who Kalis is."

Axel glanced at him. "He's a psycho who wants to control the world using a massive warship, and we're gonna find out where it is, get there first and, if I have any say in it, fly the warship straight up the bastard's ass."

"That sounds about right," Triste said, nodding slightly.

"Oh, okay." Rio snatched a fistful of cereal from Emilena, then suddenly brightened. "Wait, a *warship*?! That blows stuff up and shit? And we're gonna be taking it? That's fucking awesome!" His eyes glazed over. "I could do whatever the hell I wanted then..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 16, 2015, 07:41:22 PM**

Emilena nodded. "I've smuggled guns before. Way more dangerous than drugs, but not when the mafia's on your side."

Flora brushed Marita's lips with her finger. "I'll bust my nuts in your mouth later, lover. I won the bet, after all." She looked at Rose. "You used to be a whore, right? I'll take an outfit, but don't give me one of your whore costumes. Girl's got to have dignity."

"Are we taking any sort of public transport to Egypt? Cause if so, you'll need to do a better job of covering your tracks," said Emilena. "There's a reason both Veranus and I were separately able to track you to the Yungas airport, and it wouldnt have happened if you were on a private mafia jet."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 16, 2015, 09:57:04 PM**

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dignity? you just said you were going to stick your enhanced gizmo in my girlfriends mouth! in public! theres nothing dignified about that! " Rose replied. 'you'll get what i'm willing to give you Flora.. no more or less...and i'm not a whore..i got rid of those attires after i moved in with Marita and Marie..' Rose replied.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 17, 2015, 02:33:36 PM**

Soren shot a dirty glare at Flora but said nothing. He wasn't interested in dealing with a Folf who'd seemingly fuck anyone, anytime, anyplace. "Anyways, what about weapons?" Soren asked. He pointed to his shotgun leaning against the back wall of his bedroom/workshop. "I can't bring that on the plane! And customs will be on my ass if I try bringing that into the country!"

"Thanks!" Anne clapped Tony on the back. In reply to Soren, she spoke: "Well, I've got horseshoes, a horn and brass knuckles." She blew some air through her nostrils. "Though how'd they'd fare against Kalis's forces is questionable."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **January 25, 2015, 01:41:44 PM**

"Thanks... I'm glad to have you back." Tony replied to her with a smile as Anne clapped him upon his backside.

"Right... but I would caution against using that ship ourselves. I've been... thinking on it... myself. A race capable of building such a device would be truly evil... I don't think anything good can come of it and... I sense... something else with it as well that feels off. Almost like... there's A REASON that civilization doesn't exist anymore... I mean what's puzzling me is they build a giant warship capable of devastating cities but then... vanish? No... something's wrong about that..." Vergil trailed off here, looking into the distance.

"Anyway... it's something I'll be pondering over the next while... and hopefully we don't run into a nasty surprise along the way regarding it." he murmured. "So let's make our preparations."

"I'll arrange our transportation, and as far as tracking us goes... somehow I feel Kalis has always been one step ahead of us in that department regardless of how careful we've been." Tony replied. "In terms of weapons though, my father can easily smuggle those into Egypt or wherever we're going." he commented.

"Make the arrangements... I'm going back to my place to regroup and take stock... I'll be in touch..." Vergil said, getting off the chair now and nodding at the group.

The city of Aswan was not scorching in January, as it typically wouldn't rise above 85 degrees this month, and the city was actually a pleasant 75 today and dry. The desert stretched out on either side of the city, and the blue ribbon of the Nile cut the city in two, slicing through it majestically before flowing north to the Mediterranean, hundreds of miles away. The first cataract of the Nile was just south of the city, and further south were numerous others. Lake Nasser was above the city as well, having completely submerged the second cataract after the completion of several dams in the region; it made navigation of the cataracts much easier.

Vergil stepped out of the taxi into the afternoon sun, and donned a pair of black sunglasses as he looked around the streets. Tony exited from a cab that pulled up behind that one, and the ferret two was already wearing a pair of sporty looking shades. Their "gear" was in luggage in the trunks of said cabs, having been waiting for them after they'd deplaned from their private jet from Cairo to Aswan.

"According to the coordinates... the next waypoint is located up the Nile further south... past Abu Simbel and over the Sudanese border." Vergil commented, checking his phone.

"Right... so we need a boat... I'll go take care of that." Tony said, looking off in the direction of the waterfront.

"Preferably something fast." Vergil responded.

"Right... anyone want to tag along?" the ferret asked, looking around at the group as he began unloading some of the duffel bags and paid their driver.

"I'm gonna get a drink at the bar before we leave." Vergil said, pointing to a nearby local place that looked like a good place to hang out and gather information.

"I'll see you there!" Tony called.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 25, 2015, 11:19:56 PM**

I'll come along " Marita said as she grabbed her belongings from the truck, and began following Tony. ' Should be near the river, right?' she asked.
-
marie and rose grabbed their supplied and headed safter vErgil, a drink sounded nice after the length cab ride ' so what kind of drinks do they serve in this part of Egypt, Vergil?' Rose asked as she carried her knapsack on her back.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2015, 12:22:51 AM**

Flora shook her head. "I--uh, think I'll stay with the group," she smiled, feeling jumpy.

Emilena laid a hand on her shoulder reassuringly. "It's okay," she consoled. "This isn't Titus Desert. Nothing *that* bad is going to happen."

"But aren't we like...raiding a secret fortress or something?" Flora shuddered. Ever since Titus she could never feel comfortable in the desert.

"Yeah, but there's no way its going to be as bad as Titus." Emilena dropped her suitcase in front of Flora. "Though if you insist, carry my stuff. I'm going with the boat group."

(OOC: Do the characters have weaponry?)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 27, 2015, 04:13:54 AM**

Axel stretched as he climbed out of the taxi, working out the knots that had started to work their way up his back. He took a gulp of fresh air - after a long journey cooped up in the back of a taxi, with a window that refused to wind down and a driver for whom personal hygiene was a myth, the rat had been on the point of suffocation.

Feeling a little better, Axel waved a hand quickly to Tony as he walked down towards the waterfront. "Yeah, I'll come." Heaving the strap of his bag over one shoulder, he fired a disgruntled look at the driver, who reciprocated with a bored roll of the eyes, and set off after the ferret. Axel slowed as he neared Emilena, who was also heading in the same direction. "Hey, uh... I didn't get a chance to say before but... thanks for trying to help Lily and me with..." He shrugged. "Even if it didn't exactly go to plan."

Rio watched Emilena and Axel following Tony, then looked up at Flora, shielding his eyes against the sun's glare. The folf didn't exactly seem happy. *What the hell happened in Titus?* "Don't worry about it," he started, shrugging on his *Captain Super Man* backpack - he'd had almost nothing to bring along - and making for the bar. "We can just..." Getting closer, he noticed a sign hanging above the bar's doorway. Beneath the arabic, 'No sell to under 18' was written in english. Rio swore loudly. "Oh goddammit!"

"Shut up," Triste hissed, her eyes flicking around, scanning the crowd that was flowing in the streets around them. It had been too easy for Veranus to follow them before, and because of that they'd almost lost everything. She was determined not to let that happen again. At

Vergil's side, she quickly examined the faces of the patrons sat around as they entered the bar. A few looked up, disinterestedly noting the new arrivals, but none seemed to be taking any particular notice of them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 27, 2015, 11:30:21 PM**

(Egypt)

Anne adjusted her sunglasses. The smell of tobacco still lingered in her coat and nostrils thanks to a driver who seemed to be constantly smoking. Her steel horseshoes remained but her brass knuckles were concealed inside her pants pockets. Uncharacteristically, she carried a small purse.

"Never thought I'd see you carrying something that a filly would carry." Soren cracked a smile as he nibbled on catfish kebab.

Anne's ears flattened and she gave the finger to the Human. She noticed several billboards advertising numerous algal oil industries as well as fish farms -- Egypt had become a major algae oil and fish farming country thanks to its vast amounts of open space, brackish water and copious amounts of sunlight.

(Corona)

Marion waited outside Mace's office. Her prostheses had been replaced as had her flying frame. She scowled as she looked at a picture of the city's skyline of gleaming steel and glass towers.

The Human simply could not believe this. She had important information to relay to Mace and the secretary had scheduled her in for an appointment...five days later. She stared at the disinterested Gila Monster and gritted her teeth. That fucking pencil pusher had just gotten some valuable intel outdated!

She knocked on the ornate wooden door again.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 02, 2015, 05:58:17 PM**

((Sorry guys... I'm really depressed... and I can't write effectively when I'm depressed. I'll try to post more frequently.))

Tony waited for those accompanying to grab their stuff, and he began walking down to the waterfront. He was told he could rent fast, reasonably priced (for him) and relatively well equipped boats. "Yeah." Tony nodded to Marita's question, and glanced about, shoving a hand in his pocket as he carried his bag over his shoulder.

"Hmmm?" he asked, glancing over at Axel now. Even in the relatively comfortable weather of this part of the world, he wore his flat cap, and smiled as the rat elaborated. "Oh hey... yeah... no problem. I mean I'll always try to look out for you guys... regardless of whatever present company may think or feel." He shrugged here.

"I mean come on... you were like... the first one in that group to even show me trust or kindness so... I haven't forgotten that." he stated, his eyes moving from the rat to down to the waterfront, scanning the boat selections they had. Whistling as he saw several yachts bobbing up and down along the quays, the ferret nodded.

"I'm all for that one." he said, pointing out a rakish looking white and silver yacht with wood paneling on the floors. Tony figured her to be about 75 feet long. There were plenty others like it on the river, some bigger than that one, and so they'd blend right in. A sign out front read it was for rent, or sale, if the buyer was interested enough. "Whaddya think?"

Vergil noted Triste's caution, but figured it was all right... he didn't sense Varanus after all, and that was a good sign. He had learned to pick up on him the last time they'd encountered one another, and he was ever presently searching for that.

Looking at Triste as he headed inside, Vergil figured on asking her what had been on his mind awhile now. "You know... I don't think I ever found this out but... had you ever met Rex before? Any read on what he was like before... well you know... ever serve with him, or... well you lived in his time... both when he was fighting the Alliance and later on when he rebelled. Thoughts on him as a leader? Any indication of why he might've turned traitor?" Vergil inquired.

"It's just I'm still curious... I feel if I come to understand him... understand how he operated... then maybe I could understand... everything. More about myself and this mission... and why Rex was after that ship in the first place."

"As for what they drink here..." he turned to face Rose. "Your guess is as good as mine. Tropic stuff? Egyptian stuff? Haven't the slightest idea." he chuckled.

"Mr. Sardolemuel will see you now." the receptionist told Marion, and nodded for her to go inside.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 04, 2015, 12:48:30 PM**

(Egypt)

Soren nodded. An algal oil tanker with Arabic writing on it motored past them on the river. He pondered something. Algal oil tankers were enormous and inconspicuous...could Varanus hide something within a tanker?

"Looks good to me," he said.

Anne smiled. "Yeah! We can go for a river cruise at the same time.

(Corona)

Marion entered the luxurious office and took a seat in the plush seal leather chair. She took out a small memory card and placed it on the table.

"Five days ago, I spotted the same Human and Shetland Pony Augment that I had previously seen in Bolivia accompanying Vergil. I spotted them at Big Wong's Authentic Cantonese Cuisine -- a known Triad meeting place. This memory card contains pictures of them. Right now, I do not know of their whereabouts."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 05, 2015, 04:34:40 AM**

Axel gazed longingly at a large boat with a large, powerful (and probably incredibly loud) engine fitted, and adorned with bright red racing stripes along the side of the craft. At Tony's suggestion he tore his eyes away. "Yeah, that's, ah... probably the safer option." *Another* *time...*

Looking around, Axel spotted a small wooden shelter a small distance up the waterfront. "I guess that's where you pay," he said, pointing as he started to make his way over. As he got closer, he could see that the shelter was entirely filled up by a rather overweight man who'd managed to squeeze his considerable bulk into the small space. Two beady eyes gleamed in the shade offered by the structure as the man stared at the rat who walked over and stopped in front of him.

"Hi," Axel smiled. "How much to take that boat out? The one over there?"

The mass in the shelter growled in arabic and spat a glob a phlegm between Axel's feet.

Axel's smile vanished, and he took a hasty step back. "Ah..."

"I never actually served with Rex, no," Triste said, taking a seat at a table that would let them see the entrance of the bar - and anyone coming in. "But I knew of him while he was still in the Federation. As a leader he was... gifted. He knew how to make people listen to him. Follow his orders. *Believe* in him. And he was extremely intelligent." She fixed her eyes on Vergil. "That's what made him so dangerous when he went rogue. As for why he went rogue in the first place... well, we never determined the exact reason."

Triste paused as a patron walked past, her eyes tracking him until he walked out the door and turned out of sight. "He had his own ideas about how the Federation should operate. And when you combine that with his drive to always succeed then..." She sighed. "Maybe it was inevitable."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 07, 2015, 10:48:12 AM**

"Yeah that's right... believe me I plan to ENJOY this cruise while it lasts." Tony agreed with Anne, nodding his head and smiling. "Cause it looks like we got at least an hour before we reach our destination if not more, depending on how long it takes to the clear the dams and such."

He noticed Axel practically get verbally slapped by the thick Arabic the rotund man who looked like he belonged in some back street deli was using. "All right hold on... I'll handle this..." Tony stepped forward, and began yammering in the same tongue the corpulent guy was using, the two exchanging seemingly heated words, but finally, after a moment or two, the man seemed to acquiesce after Tony flashed some credits in his face. Taking the payment, he nodded and handed the ferret proof of rental and a receipt.

"Right!" He grinned, walking back to them now. "Managed to get a good deal. Bartering is the norm in these parts, and you never pay full price for anything if you know what you're doing. So according to this..." he glanced at the sheet of paper. "It looks like... keys are in a safe in the cabin... combination is on this paper." he tapped it with his claw.

Vergil nodded slowly. "Yeah... I can see that then. I wonder what he and Kalis saw when they went to go finish off the Alliance... what made them change their mind? They weren't really joining the Alliance but... well I suppose it doesn't matter. What they did was ultimately wrong and cost a lot of lives. No denying that." he stated, watching the door as well before shifting his orange eyes back to her.

"So... would you allow me to buy you a drink?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2015, 12:33:22 PM**

Upon noticing that Tony had solved the language barrier, Flora sadly put the auto-translating megaphone back into her bag and Emilena breathed a sigh of relief. "Great, let's get the hell out of dodge. The quicker we're on the water the fewer eyewitnesses we leave behind."

She folded her arms. "Where did our useless teammates get off to now?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 07, 2015, 03:28:43 PM**

Good that you Speak Arabic, Tony, because mine is virtually nonexistent " Marita said ":Don;t do much business with that part of the world. looking over at Flora she motioned to her.'come have a seat with me Flora.

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Rose bought four bottles of beer Marked 'Stella' , and had Marie hold three of them as they headed towards a open table, close to where Vergil and Trieste were. ' we're saving a couple for Marita." Rose explained ' didnt know alcohol was allowed here' Marie said looking at the bottle " they've been making beer here for thousands of years ' Rose said opening up a country guide and flipping through it ' since the days of the pyramids, if not longer. " The Pyramids, sole surviving wonder of the ancient world, still towered over the desert.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 08, 2015, 04:47:19 PM**

"Oh, did you buy alcohol?" Flora scampered forward. "Sweet! I love going to foreign countries because they never realize I'm underage!"

Indeed the bartender didn't seem to speak English, or at minimum he didn't bat an eye as Flora grabbed the Stella and sniffed it. She wrinkled her nose and stuck her tongue. "Ew. I was spoiled by those African Cocktails. Well, I can fix this." She fished a travel bottle of cough syrup out of her back pocket. "You bought the drink, so I'll supply the drank." She started pouring it into Marita's beer. "This'll make that potable potent."

Emilena clicked her tongue. "Could we, like, take the boat for a test run?" she asked the other teammates on the dock. "And pick up the waypoint while we're at it? We can retrieve the others on the trip home."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 08, 2015, 05:41:47 PM**

we'll go then ' marita said, and climbed aboard the boat as Flora spiked her drink with the syrup. " No drinking Flora Until we reach the end of the trip' she said. now get on board, and we'll try this craft out. Tony, naturally will be driving " She smiled at Tony.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 08, 2015, 05:46:32 PM**

Axel had a quick look at the paper Tony was showing them, then nodded. "Alright, let's get the keys then get our asses in gear." At Emilena's suggestion, he bit his lip. "We need Vergil to make the waypoint... thing... work, but maybe one of us could head over to the bar and get the others, while the rest of us get the keys." He shrugged. "It'd save us time."

From the side, Rio raised his hand. "I'll go." He'd been eyeing the box of credits that the large man in the shelter was holding as carefully and watchfully as if it were a newborn baby. Upon careful consideration, he'd decided the risk of accidentally getting wedged in one of the man's many folds was too high. "I get to drive the boat for a bit, though, right?"

"Ah... yeah. Sure. Tell them to meet us back here." Pleased by Axel's affirmation, Rio turned and sped away in the distance of the bar, not seeing the rat shake his head and mouth *no* at the others once the boy had turned around.

"I'll have a water," Triste said, the corner of her mouth twitching in what passed for a genuine smile. "Need to keep a clear head for what happens next. You three should take it easy too," she warned Marie, Rose and Flora. "We need to be focused for this."

She turned her attention back to Vergil. "So when we get to the waypoint, do you-" She was interrupted by the sounds of a commotion at the entrance, and her head quickly snapped to the side so she could see what was going on. Triste caught a glimpse of a scrawny, tanned kid being plucked up by the scruff of his neck and effortlessly carried out of the bar that he'd just tried to enter by one of the bar's staff.

"No, you don't... goddammit, I *know* people in here, you prick, just..." Rio struggled helplessly. Just as he was being taken out the door, he caught sight of Vergil and the others. "Hey! We got the boat! We-" Rio didn't get to say anything else as the man flicked him through the doorway and out of the bar like something unpleasant he'd found on his finger.

Triste sighed and started to rise. "Looks like that water's going to have to wait."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 08, 2015, 07:10:26 PM**

(Egypt)

Anne let out a sigh of relief as Axel said that Rio would not be piloting the boat. She climbed aboard the gangplank after Soren. At the same time, she had her hands in her pockets, which were concealing her stolen brass knuckles.

Soren sat on a deck chair aboard the ship. He noticed that a hookah sat on a elegant glass table. "So who goes in first?"

The Shetland Pony mare looked at the hookah and smiled.

(Corona)

Marion looked at Mace. She tried to decipher his nearly unreadable expression. "What are my orders, Sir?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 09, 2015, 11:50:57 AM**

((Sorry for the somewhat meh post; don't really have a lot of time right now))

"She's standing right in front of me, apparently." Tony said in response to Emilena's question about useless teammates. "Oh I'm sorry, I thought you meant the useless teammate that couldn't escape a castle without Vergil's help, RIIIIIGHT." he said, grinning at her here. Best way to nullify her stupid sarcasm was fire back with intelligent sarcasm. "The teammate that can actually ACTIVATE the waypoint is back at the bar getting a drink, like he already said. But yeah, we'll send someone along to fetch him." He nodded as Rio left, and appeared relieved that no, Rio wasn't driving the boat.

He headed down to the dock with the others, and peered into the big yacht. "I'll go first... get the keys, start her up, and we'll shove off once everyone is here. Shouldn't be much longer anyway... they're usually good about moving..." He headed into a luxurious cabin, with padded chairs, royal blue carpet, and fridge. Opening the fridge with a modicum of curiosity, Tony noted it was empty. "Hmmm... let's put our water bottles in here... we're gonna need 'em later on after all." he stated. "Best keep 'em cold."

Heading to the large safe mounted on a bulkhead, Tony input the numbers, opened it up, and retrieved the keys. "OK got 'em! And yes, I do like the idea of me driving." he said, smiling back at Marita.

Vergil nodded, but was interrupted by Rio coming up to them, promptly getting denied entry, and telling them the boat was ready. He sighed. "Yeah... sorry about that... I'll try and make it up to you somehow." he said, giving Triste a sincerely apologetic look. Standing up, he nodded at the others, and headed for the exit.

"You all right?" he asked Rio, offering to help him to his feet by outstretching his hand. "Lead the way, young squire. We'll be right behind you." he said gamely.

Mace looked at Marion and frowned. "So... do you know what Vergil is actually after? Have you been able to determine his goal? Is he after something called... Torment's Cataract?" he inquired, giving Marion a steely look with his gray eyes now.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2015, 12:56:26 PM**

Marita took a seat next to the fridge " Nice digs. Feels almost like a luxury cruise, minus the chattering guests and all you can eat buffet. Did you get in touch with your dad Tony, to let him know you're alright?" she Asked.

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 rose and marie picked up thier bears and followed Vergil and Trieste out of the bar towards the docks. Rose was holding two bottles, Marie just one.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 10, 2015, 05:19:56 AM**

Yesterday there was no possible way Emilena would have allowed a comment like that to fly, especially not from Tony. At minimum she would have acidly reminded him about his track record with fighting ten-year olds, but Lily's warning was still fresh in her mind. Lily wasn't part of the team anymore, but she would no doubt be crossing their paths again, and she had been very clear about what happened if the team considered Emilena a hindrance...so Emilena merely bit her lip and counted silently to ten before boarding the boat.

"Why did you buy alcohol if you weren't even planning on drinking it?" Flora complained loudly, hopping on the boat. Her face brightened when she saw Tony. "Hey! I heard you and Marita were in a relationship; so are we! Wanna have a threesome? You can be on top, that way your masculinity isn't threatened."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 10, 2015, 10:26:15 AM**

Marita facepalmed at Flora's comments- that girl had no inner filter whatsoever. ' first , Flora. i bought it to drink later, after we found the waypoint. and second, asking Tony for a threeway isnt a good idea.' Marita said shaking her head. ' he might be up for it, he might not, but thats not something you come out and ask a guy in public, to his face."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 10, 2015, 12:36:53 PM**

"Here it is." Rio signaled towards the boat, then hopped on after Flora. Glancing back at Vergil, he nodded. "Thanks for the hand up back there, man," he said. As he entered the cabin, he caught the end of what Marita was saying and grinned. "If you don't ask him to his face, how the fuck else are you gonna ask him? A letter?" Rio straightened. "I've had *millions* of threesomes," he boasted, looking down his nose at Marita (although, since she was much taller than him, it was more like looking up his nose at her).

"*You don't even know what a threesome is*," Axel's voice drifted through a window above the fridge, from where he was examining the boat's engine outside.

Rio started, then pouted. "Yeah! Yeah I do! It's..." He frowned. "... It's when you have sex three times, like, really really fast."

"*That's exactly what it is.*"

Triste shook her head as she sat down in one of the expensive looking chairs and spread out a map on her lap. Tracing the route they'd have to take, she looked up at the others. "The waypoint isn't too far away - it'll take us about an hour... an hour and a half to get there."

"Alright! Just checked the engine - just quickly, anyway - and it seems good to go," Axel announced, stepping into the cabin, his shoes whispering against the carpet as he wiped his hands on the back of his trousers. He saw Tony holding the keys. "Should we set sail, captain?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 10, 2015, 01:24:57 PM**

a threesome is when there are 3 people involved in having sex ' Marita said ' and since you are 13, Rio, you are well underage for any sort of sex. an adult is not even supposed to touch you, let alone bang you, at your age. normally I'd not be so frank about such things, but Flora cant keep her thoughts to herself,bless her heart, and you have a mouth that never stops yakking.' She cracked at Rio. she then overheard what Trieste was saying. " so 90 minutes huh. whats the over-under on having 15-20 of those killer robot things there? I mean , there's been more of them at each waypoint, hasn't there? There were 6 at the first one, 9 at the second.. "

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Rose and Marie Climbed on board and headed over towards the fridge to put their beers away. ' nice digs ' Rose said appreciatively as she took a look around before choosing a seat ' she pulled out some Egyptian coins she had gotten for the beers ' Something to toss into my coin jars at home ' she said ' a couple pounds and few piastres' she added.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 10, 2015, 05:52:44 PM**

"No problem." Vergil replied, smiling and nodded at Rio as he hopped aboard, though paid precious little attention to the next set of sexual conversations taking place. Instead, he opened his duffel and took out a pith helmet from a bygone era, placing it upon his head and smiling at Triste as if he'd just pulled a prank and sat down next to her. Surprisingly, it seemed to fit well on him, and didn't look completely out of place. He had to keep the sun off him somehow when they got out there after all.

"Dr. Livingston I presume?" he asked Triste, sitting beside her and glancing at the map she had pulled out. He nodded as he noted their next destination. "It's possible, but we didn't encounter any at the last waypoint, probably because it was underwater." Vergil mused aloud to Marita's pondering.

"Uh no, I'm not interested." Tony replied blandly, sticking out his tongue in revulsion. "Since you two are spoken for, I'll look elsewhere, thank you." he stated, motioning at the two of them with his claw back and forth. Hmm... maybe he could try and rekindle his thing with Anne. The pony was certainly in good spirits, or so it seemed, but Axel interrupted them after reentering the cabin from inspecting the engine. "Awesome!" he stated in response to the rat's declaration that the engine was good to go. "Then let's shove off!" He had to admit Axel had the right idea checking it BEFORE they left... no use in renting a lemon after all that would die on them in mid-river...

He went outside, mounted the stairs up to the cockpit, taking them two at a time and pulling himself up with the handrails until he reached the bridge, inserted the keys, and listened to the big, throaty grumble as the engines came to life. "Right..." He whispered, checking to make sure they were clear in front and behind, then pushed the throttle forward to head out into the Nile.

He spun the wheel to the right, keeping a close eye on river traffic, and increased speed once more to do a 180 into the river. He pulled out safely and pointed the bow south, nodding to himself with satisfaction on maneuvering the big boat safely.

"I feel like Lawrence of Arabia's theme should start playing or something." Vergil chuckled, looking out the cabin windows now as Aswan slid by them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 10, 2015, 08:55:18 PM**

Hold on Tony" Marita said coming up to him " Flora and I are not in a relationship, nor would I ask you to join in a threeway. Shes... well I dont know what she was thinking when she said that. she's quite a bit of a goofball" Marita said " I'm sorry that you had to be grossed out like that. Let me buy you dinner to make up for that scene. whatever you want.." Marita said firmly. ' and we havent had that date yet either. so don't go casting me aside until we've had it.'

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 14, 2015, 12:45:06 PM**

Veranus' radio cackled. It was a private frequency, one only used by his closest henchmen. "Veranus," said the mystery voice. "I need to speak to you. Please respond."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 14, 2015, 11:44:50 PM**

(Corona)

"I had boarded a *Scarab Mk IV* ship and a personal ship known as the *Falchion* in pursuit of one of men whom I encountered in Bolivia. I shall just boil it down to the essentials." Marion sipped a glass of water as she calmly recounted all the details.

"For starters, the Ferret whom I took to be a government operative is not one. He is Tony Stracci, the son of the notorious Lanthaeni crime lord Don Stracci. Both ships are owned by someone named Varanus. Some information I stole out of the shipboard computers indicates that Varanus is also after Torment's Cataract.

"Furthermore, information I gleaned from Tony Stracci's personal belongings suggests that he is in contact with Vergil and that he had been after some sort of waypoint in Bolivia. Finally, I also noticed one that several of his contacts live right here in Corona."

She downed her glass of water. "Right now, I believe that I may be able to find out where they are going next and what they are up to."

(Egypt)

Soren was examining a map of the Nile. He scowled as he realized that several of the areas were marked as belonging to various companies -- and were therefore forbidden zones. He t

"Tony," he said, as he climbed up the wooden stairs from the lower decks and into the bridge. "I don't know how accurate this map is but according to what Triste said, the waypoint's inside the borders of Aswan Algal Chemicals."

Anne reclined on the deck where she sipped a bottle of local honey beer. Her metallic horn gleamed in the desert sun.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 16, 2015, 04:45:06 PM**

Tony regarded Marita skeptically, but finally nodded at her explanation. "All right... when we get back from this we will, how's that sound?" he asked, raising his brow as Soren came up to him here. "So... it's in a corporation's territory?" he asked. "Pretty remote place if you ask me... maybe they don't really monitor the desert as much as they do the shoreline." he suggested. "I mean we don't know the terrain makeup of the waypoint just yet... it could be based in a relatively desolate part after all... you never know."

He turned his attention back to the river, and silently hoped this would be easier than the other ones... but somehow he doubted it. This whole trip had been one big challenge from start to finish, and he had no idea what else he'd encounter before this quest was through.

He increased speed on the boat's throttle as he reached more open water, and kept his eyes scanning for oncoming traffic, but it was sparse the further south they headed, and that suited the ferret just fine...

"What?" Varanus asked, touching his throat. He'd fully healed in the weeks leading up to this point, and was ready to get back into action, which promised to be soon at this rate.

"I see." Mace replied, studying all the information she had laid out before him. He paused as she mentioned waypoints.... it was the exact same thing his brother had been looking for years ago... but what was the connection now? His brother had only told him a few things about it... not enough. "You... said waypoints?" he asked softly, swallowing hard. "I-I see. Um... I suppose so but... I feel at this point this is getting beyond something I wish to pursue. Given what I learned about this stuff in the past... it's stuff we probably shouldn't even be messing with in the first place." Mace told her flatly, fixing her with a steely gaze. "It destroyed my brother all right? And he was the strongest person I've ever known."

The gecko tapped a finger on her notes thoughtfully. "My brother changed forever... and ultimately ended up dead pursuing this... I'm more interested in this Vergil Speicher... and what his connection with my brother is." Mace said now, looking up at her. "Have you found anything linking him to Rex?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 16, 2015, 05:51:06 PM**

Sounds great " Marita smiled , relieved that she had salvaged things with Tony for the time being. ' this waypoint should show us the last Waypoints location correct? The one In Asia? After that well, its finding the ship itself..
-
Rose and Marie calmly drank thier beers, letting the warm sun tan their skins. the scenery was the only thing notable, there wasnt many boats in this portion of the river.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 17, 2015, 03:42:14 AM**

"We could always just stop the boat just outside, sneak in and get to where we want. I could do that shit no problem," Rio suggested, leaning back on on of the plush chairs and propping his feet up, trailing sand onto the expensive looking fabric.

Axel shrugged. "Depends how far in the waypoint would be. And if there's more of those robot guard things, it'll be hard to be subtle."

Rio looked up interestedly. "Robot guards?"

"You don't want to know," Axel shuddered.

"We'll assess the situation when we get there," Triste said, studying the map. "If we're in luck, it'll be as Mr. Stracci said, and security won't be an issue." She glanced out of the window, noting the steadily dwindling number of boats. Turning her head, she looked behind them, eyes tracing the course they'd just taken, studying what few boats remained on the river. Still no obvious tail, no signs of being followed. Triste swallowed and turned her attention back to the front and whatever awaited them further on.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 17, 2015, 11:28:08 AM**

"I wish to speak with you in person," the voice continued. "I have information on a certain target of yours which you will find quite valuable, not to mention a method of obtaining more. I'm transmitting you my coordinates." The coordinates placed the call somewhere in the deserts outside Corona. "You may meet me there, or choose a rendezvous point of your own. And to prove I'm telling the truth, you can have the first tip for free; Vergil Speicher's team is currently sailing down the Nile River, having just left the city of Aswan."

"I've never liked corporate raids," frowned Emilena. "This far out of town, they're basically governments with no need to put up a good face for the populace. If any of us get caught, they're good as dead."

"Then let's not get caught..." Flora shivered. As the prospect of leaving the boat and returning to the desert loomed, her old xerophobia was starting to reassert itself.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 18, 2015, 02:52:22 PM**

"Hahahahah...." Varanus chuckled throatily at the voice on the other end, having checked his phone for the coordinates. "Oh I already know where he is... we're already waaaaay ahead of you." he smirked, lowering his sunglasses as he reclined on a deck chair, soaking in the sun on the boat that moved down the Nile a good ten miles behind the yacht Vergil and company were on, completely out of sight thanks to bends in the river. "Unfortunately I'm nowhere near Corona at the moment, so our meeting will have to wait. If you wish to join our cause, I can give you specific instructions about enlisting. Right now though... I've got a job to do." he said, looking up at the sky. No one could see it just yet... but Varanus was bringing along sizable reinforcements this time. However, he wouldn't call on them unless absolutely necessary... he wanted to finish Vergil himself... he would take personal pleasure in performing that task...

"Well hence we should avoid any corporate contact whatsoever." Vergil stated, looking over at Emi. "You're right... they'd kill us and no one would care. It'd be pointless to get into it with them out here. We aren't gonna get lucky twice like we did on Voltaic. I say we cruise on by the point of land closest to where the waypoint is, see how many shore installations there are, and if none, anchor right there and take a small boat to shore. It looks like the waypoint is..." He glanced at the map again, narrowing his eyes. "Only about nine miles inland so... requisitioning a vehicle might be preferable once we land."

"That's right." Tony said to Marita up above. "This is the penultimate waypoint... then one more, then the ship. We're gonna destroy that thing somehow... or maybe let the fleet handle it. Either way, we're not letting Kalis obtain it." he said with determination. At the rate they were moving, it wouldn't be long before they arrived, which was good, as Tony was looking forward to doing this again...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 18, 2015, 03:43:20 PM**

"I assure you, you're not ahead of me," the voice replied. "I can gain up-to-date information on Vergil faster than you'd believe. I look forward to meeting you and sharing my intel. Don't take too long in sending someone to meet with me; I wish to work for Kalis, but I can turn to other factions if I must."

Then the voice cut out.

"Sounds good to me," Emilena nodded. "I doubt we'll be lucky enough to obtain an unguarded land vehicle once we disembark, but if we do come across one Flora has significant experience hotwiring cars."

Flora nodded proudly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 18, 2015, 04:53:40 PM**

(Corona)

"No sir," Marion replied. "But since several of Vergil's contacts live in Corona, I may be able to get some information from them."

She finished off her glass of water and placed it on the soapstone coaster.

(Egypt)

Soren sipped some local soft drink as he examined the maps on the table and his laptop. The ride was fairly smooth so he didn't have to worry about making accidental marks. The maps he had were marked up with rough positions of patrol routes, boundaries and other data.

He looked out the cabin window and saw a large algal oil tanker pass by. *Hmm. Maybe we can stow away aboard one of those tankers...* he thought.

The door clicked as Anne came in. "So what's going on?" she asked as she went to the refrigerator.

Soren rubbed his face. "I'm doing some map analysis. And right now, I don't see how we're going to get in by water or air."

He got up and headed for the bridge.

"Tony," the Human said as he placed the marked-up maps on a teak table inside the rather luxurious bridge. "I've been doing some analysis and we can't get near the waypoint by water -- it's deep inside corporate territory. The companies here patrol their waterways vigorously and if we get caught, we're bricked. Their land and air patrols are no less vigorous but owing to the sheer amount of land, intruders are less likely to be noticed."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 18, 2015, 05:53:12 PM**

Who the hell was this who was coming on and contacting him? And how did they know so much? Not like it really mattered, since Varanus intended to end Vergil by the end of the night. Soon no one would care who he ever was or had been. Except of course... Varanus KNEW who he was... and it was with great pleasure that he'd terminate his existence. Who knew? If he could... it might mean he'd be strong enough to take out Kalis and inherit his empire for himself.

"Yeah uh... relay that call to Admiral Carrack. He can pass it on to Kalis, and if his lord is interested, we can I dunno... send someone out there to meet this guy or something." Varanus ordered, narrowing his eyes as he raised his sunglasses to cover them again and went back to sunning himself.

Mace nodded. "Very well... look into these contacts and see what you can find. But don't go breaking the law. You get caught I'll deny all knowledge of your existence, but then again... you already know that." he said, giving her a nod. "Find me what I want... and let's find out more about him."

"Well stealing a vehicle might be easy, especially if we pick one carefully and not just jack one that we see the first time. But yes, we'll try and avoid people at all costs... the less that see us head into the desert... the better." Vergil stated, looking down.

Vergil greeted Anne with a nod as she entered. "We're just basically going over ideas and plans. Bouncing them around so to speak. That horn of yours... can it activate electronics from a distance?" he inquired.

Up above, Tony listened to what Soren had to say. "I see... but they can't stop navigation on the entire river! I'm sure there's a corridor you can take through it. I mean if we can't go any further we'll have to stop, and hope there's a convenient vehicle we can take that fits all of us... otherwise we're gonna be out of luck anyway. Walking nine miles in the desert... we'd need a hell of a lot of water for that. Unless we wait till night, but then we'd be freezing our tails off." Tony pointed out. "I'd rather just go during the day, as we didn't exactly pack warm clothing. Anyway... how far before they'd stop us?" he asked Soren.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 19, 2015, 12:13:22 AM**

Soren looked at his map. "Most of the smaller canals that branch off are in corporate territory -- and closed to public access. Aswan Algal Chemicals has an algae farm on the shore of the Nile -- something they got special permission from the Egyptian government to do. That stretch of the waterway is open to public boat traffic but it has a *very* strict speed limit. If we go too fast or too slow, or worse, stop, Aswan Algal Chemicals will be sending over a patrol boat to see what's going on." He took a seat and templed his hands. "Granted, we could feign engine trouble, ambush the guards and then steal their patrol boat but considering that their patrol boats are armed, I'm not liking the chances of success."

He then pointed to some red dots he made on the paper -- one of numerous that dotted the riverbanks. "We can forget about the waterway approach. Cameras and various sensors watch every inch of the riverbanks. If you even *hint* that you're heading for the restricted access canals or preparing to make a stop at the riverbank,, the guards will be on your ass.

"By land, it looks like the off-limits areas are clearly marked. It looks like the closest you can get to the complex is maybe about four miles. Any closer and the company starts getting *real* interested in what you're up to."

Anne shrugged. "Hypothetically, if it's radio-controlled, I probably could control it remotely. But the problem is that my antenna is powered by a cluster of micro-fuel cells that runs off the glucose in my blood; it's not very powerful so I'd say I have a range of 200 feet tops. As for the jamming capability, it's got a range of twenty feet at most."

She reached inside the refrigerator and grabbed a glass bottle of beer. She pulled out her stolen brass knuckles from her pocket and used them as an improvised bottle opener.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 21, 2015, 04:03:07 AM**

Axel looked over the map Soren was pointing at, and frowned. "Damn... so they've got every way in covered..." He chewed his lip for a second thoughtfully. "Well wait. Anne, your horn could jam the cameras right? If the signal from your antenna was strong enough?" The rat blinked at her. "What if we could find a way to boost the signal that you could give off from it? It wouldn't have to be for long... just, you know, enough to take out a few cameras and give some of us the chance to get off the boat and out of their sight? Then whoever's left on the boat could keep driving up the river, then turn back and, ah, pick us up again?" He shrugged. "Maybe there'd be a way to mess with the security defense once we're in, give us a chance to get away again? It's the only way I can think of that means... you know, we'd have a chance of avoiding any people who work there."

"We'd still have the problem of avoiding the security teams patrolling the plant," Triste pointed out.

Rio perked up. "How about a distraction? You said the guards get all over your shit if the boat stops along here," he said, reaching up and stretching his arm to point at the waterway. "So what if whoever stays on the boat *does* actually stop somewhere along there. If a team of assholes comes around, it'd mean less of them for the rest of you to hide from." Rio looked up at the adults. "And they'll probably not get as mad if they see it's a kid who fucked up driving the boat. And if they do then I guess it'll give you guys more time to do whatever the hell you're gonna do."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 21, 2015, 09:03:31 AM**

"Hmmm...that could work," murmured Emilena. "It could give something for the less threatening teammates like Axel and Marita something to do."

"I could go with Team Less-Threatening!" Flora piped up.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 22, 2015, 03:23:35 PM**

Since it seemed everyone was wandering up to the cockpit, that's where Vergil headed as well, having already sensed what the discussion was taking place above his head. He went outside to the teak stern deck, and climbed the stairs (or ladder as it was known on boats) up to the wheel, where Tony and Soren (and everyone else) were deep in discussion regarding their next moves.

Vergil listened to the suggestions, and nodded even as Tony spoke up. "I was just about to suggest that actually!" the ferret said. "We move those on shore to the boat, and slip ashore without being seen. No sense risking it with security like that. Nine miles away though... we're gonna probably need ground transportation of some kind..."

"I agree with the distraction." Vergil spoke up now, looking them over. "But I don't want our distraction getting harmed or killed for their job. We should do our best to keep them out of reach of the company forces. Of course... you could always throw the throttle forward and take off, leading them on a chase... but you'd have to ensure you could keep this boat around for our escape. We brought communicators with us, so keeping in touch won't be too much of an issue." he informed them all.

"Still... I don't want the decoys captured. Find a way to get this boat away from the security forces after they clear you, and join us." Vergil looked at Rio here. "I don't like leaving our forces divided for too long in the face of potentially strong opposition. To top that all off... I don't want to inflict needless pain." he said, looking sympathetically at Flora and Rio, as they seemed to be volunteering.

"Well hey... they could like... be waved on their way, and then like... come back for us when we're done." Tony suggested.

Vergil nodded. "I think that'd be best, yes. Perhaps a high-speed extraction would work well. What's everyone think?" he inquired, looking around at the others. "We'll have a better idea of course once we're on shore, and can see their defenses for ourselves."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 22, 2015, 04:22:51 PM**

Those on the "Boat" team will have to occupy security on the river long eough for those on land to get to the waypoint, deal with whatevers there, and unlock the coordinates to the last waypoint. We're likely talking something that could conceivably be anywhere from 15 minutes to a couples hours ' Marita said." thats not including picking them back up either, so we're possibly doubling the time frame. so whoever is operating boat needs to be good at it.. and no Rio, we're not putting a 13 year old in charge or driving this thing,.so dont ask. It'll likely be either me or Axel operating the thing.." Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 22, 2015, 05:46:13 PM**

Anne nodded. "If you can get your hands on a repeater like what's used for boosting cell phone signals, you can significantly increase my range of implant."

Soren tapped his chin. "You know, this boat has a radio, right? And a repeater's essentially a radio transmitter." He smiled. "It should be very easy for me to modify our radio."

The Human then looked at his map again. "You know, we could stow away on an oil tanker and deal only with the internal security."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 23, 2015, 03:46:31 PM**

"How often would an oil tanker come along? By the time we manage to get aboard one, we could have wasted too much time," Triste pointed out. "And we don't know what kind of security they'd have on the ship - I'd be surprised if nobody else has ever tried sneaking in using the ship. We could just be trading the maneuverability of the outside for the enclosed space of the tanker with the same amount of resistance."

Axel shrugged. "At least if we went for the first plan, we could hit the place fast, and get out quick."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **February 23, 2015, 10:37:39 PM**

"I agree with Triste. A tanker's too much time, too unwieldy, and too much of an unknown. You said yourself a water approach is out anyway. We have to strike fast. In and out, get the waypoint, and not mess around. So let's focus on getting ashore as quick as possible, procuring land transport, and getting to our destination." Vergil stated, looking the map over again.

"Satellites show either a rock formation or something like it over the waypoint so... it could be a cave or something where it's located." Vergil commented thoughtfully. "Anyway, if a water approach itself is out, we can't really make use of a distraction anyway. We should just stop well short of their territory, get a vehicle, and move on in." he suggested. "Less chance of detection that way."

"Hm... gotta find a land vehicle first." Tony pointed out.

"Could just wait for a patrol to pass by the perimeter, incapacitate them, steal their vehicle, and get the hell over to the waypoint. I think that's our best best." Vergil replied. "Of course we don't know anything about their vehicles... none of this showed up on our intelligence beforehand... we'll just have to ultimately improvise I suppose." he confessed.

Mace nodded. "All right... do it. See what you can find out and report back." he ordered, giving her a look that said it all: get this done.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2015, 11:10:13 PM**

Whatever vehicle we grab, has to be big enough to hold all of us ' Rose said as she peered over the map. " i mean we are going in as one big group right? The whole ' one team provides a distraction" is out the window?
 - Time is of the essence; Marita said " we cant waste too much hemming and hawing. w e need to be in, out and on to the last waypoint as quickly as possible and attracting the least amount of attention possible. Which , obviously is going to be tricky..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 23, 2015, 11:34:36 PM**

(Corona)

"Understood." Marion saluted, picked up her notes and exited the office.

First things first, she had to do some research.

As she entered the elevator, she examined her notes. Surprisingly, Tony Stracci's passport had been with him the whole time. Of course, when traveling, leaving one's passport in a hotel room -- especially when the hotel staff may or may not be petty thieves -- was an unwise decision. The Human then examined a battered scrap of paper containing Vergil's name and a phone number she presumed to be his.

The elevator gently chimed as it reached the first floor atrium. Numerous workers milled about the airy space. Some were chatting, others were heading to the elevators. And some were heading to the company cafeteria for a snack.

She stepped into the crowd and headed for exit. First thing she'd do is use the company's considerable pull to get the Corona PD to trace on that number.

(Egypt)

"You mean this vehicle?" Soren pulled up a grainy satellite image on his laptop. While the image quality was quite poor, it was easily made out to be some sort of armored dune buggy with some kind of gun turret on the top.

Anne looked outside the window with a set of comp-noculars at a passing oil tanker. She scowled. "Forget stowing away. The oil tankers are all drone barges. No visible windows on the bridge."

Soren smiled. "Hmm. Do you think you can hijack them with your 'radio horn' and a repeater?"

Anne shook her head. "I can 'hear' the radio transmissions but the tankers only emit signals -- mostly heading, destination, state of cargo, speed and all that shit. I suspect that their routes are pre-programmed."

The Human let out a breath of air. "Well fuck, there goes one of my ideas for a distraction."

"If it involves a computer virus, it might still work." The mare put the comp-noculars aside and grabbed a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. There, she laid out her basic plan. "We want to get to the waypoint with out the guards getting on us, right?"

"No shit."

"These oil refineries are mostly computer controlled. And--"

Soren finished the mare's thought. "IF we can get a virus into the system, we can probably cause some big problems for them. It's a perfect distraction. They'll be too busy dealing with the fire or what have you to notice us at the waypoint. And by the time the fire's out, we'll be gone." He brought up the satellite map again. "And it looks like the cracking and distillation units are far away enough that we're not going to suffer any ill effects."

He then turned to Axel. "Do you think you can whip up a virus that'll force the refinery's equipment to operate beyond their safe parameters or override the programmed safeties?"

Anne finished off her beer and walked over to the trash can. She looked outside the window and saw the patrol boats of Aswan Algal Chemicals in the distance. Even worse was she could see that frame-flyers also patrolled the refinery airspace. "One problem, someone has to get the virus into their systems."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 24, 2015, 09:05:33 AM**

"Yeah, I could get something ready in a few minutes if Marita lets me borrow her laptop." Axel nodded. "It, ah, won't exactly be a masterpiece but it'll be enough to screw things over for them."

"But we'd still be left with the problem of waiting around until the virus has sabotaged their systems. We need to do this quickly, remember?" Triste said, glancing in Axel's direction as he rooted around in Marita's bag.

"We might not have to do it first," Axel said over his shoulder as he pulled out the laptop and booted it up. "Even if we get in without needing to use it, it won't hurt to have it just in case. Could always use it if we, ah, need something to buy us time or help us get out unseen. Alright, here we go..." His fingers started tapping on the keyboard.

"Fine. Just hurry up and get it done." Triste joined Anne at the window. The plant was getting closer by the second. "Stracci, start getting us closer to shore, and someone else modify that radio to use on the pony's horn. We can't wait any longer."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 01, 2015, 04:21:03 PM**

"Sounds like a plan to me..." Vergil closed his eyes, focusing intently, and suddenly, they sprang up. "Two vehicles of some sort are close by... just on the other side of that building." He nodded at a low building that was close to the shoreline.

"Right! Getting us closer now! Let's start doing all that electronic stuff cause we're going in!" Tony said, turning the wheel and pointing the bow to the shore now and throttling down a little. "OK! Someone should break out the dinghy and get it ready! We can use the yacht itself as cover! Shield us from the shore and get on dry land quickly!"

Vergil nodded, and looked at Triste. "Dinghy duty?" he asked, breaking out into a small smile.

Outside Corona, an agent of Kalis was waiting in the coordinates given by the mystery voice on the phone. Varanus wasn't there, as he was currently in Egypt. This man was tall and thin, with a hook nose, a scowl on his features, and a gun in his rear waistband. He tabbed his foot and kept on the lookout for anyone approaching.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 02, 2015, 10:02:04 AM**

Soren grabbed a toolbox laying near the bridge's entrance. "I'll get to work on the repeater. Marita and Axel, could you two get to work on that virus?"

He opened a panel that was clearly labeled "radio" and began tinkering with the radio equipment.

Anne looked out the window. She nodded. "Whenever you're ready, Soren."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 02, 2015, 01:50:48 PM**

"I'm on it, I'm on it..." Axel muttered, his brow furrowed, tongue sticking out in concentration as his fingers scuttled across the keys of Marita's laptop.

As Vergil mentioned readying the dinghy, Triste answered his smile with a small one of her own - though it vanished after a split second. "I'd be honoured." Walking briskly across the yacht, she reached the side of the ship. The dinghy was suspended above the water, a set of pulleys keeping it up, and as she studied the craft she frowned. "This won't be big enough for the whole group to fit. Looks like we'll have to leave some of us behind after all," Triste called back.

"I'll stay," Rio volunteered, his eyes staring at the wheel hungrily.

Axel stood up from the laptop and rubbed a hand through his hair. "Alright, done. It's not pretty, but, ah, it'll get the job done." He bit his lip as Triste reported that the dinghy wasn't big enough. "I'll stay back too. We can keep the boat going then come back to pick up the away team when they're done." He blinked. "It might be nice to *not* have someone trying to shoot my ass for once." Pulling out a USB stick onto which he'd stored the malicious files, he tossed it over to Soren. "Here. If you can find their network systems, just stick that in and open it up. It'll do all the rest for you."

Triste had meanwhile been lowering the dingy into the water, the view of any workers at the plant obscured by the angle the yacht was positioned. As it splashed lightly into the water, Triste turned back to the group as she lowered herself over the side. "Whoever's coming, hurry up. We don't have all day." She fixed her gaze on Anne. "Make sure you disable the cameras *before* they get the chance to see us. We need to make this quiet."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2015, 05:25:18 PM**

The representative of Kalis was standing outside a makeshift hovel in the remote deserts outside Corona.

An overweight middle-aged man opened the door. He was visibly nervous and couldn't meet the representative's eye. "Uh...hello. Hi. Nice to see you...uh...showed up..." Meekly he led the way into the back of the building, where a hastily-assembled radio and broadcaster took up the lion's share of the living quarters.

The only other person present was a dark-skinned woman in a light grey dress. "Hello," she greeted the newcomer. "My name is Lily North. I'm the one who spoke to Veranus recently. Thank you for meeting with us so promptly."

"I'll stay on the boat as planned," Flora nodded.

Emilena strapped her pistol onto her belt and carefully boarded the dinghy. "Marita, we're going to need you on the infiltrating team. For your hacking expertise."

Flora sidled up to the map and secretly palmed Rose a note: *Will you stay with me on the boat? I desperately want to ask you some things regarding Marita...*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 02, 2015, 05:34:05 PM**

A click was heard as Soren closed the access panel. He wiped off some dirt on a nearby paper towel.

"All right, repeater's ready to go." The USB landed at his feet. He picked it up and pocketed it.

A distinct clatter was heard as Anne retrieved her rifle from the locker and loaded it. She also had on a ballistic vest but a helmet was conspicuously absent. "Hey Soren! We're ready to go!"

"Just give me a moment!" Soren ran over to the open locker and grabbed his shotgun. He quickly loaded in shells and strapped on a belt containing extras. He also donned the provided ballistic vest and helmet. He slung his shotgun over his back.

He then looked at Rio, Tony and Axel. "Shouldn't I stay to fend off boarding attempts?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 02, 2015, 06:19:50 PM**

Sure ' Marita said, going over and grabbing her computer. Lets go then." Marita Said grabbing her bag, which had her gun stored insude it. She slid her computer in, and looked at Vergil Emilena and Trieste.

_
"I'm going with the infiltrators ' Marie said " Just be warned, I havent used a gun much.. but I'll do my best to help ' she said as she took out her gun.

_
I'm staying with Rio and Flora ' rose said as she took the note and took a very brief glance at it.. she motioned to flora then towards the back of the boat.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 07, 2015, 03:22:41 AM**

Axel shook his head. "No, if they try to board we'll just have to, ah... well, we'll have to think of something. But we can't start fighting on the boat - we're too exposed, if the security starts firing on us we'll be cut to pieces."

"Oh, that makes me feel good," Rio muttered in the background.

"Stay with the others Rambo," Axel said, nudging Soren's shoulder. "You know what the other waypoints were like, if it's the same thing here they'll need all the help they can get. It's alright, we'll be okay."

"It's now or never!" Triste called across, looking over the side of the boat. "*We need to go!*"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 07, 2015, 12:23:05 PM**

Tony nodded at Axel to take over, and relinquished the wheel. "Right! Well we'll see you guys in a bit!" he said, jogging down the stairs from the bridge to the rear of the craft, where their zodiac was bobbing in the water gently.

Vergil had climbed aboard after he had helped Triste hoist the launch over the side, and all that was left was to motor the short distance to shore. Tony took his seat, closed his eyes, and waited while they began the voyage, Vergil operating the throttle to bring them towards the shoreline. There were a lot of reeds poking out of the water here, and it would make an ideal spot to run the craft on shore and conceal it.

Tony held the small GPS tracker in his hand, opening his eyes to check it every so often, as it was pinging off the precise heading and distance of the waypoint. As the craft crept into the reeds, Vergil ran it up onto the shore to beach it so it wouldn't drift away, and Tony hopped out to help haul it further onto the sand. Vergil cut the engine and leaped out as well, crouching in the reeds as he watched the compound, which was about 100 meters to their left.

"The vehicles we're after are slightly to the right of that building... I think there's people in the building though." Vergil said softly.

"Well... guess we'll just have to be quiet... who's got the laser cutter?" Tony whispered, referring to a small pen laser they'd brought to slice through things like fences, such as the one that surrounded the compound.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 07, 2015, 03:19:36 PM**

Soren sat in the zodiac. His shotgun was slung across his back.

When they had landed, he took out his comp-noculars and focused. There, he saw two of those armored dune buggies. "I see two of the vehicles but no cameras." He then noticed several quadcopter drones flitting through the air. Upon closer look, he noticed the drones were armed with a machine gun and a camera dangling underneath the body. "Scratch that, I see a few armed security drones."

He then switched his comp-noculars to a radar mode. There, several silhouettes showed up against the blank concrete wall. "It looks like a guard post of some sort. And there's at least four people inside."

"I've got the cutting tools and shit," Anne whispered. Her horn was active and she had overheard bits and pieces of radio chatter.

Upon hearing Soren, she softly swore. She snorted as a reed tickled her muzzle. "Great, I can't jam anything because if the cameras or sensors here go out, the guards will stream out and start looking for what happened."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2015, 03:20:59 PM**

'Here ' Marita said, handing it over to Tony. ' " Just make a big enough opening for all of us, so we can all get through. time is of the essence , after all.
-
marie crouched down and stared at the fence, which wound its way off into the distance.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 07, 2015, 06:21:24 PM**

"Are the cameras feeding directly to the guard post or do they have their own security room elsewhere?" Emilena asked under her breath. "If the latter, we could cut them off at the source and then bypass the guard post easily."

Flora fidgeted her hands nervously. "Hi. I was just wondering regarding Marita...we haven't actually...you know...done anything yet, and you're like an expert on that, so I was wondering...what do girls *do* exactly during it? Do they just like...lay there?" Flora stammered, blushing beet red.

"I'm a former member of Vergil's team. I joined him out of concern for my son's well-being, who's currently a soldier in Kalis' fleet." Lily's eyes flashed angrily. "Vergil recently kicked me off the team, saying our goals were 'incompatible' and that I shouldn't care if my son dies just for the good of *his* mission."

She stepped forward and unrolled a large map of the world. "I'm not the only one he's antagonized; I have a friend on the inside, and they have a direct line to me. Wherever Vergil's team goes, whatever they do, I get informed in real time. As it's happening." She tapped a section of the Nile River. "Half of his team has just disembarked from their boat here. They're hoping to secure land vehicles and travel to the waypoint. The noncombatants are remaining on the boat in case a distraction is needed."

She stepped back so the representative could examine the map without his personal space being threatened. "And while that's the primary service I can provide, I can help in another way." Lily took a deep breath. "I'm a psion. I specialize in healing and I'm the reason Vergil's team has never suffered a casualty up until now. However, Vergil blocked my powers somehow when he kicked me out, and I haven't found a way to reactivate them. If your doctors can help me with that, I can revolutionize your hospitals and infirmaries. Both of these services come at a single price; I want Kalis to assure my son, Ejlert Sulus North, is stationed somewhere out of harm's way."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2015, 11:25:08 PM**

Rose stared at Flora upon reaching the back of the boat and hearing her question.
' Wait, are you asking me what to do while having sex with Marita?' she sighed and took a deep breath before answering. " have you ever had sex with another girl Flora? I'm guessing not, by your question, someone who has had experience in that wouldn't ask such questions or be nervous about it..
but normally before you do anything intimate, you go out on a date. makes it more meaningful when you are in bed- you've spent time together, had a good time and are in the mood for some 'fun'. I'm also guessing you haven't had many dates either. we'll take you out on one after this is over, see how you like it. but since you asked about what happens when two girls do it, I'll tell you.

now, in girl-girl , one of the girls assumes the male position, which is on top. the one on top drives the action and dictates to the one on bottom. girl-girl sex is similar to male female sex, with the exception of course is that girls don't have a penis and there's no penetration. no risk of pregnancy either , which given our - and by our I mean, Marita, Marie, and me-current financial status is a very good thing, we couldn't afford having a baby.
every girl I've had is different to a degree- some like a long session, others just want to get it over with.some like foreplay others dont. Marita usually is on the bottom, with me on top. shes a good lay and rather feisty in bed, especially after a glass of wine.' Rose said with a smile.'would you like me to show you a few things?" Rose asked Flora.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 08, 2015, 04:50:06 AM**

Triste studied the building then shook her head. "It's difficult to tell..." she replied to Emilena's question. "Shit, we need those vehicles." Studying the paths the drone were taking proved no help - there was no distinctive pattern to where they flew. Her eyes narrowed. The machines only seemed to be patrolling the outside of the perimeter. If they could just get past the fence to the inside of the compound...

"Anne," she started. "Could you just try to target the sensors on those drones? Not the cameras? You disable those, then I could cloak in, cut the fence and bring one of vehicles to the rest of you, further down from the range of the drones."

Rio snorted. "What do you mean, go out on dates before doing anything *intimate*," he said, scrunching up his face on this last word. "Sometimes, all people want is a good hard screw. Who the hell has time for dates?"

Axel said nothing, his eyes fixed resolutely forwards as he steered the boat back to the center of the river, the plant drawing nearer. Betraying his attempt to appear nonchalant, his ears had turned a bright shade of pink, and as Rose began her description they turned in her direction in a rather fixed manner.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 08, 2015, 10:51:37 AM**

"Good idea." Vergil whispered. "We'll be ready. Once Anne jams the sensors, Triste gets the vehicle, we get in, and take off. I'll run interference in case something goes wrong... I can easily topple a few drones and knock a few security guards back after all."

"Right! So... let's make it happen then! According to the GPS, the waypoint is nine miles off... so that's... not too far into the desert. About a ten minute drive or so." Tony whispered back.

"Chances are, the guards will hear the vehicle start up so... I may need to run interference anyway." Vergil murmured. "I'll be ready for that... so just focus on getting that vehicle to us. I'll cover you while you do..." Vergil assured Triste. "And hey!" he said, reaching out and grabbing her arm. "Be careful... all right?"

A figure wearing red robes suddenly appeared behind the agent now, and glared at Lily with cold, dead, but golden eyes. He was a tall gargoyle gecko, his skin spiny and hideous looking. His robes swept down to his feet, which weren't visible. His lower jaw was gone, replaced by a metallic substitute which clearly did not lend itself to movement. Instead, when he spoke, it came from some voice box embedded deep in his throat, giving him a raspy, hoarse, yet chilly voice that sounded like death incarnate. Lily could sense his powers were immense, dwarfing anything she might have ever encountered before.

"You need not concern yourself with Vergil's team. I've already taken measures to ensure that not only will they soon be in my possession, but after extracting what relevant information I need, they will be eliminated. One of their own team is working for me... though he doesn't know it yet." Kalis explained, not blinking as he stared at her. "My second-in-command is shadowing them. Once they have the waypoint, he'll move in. However, I've sent Admiral Carrack and his flagship as backup... they won't have any chance of escaping my trap."

"Your powers are useful to me... you may enlist... though know this... I do not broker deals. Your son will be called upon to serve whatever capacity I see fit. He is of use to me, and I will send him to a position that makes the most use of his talents. You join me, and I can guarantee that should you survive the coming war, I will personally see to it that you will receive whatever you want on this planet. That is an assurance I can give you." he concluded, having stared at her this whole time, his eyes boring into her deeper and deeper.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 08, 2015, 02:38:00 PM**

"I'll provide cover fire if things go south." Emilena sighted the scope on her pistol. "Always wanted to try one of these; sounds completely stupid in theory but at this range it'd actually fit the bill."

She attached a silencer. "Course, it'd be ideal if it didn't come to that."

Flora jumped; she hadn't realized the others were in earshot. "What? No! I've had *loads* of sex! With...*lots* of people!" she added hastily. "Come on," she practically dragged Rose out of the room and into the lower deck of the yacht.

"There, uh, might be a bit of a problem with that..." she kept her voice low even though they were now alone. "I'm not...uh...exactly built like other girls. I don't know if it'll be the same thing..." She hesitated, then nervously unbuckled her jeans and slid them down to her kneecaps. "Is that a dealbreaker? Will Marita insist we keep things nonphysical?"

Lily visibly jumped; she thought the representative had come alone. She recomposed herself quickly, and hoped that her less-than-graceful first impression would be excused since she's not applying for a combat role. "I'm...glad to hear Ejlert is of use to you," she replied. "That's reassurance enough, that he's part of the picture and not just a faceless gun among the ranks..."

"Er..." Foley cleared his throat. "That offer applies to me too, right?" he had been shaking ever since Kalis had appeared, and was quickly wondering if calling attention to himself had been a mistake.

"Foley is a skilled programmer and a friend of mine," Lily introduced. "He's the reason I was able to contact you; he reverse-engineered Veranus' radio chip using only the supplies in this shanty."

"I heard from multiple sources you're planning on taking over the world, and pretty close to doing it..." Foley tried to grin casually but the fear in his eyes kinda killed the intended effect, "and I thought 'that sounds like the team to be on,' you know?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 08, 2015, 03:59:08 PM**

rose started as flora undid her jeans and revealed her privates- instead of a vagina like a normal girl, a penis moved back and forth . ' have.. you .. always had that? she asked quietly.'or is that an implant? rose looked closely at flora. ' you're not the first one i've met to have a 'double package', in my er-previous work, i had a few girls with sausage downstairs. they were actually the nicest companions and paid the best- most likely because i was willing to bang them.there was a girl named Curusa ... anyway. i dont think it will be a dealbreaker. maritas had a open mind ever since we started dating. as long as you are honest and open with it, have a package wont be an issue."
-
9 miles huh, so we'll need to move very fast.. ' marita said..'cut the fence, and move your butts.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 08, 2015, 07:01:34 PM**

Anne nodded. At the same time, she tried to pick out the frequency the drones transmitted in. The mare found that frequency and sent a small burst of radio waves which was picked up by the repeater on the boat and greatly amplified.

"It's done," she whispered.

Little did she know that other sensors had picked up an unusual burst of radio waves coming from the boat cruising down the river.

Inside another part of Aswan Algal Chemicals, a group of flying-frame equipped guards were being dispatched to that boat cruising down the river. Standard protocol for the guards was to hail the vessel and ask if there were any problems. An armed patrol boat was also dispatched.

Soon, a sleek motorboat with a machine gun on its bow was roaring down the Nile River and heading straight for the boat that Tony was currently captaining. Four of the armed guards flew above the boat, the engines of their flying frames were drowned out by the roar of the motorboat's engine.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 08, 2015, 10:05:13 PM**

"It's not a 'double package,' I'm just flytrap and no Venus," Flora corrected softly, blushing. "And I've always had it...honestly sometimes I don't think I really count as a 'girl.'"

She was getting excited, and there was no real way for her to hide it. "So, you said you were going to 'show me some things'?" she repeated, flushing bright red under her fuchsia fur.

"Go Triste, go!" Emilena kept her gaze trained on the expanse ahead, but the coast was completely clear.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 08, 2015, 11:07:26 PM**

well, considering the circumstances we'll keep it short and sweet. a bit of breast foreplay and french kissing ' rose said. ' since well we have to keep an eye out for the others and anyone who might try to stop us from, well, getting out of here.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 09, 2015, 09:16:45 AM**

Triste nodded and glanced back at Vergil, briefly touching his fingers. "I'm hoping it'll take more than this to bring me down." She met his eyes for a second, then pulled away, standing up and cloaking simultaneously. "Just keep me covered," she muttered, then set off at a jog down towards the fence.

Getting closer, she could almost feel the eyes of the drones upon her, almost a physical weight that seemed to weigh her down. Triste could hear their mechanical whirring as they hovered lazily overhead. As she ran beneath one, her boots crunching softly on the rocks and pebbles scattered across the sand beneath her feet, the drone suddenly stopped in its path, swiveling in her direction camera and machine-gun barrel gleaming in the sun's glare. Triste's heart sank - *had something gone wrong? Could it see her?!* - and as she ran past it the gecko kept it in her peripheral vision, convinced she was about to feel the hot, piercing pain of bullets ripping into her.

Then she was past, and nothing had happened. Letting out a breath slowly, Triste looked over her shoulder and saw the drone set off in another path, not interested in her. *Thank god.* Finally, she was at the fence. Stopping just short of the chain-link structure, she quickly pulled out the laser cutter that she'd taken from Anne. A thin buzzing started to whine in her head - her cloaking was about to run out. Breathing evenly, Triste activated the device and started to run it down the fence, the white hot laser cutting easily through the metal. The buzzing in her head started to get louder, more insistent, and she picked up her speed, cutting down then to the left, creating a small flap. Switching off the laser, Triste gently pulled the flap up at the corner, slipped through and pulled it shut gently behind her... just as her cloaking drained away. Hissing, she darted forwards and pressed herself flat against the wall of the security compound.

The ringing in her head started to fade as the invisibility system embedded in her skin started to recharge. Triste knew they didn’t have enough time to wait, so after taking a second to gain her bearings she set off to the right, keeping close to the wall of the compound as she followed the structure around to the rear of the building. Only once did she have to duck past a window, and as she did so Triste heard the muted voices of the four guards Soren had reported.

Whatever they were talking about, the discussion seemed relaxed. In the background, she could hear the sound of what sounded like a sports commentary coming from a tv. If they were lucky, the noise would cover the sound of the vehicle.

She rounded the corner and finally, there in front of her were the two armored vehicles. They were parked out in the open - right in view of a door leading into the building. Shooting a wary glance in the door's direction, she darted straight for the closest vehicle. Running her long fingers against the vehicle, she pulled the handle and almost smiled as the heavy door heaved open. *Thanks for making it easier...* Easing herself behind the wheel, she took a quick look at the ignition and gritted her teeth. No keys - of course it wouldn't be that easy. Sliding the knife from its sheath on her arm, she sliced at the wires beneath the wheel and started reconnecting them, shooting glances through the windscreen towards the door. Still nobody. Suddenly, the engine of the armored buggy rumbled to life, the dashboard lighting up.

Triste waited for a second to see if anyone came out, and when the door stayed shut she allowed herself a quick smile. Things were finally going smoothly. Working the gearbox, Triste eased the buggy forwards, keeping it slow for the moment as she craned her neck to see down to the front of the car. A gate in the fence was ajar, and she nudged the buggy through, trying the keep the noise down as the metal squeaked. Then the vehicle was clear, and she started to pick up the speed, the dust road she followed taking her further away from the compound and, luckily, keeping away from the sight of the drones. Glancing to the side, she spotted the area where the rest of the team was hiding and as she swung the vehicle off the road and sped towards them, Triste could feel her heart pounding in her chest. *The hard part still isn't over.*

"Get off! *Stop it!*" Axel snapped as Rio prodded at his arms, the metal clinking as the boy's sharp nails tapped against their surface. Throwing a hand up in the air in exasperation, Axel turned away from the wheel and pointed a finger. "Keep it up and I'm hanging you on our flagpole! I'm talking serious wedgie time!"

Rio seemed unimpressed by his protests. "So they don't fire lasers or rockets or anything?"

"They let me pick stuff up and... do other stuff. That's it!"

"Super strength?"

"No."

"Force fields?"

"No!"

"Oh shit."

"What?"

Rio was staring at something behind Axel. The rat turned and his ears flattened as he saw what had caught Rio's attention. A boat, tailed by four guards using flying frames were speeding towards them. "Oh shit," he echoed.

"Move!" Rio pushed against Axel and put his hands on the wheel, standing on tiptoes to see where the boat was heading. "It'll look more natural that we're going slow if I'm driving... just talk to them!"

Staying next to Rio in case he started to steer them aground, Axel swallowed and turned to face the incoming security team. He waved to them. "Ah... Ahoy there!" he called lamely.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 09, 2015, 12:13:01 PM**

The motorboat slowed down as it stopped next to the pleasure vessel. The flying guards landed on the deck and their wings retracted.

The first guard took off his helmet, revealing a man with a heavily tanned face and Arabic features.

"*Hello,*" he said in Arabic. When he got no response, he switched to English. "We noticed that your boat seems to be going a little slow. Are you having some engine trouble?"

Despite the guard's casual tone, the motorboat's gun turret was aimed squarely at the bridge and the three other guards had their weapons at the ready.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 11, 2015, 04:46:42 PM**

Vergil watched Triste go about her business, and though he soon lost sight of her, he knew she was making it look easy, but also knew it was anything but. He knew she'd be going through some tense moments here, and as he heard the rumble of the engine and saw the vehicle start to roll forward, he began silently pleading. "Yes... yes..." He hissed under his breath. "Come on! Come on!" Still no movement from the guard shack... fortunately they seemed really interested in their sports match for whatever reason.

"That's it..." he said, watching as the vehicle got closer and closer. The less they had to deal with here... the better. Vergil knew their hands would be full at the waypoint, so this was good. Less crap equaled more productivity as far as he was concerned. Vergil could already sense the others might be in trouble back at the boat....

As the vehicle rolled to a stop near them, he stood up and made for the side door. "Let's go!" he whispered, throwing it open and allowing everyone to clamber in first. Tony got in, holding the GPS locator, and Vergil finally climbed into the front passenger's seat, shutting the door and nodding after they were all in.

"Uh OK so like... go this way." Tony reached an arm in between Triste and Vergil and motioned with his hand, waving it like a weather vane in the direction he wanted Triste to go. "It's nine miles in that direction. I'll let you know if you've deviated too much."

"Well... that went... well." Vergil said, looking over at Triste as he was propped up on this huge seat. "You did good." he praised, giving her a nod. "We might need to hurry though... I'm sensing... trouble back at the boat."

Kalis turned, and fixed Foley with a gaze that could've frozen the blood in his veins. "No offer is that ironclad when you join me. You make yourself useful or you die if you fail. I've found this method has a... very effective rate of success for those who wish to keep their jobs. It weeds out the worthless from the worthwhile. But you are correct; I need but one waypoint and Devastation's Inception is MINE! I wasn't able to access the others thanks to Rex having reprogrammed them... something I was unaware of before I killed him. Still... Vergil's search has been most fortuitous to me. My map is nearly complete, and when I have it all together... I'll know." He turned his gaze to Lily now.

"Who is your contact in Vergil's group? You tell me and I'll order Admiral Carrack to spare this person rather than kill them along with the rest of the group once he's finished extracting all the relevant information from them. Unless of course your contact is expendable, in which case I'll eliminate them along with the others in due time." Kalis informed her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 12, 2015, 07:18:01 AM**

"Well, I'm totally, uh, on board with that!" Foley stammered a reply. "Love live Emperor Kalis, hoo rah, and all that!"

"My contact would prefer to remain anonymous, at least until Vergil is killed," Lily answered. "They don't want to risk any 'special treatment' arousing suspicion from Vergil's team. They understand and accept the risk this puts them at."

She paused. "Would it...be possible to learn where Ejlert is currently stationed? Maybe even visit him, if possible?"

"F-french kissing?" Flora stammered. Her fingers shook as she unbuttoned her shirt. "I...uh...just like that?" She wasn't used to getting this far; usually once the flytrap entered the picture she was greeted with a metaphorical (even sometimes physical) wall.

Emilena vaulted into the vehicle. "Nice job, now let's book it. They won't notice this truck is missing forever."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 12, 2015, 10:37:47 AM**

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yes. i'll keep it under a minute' Rose said. Rose suddenly pressed her lips to Flora's, stopping her from unbuttoning her shirt. Rose had kissed girls like Flora before, she found Floras lips to be soft and supple, the same went for her bosom, which Rose now touched with her claws. Rose gently slid her tongue into Floras mouth.
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Marita and Marie climbed onto the back of the vehicle ' lets move Marita said ' the sooner we get to and clear the waypoint, the better. lets just hope theres not 50 giant killer machines at this one..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 13, 2015, 03:47:05 AM**

Triste's jaw clenched when Vergil mentioned trouble back on the boat. "Son of a bitch... alright, let's make this quick." As soon as the others had clambered into the vehicle she slammed the accelerator to the floor and the buggy roared off, kicking up a trail of gritty sand and loose stones.

The direction she'd been directed towards was off road, and the car was launched into the air several times as they raced across the uneven ground - luckily the buggy was built for this terrain, and the passengers stayed in relative comfort as they were bounced about. In the distance, Triste could see that the direction they were taking was leading into a more mountainous area, something that she noted with a degree of relief. At least they'd be less exposed.

"Any idea what to expect?" she asked Vergil. "I know it's a fair distance out, but the less noise we can make out there, the better."

Axel blinked uncertainly when the guard first began speaking Arabic, but upon the man changing to English a relieved smile worked its way onto his face. "Ah, no no, nothing like that sir.... er, officer..." He swallowed, his mouth becoming uncomfortably dry as he couldn't help but notice the abundance of guns. "Uh, I'm just taking my son for his first boat ride. You love boats, don't you kiddo?"

Clutching the wheel, Rio nodded enthusiastically. "I love boats dad!"

Axel chuckled. "Of course you do." The rat leaned a little closer to the guard. "He's adopted but, ah, I don't think he'll realise for a while. I think he's, you know... a little slow."

Rio's expression darkened.

"So, ah..." Axel licked his lips but it was like sandpaper. "If there's nothing else we can help you with, we'll just be on our way..." He crossed his arms casually across his bony chest, praying that whatever Rose and Flora were doing they didn't attract any attention.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 13, 2015, 09:14:20 PM**

Soren's stomach lurched as the vehicle bounded across the rocky desert. He watched as the dunes and rocks sped by them outside the window.

"Fucking hell, how fast are we going?" A jolt made his shotgun rattle in the holder he had placed it in.

Anne, on the other hand was busy eavesdropping on the radio waves. Her ears suddenly pricked up as she "heard" what had happened. "What the fucking hell!? They noticed we stole one of the vehicles!?"

Soren turned around and saw a long plume of dust blowing in the desert wind. He snatched the comp-noculars from the bag and peered out the rear window. His jaw dropped as he saw two guards with flying frames and a similar armored dune buggy in pursuit. He checked the parameters. They had a two mile head start.

"Hey! We got company! Two 'flitters' and one of those buggies!"

The guard scowled. "You *are* aware that it is illegal to allow an unlicensed minor to pilot a vessel, right? And furthermore, your son appears to be under the minimum age. I'm going to need to check the registration, license and papers."

While Aswan Algal guards weren't really military or police, in practice, they had full jurisdiction -- including full powers of search and arrest -- in company property. Which happened to include the part of the Nile that the group was on.

One of the guards, a Jackal by looks, heard some unusual noises coming from behind a closed door. Without even bothering to knock, she threw the door open.

And found Rose and Flora engaged in some heavy smooching.

(OOC - "Flitter" is slang for a frame-flyer. Particularly one associated with company security forces, military or police.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 13, 2015, 09:40:28 PM**

Rose broke away from Flora as a light was flashed in her eyes' Alright girls " said a female leopard guard holding a flashlight ' out you come.. no funny stuff. come on.
Rose took a deep breath and slowly walked out of the room."Sorry if I interrupted 'tongue hockey', but we need to know what you folks were doing in a restricted area. You DO know this part of the river is private property right?" Rose shook her head." The leopard sighed ' Tourists? Figures.' She turned to the jackal. "Take them up with the others, while i search this

area.Put cuffs on them if they try anything funny. They're most likely tourists who got lost , its happened three times now in the past two weeks."
the leopard turned and motioned to Flora 'come on, you too."

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2 miles isnt that much, especially when they likely have heavier fire power' Marita said. ' floor it Trieste!' She said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 15, 2015, 01:03:49 PM**

Vergil shook his head in regards to Triste's question. "No... I don't. I... I don't think I've ever been to this one!" he admitted, swallowing hard. "But it doesn't matter! Whatever awaits us... you can bet it'll be..." Before he could finish, Soren interrupted him, and Vergil whipped his head around to try and see what the pursuers looked like. "Yes..." He muttered, clenching his jaw.

He began focusing on one of the flying frames, and suddenly, it veered off course, right towards the other frame. Vergil was telekinetically manipulating it, hoping the two would smash into each other and that would be that. Since they were out ahead of the buggy, they had a chance of falling right into the path of their comrades.

"Holy shit!" Tony declared, going wide eyed as he saw what was happening behind them. "Uh... you doing that?" he asked Vergil with uncertainty, who didn't respond, as the gecko appeared to be concentrating heavily.

"Don't have time for this nonsense." was all Vergil replied bluntly, not taking his eyes off the now erratic flying frame.

"Uh... right! Um..." Tony checked the locator again. "It's uh... it's like... see that grayish hill?" he asked, pointing it out as best he could to Triste. "It's that one!"

Kalis narrowed his eyes here. "Then your contact risks being killed along with the rest, something I couldn't care less about." he said dismissively. "If it does occur... you can chalk it up to the rest of the casualties that will be taking place once I launch my final offensive against the Federation."

He regarded her with dark eyes, the gold seeming to glow almost as she asked if she could see her son. "He currently serves aboard my flagship. I'm planning to gate-jump soon to Admiral Carrack's location and meet this... Vergil for myself." he informed her. "So my flagship will not remain in this area for long. If it's detected... the Federation flies will swarm over it. I'll be taking it to the *Leviathan* soon." he explained. "You may come if you wish." he told her simply.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 15, 2015, 06:10:47 PM**

Flora yelped and scrambled to pull her pants back up, but succeeded only in falling over. "Who the hell are you?" she stammered. "You couldn't even give us one minute?"

She was halfway decent by the time she and Rose were shunted back to the cockpit with Rio and Axel.

"Which one of you owns this boat?" the lead guard asked, shining the flashlight in Flora's face.

"Ow! I do!" Flora lied. "I've got the papers in my suitcase." Pushing her captor angrily off of her, she crossed to her suitcase and rummaged through, flushed and pent-up.

Emilena sighted her scoped revolver for the eleventh time, fired, and missed for the twelfth time. "Why the hell didn't I keep that laser pistol?" She griped, rebalancing as the truck bounced erratically. "No wonder I never bothered getting certified with these back in the force!"

"I would like that very much!" Lily exclaimed, then covered her mouth, worried she was sounding too eager in front of the warlord. "Sorry, I've just been hoping to see my son for a very long time. I also should investigate your infirmaries, talk with your doctors."

She glanced at Foley. "You coming?"

He nodded. "Between rigid working conditions and getting immolated in planetary destruction, I'll take the performance evaluations."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2015, 07:18:15 PM**

Rose sighed as she took notice of the guards on the boat, of which they were 5.'no funny business from any of you'.the guard near her said harshly" we'll pay the fine, whatever it is and be on our way. Rose said ' Its 100000 credits , for operating in a restricted area, and operating with an unlicensed minor the guard said."Make the transfer to Aswan Algal. Once the credits have been verified you'll be allowed to return to port. In the future, be more careful where you are going while operating a boat.' the guards said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 15, 2015, 08:10:13 PM**

It was at that moment that Flora pulled an AK-47 out of her suitcase and emptied the magazine in full auto at the not-police, screaming uncontrollably. "Rio! Hit the gas, quickly!!!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 16, 2015, 10:05:59 AM**

The bullets struck several of the guards, staggering but not killing them thanks to their armor. Except for one who caught a bullet right in the head.

"Engage! Engage!" The guards scattered and took cover behind whatever furniture was available as they raised their weapons to engage the Folf.

Almost immediately, the sound of their own weapons added to the din.

Meanwhile, the motorboat outside kept its MG turret trained on the bridge but held its fire lest it hit the guards.

Small explosions blossomed around the dune buggy as their pursuer fired off several rounds with its own mounted autocannon turret.

"Fuck it! We need someone using the turret!" Anne shouted.

Soren retrieved the firing controls from the small recess next to the ammunition holder for the turret. Almost immediately, an image of the desert popped up on the small viewscreen.

He swore as he realized that he had no idea how to operate it. Luckily, the two joysticks were clearly labeled. Gripping the two joysticks, he swiveled the turret and aimed it until the small dot was visible. He pressed another button on the console and the camera zoomed in closer on the pursuing dune buggy. He squeezed the triggers, sending a hail of 20 mm explosive shells at the pursuers. Most of the shots went wide but it still had its intended effect; the pursuers were forced to take evasive action. Unfortunately, the gunner had *much* more experience than did Soren and several of their shots landed dangerous close to them. In fact, one even grazed the vehicle's turret.

Every so often a red line showed up in the screen thanks to the fact the cannon was loaded with a mix of tracer and explosive shells.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2015, 10:10:01 AM**

Flora! Rose ducked as the bullets went flying and the battle was joined.. " you do realize you just blew any chance of us paying a fine and heading out scotfree? Now we're going to have to fight our way out of this--or pay like a million credit fine.. which we dont have..' She turned and tackled the leopard guard who was surprised by Rose attacking her. Rose pinned her down with her weight and grabbed her handcuffs from a side pocket. Rose Cuffed the guards arms behind her back then gagged her with a handkerchief. ' take them down.. we'll dump them off at the nearest dock' she said, as she left the guard on the ground, and crouched low to tangle with another guard.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 16, 2015, 12:28:23 PM**

Axel's eyes went blank when the guard requested to see papers. "Uh... yeah, this is a rental but they'll be somewhere around..."

The sound of Flora's AK-47 tore through the air.

The rat flinched and gave a surprised squeak, shooting a quick glance over at Rio who seemed just as confused as he was. Turning back to the guard, Axel's mouth opened and closed as he tried to think of something to say. The he saw the man reaching around for his gun, and the time to talk was over.

Without thinking, Axel rushed forward and barreled into the guard, driving him back and heaving the shocked man over the handrail, sending him tumbling with a yell into the river. Almost as soon as he'd fallen out of the way, the turret mounted on the boat below roared to life. Yelling, Axel threw himself backwards as bullets shredded the wooden handrail, tearing through the air where he'd been standing moments before. "*Fuck!*" he shrieked, covering his face with his arms as wooden splinters rained down on him. Axel's ears started to ring as the sound of several other guns were added to the mix. As he lay on the floor, slightly dazed, a thought managed to push through the clouds fuzzing up his head - *If we don't get the boat moving, we're gonna be shredded...* Numbly, Axel rolled onto his front and looked across at Rio, who was crouching down by the wheel, his eyes seeming to dart around everywhere. "Rio!" he screamed. "Start the boat!"

Rio glanced across almost irritably as he heard the rat shouting. He knew that in a firefight, running around was only going to make you more likely to get shot - staying still was his best chance. He tried to focus on what Axel was saying.

Start the boat!

Nodding quickly, Rio reached up and pushed the throttle fully forwards, trying to peek around to see where the boat was heading. It seemed painfully sluggish. "Doesn't this go any faster?!" he groaned, punching the wheel in irritation.

"That's the top speed!" Scrabbling across the floor, Axel joined Rio at the wheel, one hand on the boy's back to keep him low. He could only hope none of the guards came up to where they were - with no weapon to speak of, Axel had no way of defending them.

"I see it!" Triste nodded as Tony pointed the direction to head for, slamming her foot down on the accelerator as their pursuers drew closer and closer in the rearview mirror. Several *thumps* reverberated throughout the vehicle as bullets slammed into them - silently, Triste gave thanks that the buggy was armored. It would only be able to take so much though...

"Soren! Hurry up and kill those bastards!" she growled, swerving the car left and right in an effort to avoid the machine gun fire. Ahead, the spot Tony had indicated was drawing closer. *Shit!* They'd need to deal with them before reaching it...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2015, 02:12:50 PM**

Rose felt the ship begin to move as the sound of bullets thudded against the walls. the windows in the room shattered as bullets hit them. she crouched down and tackled one of the remaining guards, knocking the gun out of her hand. she tied the guard up using her cuffs, then grabbed the gun where the guard a had dropped it. she saw the final guard trying to shot at Flora. She took careful aim and fired, hitting the guard in the side of the neck, and causing him to collapse to the ground. the guards were now dealt with but there was still the matter of the turret on the boat firing at them. Flora get down! Rose called out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 16, 2015, 02:35:39 PM**

Flora had been hit in the thigh, shoulder, foot, and the last guard got a glancing strike across her side. Tumbling to the ground with a crash and lolling her head to the side, she caught the cuffed jackal guard glaring at her. "What's your problem...?" the folf asked, words slurring slightly.

The jackal started. "Are you insane?"

Flora honestly considered that. "Wow, you know, I might be." Flicking an attachment on her rifle, she shined the guard right in the eye with a pink laser sight. As the jackal screeched and tried in vain to cover her eyes with her hands, Flora dragged herself dizzily to a handrail and held on as the boat bounced and jolted in its wake. She didn't feel well...

Emilena finally hit her first target with the scoped revolver, by ignoring the scope and aiming from the hip. "When we get to the waypoint, you better move fast Vergil! We're gonna be holding them off as long as we can!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2015, 03:02:12 PM**

Rose ran crouched to avoid getting hit, and made her way over to the railing to assist flora ' The boat was moving as fast as it could and was (Very) slowly pulling out of the turrets range. _ Grab onto me Flora so you can steady yourself. Once we;re out of range we'll look at removing those bullets ' Rose said, looking at the bloody spots on Floras shoulder side and leg.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 18, 2015, 03:42:09 AM**

Though the boat was travelling as fast as it could, the guard's patrol boat was easily keeping pace, the gunner keeping the hail of bullets trained on them. The bullets were tearing the boat apart - there was no way they could keep going like this. Axel swore under his breath as he searched for a way to get rid of the patrol craft. From their position, he wouldn't be able to get up and leave the wheel - it would just give the gunner the clear target he needed to cut them down. Defeated, Axel crouched back down and gritted his teeth.

He turned to Rio and started to say something when he saw the boy staring at something in the distance. Axel spun to follow his line of sight, and blinked when he saw a spot on the left side of the river where a collection of large and sharp looking rocks were clustered, their tips jutting out of the water like vicious teeth. They were on the same side as the patrol boat.

"No way!" Axel looked back at Rio. "It's too risky, we could get caught up instead, then we'd be screwed!"

"We're screwed if we don't do anything!" Rio snapped back, his knuckles clenched white on the wheel.

That was a fair point, Axel decided. Taking the wheel from Rio, he kept the boat going in an even line, the guard's motorboat moving up closer to their side. The roar of the turret was almost unbearable - *how many bullets does this thing have?!* The rocks were getting closer... closer... *Now!*

Axel quickly spun the wheel to the left as hard as he could. The motorboat had shifted to the right to give the rocks a wide berth, but suddenly the larger boat they'd been chasing was bearing down on them. The side of the rental boat, shredded by gunfire, slammed into them and the guards were pushed inexorably towards the jagged rocks. The driver tried desperately to stop, but it was too late and they were swept forwards.

As Axel heard the crunching of the motorboat and the screams of the guards, a small part of Axel hoped the men hadn't been crushed by what they'd just done - the guards were just doing their job after all. But a bigger part of him was relieved that they'd been dealt with.

Beside him, Rio was yelling in bloodthirsty glee. "*Yeah!* Eat that, cocksuckers!"

His heart thumping like a jackhammer in his chest, Axel yanked the wheel back to the right, trying to get them away from the rocks. Luckily, it seemed that -

The boat was jerked to the side, throwing Axel and Rio to the floor, the crunching of wood that filled the air soon replaced by the screeching of metal. "Aw no... *come on...*" Axel moaned, scrambling back up and wrenching the wheel. There was a final scraping sound, and the boat pulled free, heading back into the safety of deeper waters, listing slightly.

They were taking on water.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 19, 2015, 07:17:00 PM**

The dune buggy shook as it took several more impacts. "I'm trying my best!" Soren shouted. It was then he got an idea.

He aimed the turret at the ground in front of the pursuing vehicle and pulled the trigger. His gamble was perfect. Not expecting mines in company territory, the bottom of the vehicle was unarmored. While most of the rounds detonated against the rocky ground, a few had managed to bounce up and strike the vulnerable drivetrain. The stricken vehicle ground to a halt.

Smirking, he aimed the turret at the armored windshield of the disabled vehicle and let loose a stream of HE rounds. The vehicle soon burst into flame as its battery pack was breached and the electrolytes caught fire.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 20, 2015, 10:03:53 AM**

" 'Sokay..." Flora muttered weakly, allowing Rose to stagger her over to the first aid kit. "I just need some...just need some..." she spotted a large syringe of morphine underneath the gauze. "Oh *god* yes."

She injected the entire contents of the syringe into her arm and sighed in relief as a fuzzy numbness clouded her brain. "You know..." she smiled dizzily at Rose, "I really liked...what we had back there...before--"

"We're taking on water!" she suddenly heard someone yell. In seconds Flora and Rose were up to their ankles in the Nile.

"It's still okay..." Flora insisted, wrapping her arms around Rose. Her eyes weren't focused on anything in particular. "It's still okay...Aurora will save us..."

"Nice!" crowed Emilena. "You're not half as useless as you were in Lanthae!"

She glanced backward at Triste. "We've got our opening, now get us to the waypoint before reinforcements arrive!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 20, 2015, 04:59:11 PM**

I'd rather not leave our fate up to Aurora" Rose said, grabbing the gauze and bandages and shoving them down her dress front with one hand before sloshing through the water as she held onto the clearly drugged out Flora.' and Yeah, It was getting interesting there before we were rudely interrupted. i'm thinking a Take 2 is in order, once we get the heck out of here. lets.. go find a lifeboat. Axel! Rio! I Think it's time to abandon ship!" she called out.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2015, 05:17:33 PM**

Hey! Dont leave us here!" the jaguar guard called out, the water rapidly rising as she struggled to her feet, the water lapping at her heels. She held out her arms in surrender as best she could. "'look, help me and Uesa get out of here and we'll .. look the other way. we'll class this as an accident.. happens quite a bit in this portion of the river."
Rose paused , her arms starting to strain from holding the drugged Flora.'Fine. There's a lifeboat on board right?' Yes. one, on the left side of the boat. standard issue for this class. Holds a max of 10 passengers' the jackal guard said as she rushed over to the gagged leopard, got her to her fet, and ungagged her. the leopard swore as she was ungagged ' What the hell is wrong with you people!' she shrieked at Rose and Flora.

_
"Uesa, the time for recrimination is later, after we get off of this boat. we've got maybe 15 minutes to get off before it sinks.' Atrua -which was the leopards name- said ' Hold still.' she helped Uesa work off her cuffs then Uesa undid the cuffs on Atrua.''Get to the boat ' Uesa said imperiously, drawing in heavy breaths "we need to get our belongings and first aid ' Floras not in good shape..' Rose started.
- Then she shouldn't have started shooting off an AK-47! Uesa said roughly, before sighing." Look. get to the lifeboat, put your friend in.. and then you have exactly 3 minutes to grab whatever you can- first aid, phones, whatever- before we start rowing away. that goes for all

of you lot . she said glaring at Rose.
Rose turned and headed towards the left side of the boat where a covered lifeboat, hung off the side of the larger boat. rose laid Flora down on the tarp that covered the boat.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 23, 2015, 05:33:30 PM**

His ears still ringing from the gun blasts which had long since died away, Axel stumbled down to Rose. "We... jesus, are you okay? Is.. is *she* okay?" He blinked at Flora, unsure, as the wounded folf lay in the lifeboat. He took a deep breath, trying to steady his nerves. "Why the hell did they start shooting at us?! What happened?! Did -" He finally spotted one of the guards and took a quick step back, slightly raising his hands. "Whoa, what's going on?" He looked to Rose for answers, his expression questioning as he noticed the guard didn't seem to be about to attack them.

Rio stepped forward, flipping the guard the finger. "What the fuck were you shooting at us for?! *Asshole!*" He grimaced and gestured to Flora and Rose. "Blow her fucking head off!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2015, 05:51:36 PM**

I made a deal with them ' we spare their lives, and they'll look the other way on our little excursion.' Rose said in reply .' get the tarp off, get in, and try and make Flora as comfortable as possible. we'll have to get those bullets out of her ASAP once we get to shore..' I'm headed back in.I'll have to get as much of our stuff back , and first aid,as quickly as possible.'
- You have 3 minutes' Uesa said as she got part of the tarp off and climbed in. Rose rushed back into the room.

- ' Be more respectful kid' Atrua said to Rio. "As for why we started shooting, We thought you folks were running contraband, quite a bit of it runs up and down the river. its why Aswan Algal has us patrolling the waters in the first place, that and occasionally tourists who don't have any idea what they are doing get stuck. First we thought you lot were tourists, then when your nutso friend here started going all 'mob enforcer' on us, we thought you were running stuff. Did you think we would not respond in kind when fired upon? why are you folks here, really?" Atrua said, looking at Axel before getting into the boat.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 25, 2015, 01:51:13 PM**

Rio gaped. "Be respectful?! You were shooting at us, bitch!"

On Atrua's mentioning of Flora firing first, Axel's eyes flicked briefly towards the folf, but when she asked what they were doing on the river he shook his head. "No. I'm not telling you anything. Look, I'm fine with not hurting you and your... your friend. I'm sorry there was any shooting in the first place, that's what we were trying to avoid - but we aren't friends." Leaning into the boat, he took the AK-47 from Flora's limp grip and raised the barrel to the two guards. "Get in the boat and shut up."

"What?!" Rio tugged at Axel's shirt. "Shoot them and dump their bodies in the water! You know they're just gonna run their mouths off about us as soon as we let them go!"

"No, they won't." Axel gestured the gun towards Atrua. "You two are staying with us until the rest of our team comes back. *Then* we'll let you go, somewhere further down." He took a quick peak into the distance towards the plant. Luckily it didn't look like any more reinforcements were coming - if anyone had been watching, it was probably assumed the security team had taken care of them. Axel looked back at Atrua. "If you try anything, I *will* shoot you."

The boat gave a sudden groan, lurching to the side, almost toppling Axel and Rio over.

"Shit..." the rat hissed. "Rose! Hurry up, we need to get out of here now!"

As Emilena managed to land a shot, Triste turned back and nodded quickly. "On it!" Slamming her foot on the accelerator, she sped the vehicle away from the guard's buggy and span the wheel, throwing them sideways into a narrow passage that led further into the mountains. After a few minutes, the steep walls of the passage flanking them fell away, revealing the waypoint before them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2015, 02:08:06 PM**

i have one question' Atrua replied as she tossed the tarp off the side and watched it fall into the water " HOW exactly do you propose to do that when your only mode of transportation, aside from this small boat, is going to sink to the river bottom in less than 10 minutes? This boat can carry 10, a bit more than that if you really push your luck. its not meant for speed of any sort, its designed to keep you alive long enough to be fished out of the river.' she asked looking at Axel.'Your young friend there has quite the mouth on him.. tell him to be a bit more respectful and we wont have any issues.
- Rose rushed to the lifeboat and dumped in 3 handbags- hers Maries and maritas. "this is all i could grab- the water is absolutely freezing' Rose said, shivering as she climbed in.' i did empty the first aid kit though' she said, opening her bag and showing the first aid supplies inside.' Roses dress was soaked completely through, and the boat began to lurch more.'Lower the boat Axel! the boat is starting to tip, it'll capsize, then sink. we need to be away from here before it does."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 25, 2015, 03:24:46 PM**

((All right I"m back from tour. No real opportunity to post after all, so I'll just have to catch up.))

Vergil watched with satisfaction as the last buggy was dealt with. While the mountains here were more like bluffs and outcroppings of rock, the gecko panned his gaze ahead, even as Tony directed the vehicle they were in to a gap in between them.

"Really remote here..." Vergil murmured, narrowing his eyes as he looked from right to left and frowned. "Hm... there!" He said, pointing to a cave that suddenly loomed off to their left. "That's it... it has to be... they wouldn't have built it in an easily accessible location after all." he stated. As Triste pulled the armored car to a halt, the cave entrance was like a giant arch, resembling a gaping mouth that sloped downward inside. It was mostly black and revealed nothing of what lay beyond.

Hopping out after opening the door, the gecko patted his side to make sure his blade was on him, and he exhaled, feeling it was still there. "All right... let's get this over with... no idea what's down there so... just be prepared for anything. This has so far been ridiculously easy but... I don't think it's going to stay that way."

He started walking towards the cave entrance, Tony hopping down as well and putting away the GPS locator. "Oh shit..." he whispered, seeing the creepy cavern opening ahead of him. "We really have to...?" he asked warily. "It's just I got this thing about you know... being underground and like... never being able to get to the surface again and like..." he trailed off here, gulping.

Kalis said nothing as he walked out, looking ahead of him. He raised his head to the heavens, and closed his eyes. "I must admit... you were the one I saw as the most gentle of the group...

the woman who would forgive anything, no matter how serious. But it's reassuring to know you're just as evil as I know anyone can be... how we ALL should be... it's our nature to desire strength and power and... aggression. It just proves anyone can be this way... and well... I don't say that lightly. Even the best of us fall... in your case it was your desire to protect your son at any cost. Others have their own desires and needs that must be fulfilled... and they can't do it if they don't compromise their own morals and values. It's why being us is so... easy. Welcome... to the other side." he stated, his body suddenly lifting off the ground and fading from view as he was he transported up to his ship using miniature gating technology.

Lily and Foley soon found themselves in the same situation, the world around them vanishing as they were suddenly in a dark metallic corridor. Various species walked around them, all wearing uniforms. Kalis began walking forward, striding with purpose as he headed for the bridge of his flagship. Soon he'd confront this Vergil and the others face to face... and would reveal something he'd found out only recently that he considered to be positively delicious before he'd terminate their lives.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 25, 2015, 05:53:27 PM**

"Heheh..." chuckled Flora, still high on morphine. She couldn't keep a ridiculous smile off her face, even smothering her snout in her bloodied paw didn't help.

"What the hell is so funny?" the jackal glared at her.

"We..." Flora giggled, "We...should only let them come with us...if they strip naked!" She snorted and winced in pain, tears streaming down her face.

Emilena reloaded, painfully aware that she was 0 out of 8 on that last clip. "Are we there yet? Please tell me we're there..." she muttered to nobody in particular. There weren't any pursuers to aim for at the time being, but she kept her focus constantly shifting, trying to gauge their combat positioning even as the speed of the buggy kept altering the cover around them.

Lily paused at Kalis' words. She'd never thought of herself as evil; while siding with Kalis was admittedly a rather dark decision outside of context, she was doing it for the good of her son and only after her other options had been excised, courtesy of Vergil. But this definitely wasn't the time to debate semantics, and besides Kalis had already left.

"Whoo-eeh!" Foley whistled in appreciation when he saw the confluent ornamentation. "Like something out of *Stargate*! Actually, maybe a bit grittier. *Battlestar Galactica.* Do you think we get our own uniforms? Do you think they'll have my size?"

"Foley... why don't you go ask someone." Lily turned away. "I've got to go check on things now. I'll see you later."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2015, 09:48:09 PM**

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that had better be the morphine talking' Uesa glowered.' Hold her down , we need to get those wounds sterilized and wrapped, the bullets will eventually work themselves out if they are shallow enough.
-
Rose dug into her bag for the guaze and bandages and and handed them to Uesa.' heres she said ' Some may be wet.' So what as long as they are otherwise clean?" Uesa said as she began treating Flora, moping up the blood from her snout and banadged the wounds on her side and neck.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 25, 2015, 11:16:52 PM**

Soren unlatched his shotgun from the holder. Anne did the same with her rifle.

"I don't like the look of this place," Soren said as he looked around the cave's forbidding entrance.

Anne said nothing but her rigidly erect ears and clamped down tail conveyed her fear.

Soren pulled out the radio he had in his pocket. "Axel, we're at the waypoint do you copy?"

Anne noticed that Soren's eyes widened and his jaw dropped. The mare tapped him on the shoulder. "Something up?

The Human put the radio away and sighed. "The radio on the boat's dead."

Despite the hot sand surrounding them and the scorching sun above, a chill ran through the duo.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 26, 2015, 07:46:45 AM**

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marita heard sorens comment and pulled out her phone and shot rose a text
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Rose , the radio on the boat isnt responding whats wrong? . after waiting a minute or so she got a reply and her jaw dropped ' you gotta be freaking kidding me! she exclaimed. she turned and looked at the others. 'the boat is sinking and the others are rowing away in the lifeboat.' she said looking shaken. ' so much for them picking us up..' Marita said.
How the heck did the boat sink?" Marie asked . ' Marita read the text ' got boarded by guards. , flora pulled out a gun and started shooting, guards ship returned fire, and in the middle of battle, boat hit some rocks and ripped big hole in the boat. we are currently in lifeboat, rowing away." we need to get the heck out of here, as soon as possible.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 28, 2015, 12:11:27 PM**

Triste's jaw clenched on hearing something had gone wrong with the boat. "Damn it..." She shrugged her shoulders, approaching the yawning mouth of the cave. "Well, we're here now. And we're too far away to be in a position to help them in any case. Let's just focus on this - once we're done here, we'll see if we can do anything for them."

As she stepped within, she felt the temperature drop almost instantly, the chill of the darkness settling over her like a cold blanket. As she stopped for moment, allowing her eyes to start adjusting to the gloom, Triste tilted her head. Had she just heart a rustle coming from further within? She could just start to make out the solid shapes of rocks, boulders and bushes nestled in the shadows but beyond lay only darkness as the cave continued to slope down even further. *Anything could be in there...* She felt a chill run down her spine, then dug her fingers into her palm. *Don't be stupid! You start jumping at shadows, you lose your focus...*

Without looking back, not willing to be blinded by the light from outside, she called back to Tony. "If you think it'll be a problem, you can stay back as a lookout." Triste wasn't crazy about the idea of leaving him alone where he could get up to anything, but it he was going to have a panic attack at an inopportune time, it might be for the best.

Still holding the gun on the guards as the lifeboat bobbed in the water, Axel's eyes flicked over to Rose briefly. "Tell them we'll try to lie low and wait for them to finish up. We can figure out a way to meet back with them when they're done."

"She's gonna need a doctor, isn't she?" Rio said, staring uneasily at Flora as her blood seemed to started seeping through the bandages Uesa applied almost immediately. "She's not looking too good..."

"We're in the middle of nowhere, how can we find a doctor?" Axel muttered. He looked at Uesa. "Just-"

He was interrupted by a crackling coming from Atrua. Glancing sharply at her, he saw it was coming from a radio strapped to her suit.

"What's going on?" A voice spoke from the device. "We've lost contact with the rest of your team... is everything alright?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2015, 11:18:03 PM**

The others ran into rocks in the river Sir. Uesa and I got lucky. a.. passing boat of tourists offered to help us, unfortunately their boat also ran into the rocks and sank .We're currently in their lifeboat' Atrua' said ' Atrua heard the voice on the other end swear..' damn it.. alright make it to shore and then make your way up to Algal headquarters as soon as possible for a debriefing. what were the tourists doing in this part of the river? ' they were.. headed to Alexandria, they say they were taking a scenic trip on the river, before the accident.' Atrua said. 'Great, We'll have to compensate the travel agency for the loss of their boat. so much for that holiday bonus..just.. contact me again Atrua once you reach shore. Idu Musab, out" the voice on the other end cut off and Atrua turned the radio off.'Alright, I just created an alibi for you, in return i suggest you put that gun away." she said looking at Axel intently.
-
We ned to get those bullets out quickly' rose said glancing at the reddening bandages.' we dont have time to get her to a doctor."
Uesa sighed, ' i have a pocketknife in my pocket. ' its the best we can do as far as an operating utensil. do you have anything that could serve as a utensil for removing the bullets?' she asked ' I do have a tweezer. you know the type used for plucking hair from between your eyebrows." rose said digging into her purse and pulling it out. She took a deep breath and shot. Marita a quick text " will lay low until you guys are finished'. and turned to Axel and Rio ' Rio you and Atrua will have to row. Axel you'll have to hold Flora still while Uesa and I operate and remove these bullets. we have enough bandages, but I dont think we have any more morphine.you'll have to keep her absolutely still.'

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 30, 2015, 05:07:37 AM**

"I'll stay with you, Tony," Emilena offered, who was thinking exactly the same thing as Triste. "The rest of you, get in there and make it fast. And if you so happen to see an amphibious vehicle, don't pass it by."

"Are you sure removing the bullets is a good idea...?" Flora mumbled dizzily. "When Bob shot me down in the spice mines, Nairda insisted we keep the bullets *in*...but I guess Nairda's an idiot so what does he know...?" She shifted her position and winced.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 30, 2015, 12:04:37 PM**

Axel stared warily at Atrua, then slowly lowered the gun into his lap... though he kept his grip firmly on the AK-47.

"You gotta be kidding me," Rio rolled his eyes.

When Rose suggested he hold Flora down, Axel shook his head. "No. We need to leave at least one person holding the gun. We're *not* trusting these two, Rose." He blinked at Flora, then sighed. Shuffling forwards, Axel pushed the gun into Rose's grip then leaned over the folf. "You keep that gun ready, Rose. I mean it." Keeping a firm grip on Flora, he looked at Uesa. "I hope you know what you're doing."

Scowling, Rio took a seat next to Atrua and glared at the woman. "I have my eye on you."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 30, 2015, 02:16:41 PM**

The ones already in you from before we'll leave in' Uesa said to Flora. ' we're more interested in the ones currently giving you trouble.' she turned to Axel 'my father is a doctor, who has done thousands of surgeries. He wanted me to follow in his footsteps, and I attended medical school for a couple semesters in college. to make a long story short, I found I prefer being in law enforcement more so I switched. But I know how to remove bullets and scrapnel and that'll have to do for the time being.

- Atrua sighed as she began to row' Cynical lot arent you.' she said to Rio. ' Keep an eye on me as you wish, but I'll get this boat to shore safely. "

Rose handed over all the supplies- gauze, bandages and her tweezer, before accepting the gun " We'll need something to hold the bullets, and something to clean out the wounds. there should be a couple small cups in my bag, I use them for holding my coins. just dump the coins out into the bag and use them. we'll have to use river water to wash out the wounds before bandaging them." Rose said. She turned to Axel " as for trusting them, for now we really dont have a choice. None of us are doctors or have any medical training, and Floras in pretty bad shape. I'll hold the gun so that Atrua keeps rowing, while you hold down Flora and keep her still while Uesa operates."

Uesa Pulled out her her pocket knife and set it down on the boat seat, before going over to Roses bag (Rose pointed it out for her) and retrieved a couple small cups filled with coins. she poured the coins out into the bag and zipped it back up." She took one of the cups struck it out over the side of the boat and filled it with river water. the other she left empty' "the empty one will hold the bullets' she said to Axel " When I locate the bullet , you use the tweezer to SLOWLY ease it out, simply tearing it out will make things worse. We'll start with the one on her side"-

Uesa cut off the bandages covering the side wound, and threw them aside, revealing an angry red area where the bullet had entered. She dipped her fingers into the water from the first cup, and dried them off on her uniform before picking up the knife and making a pair of incisions leading away from the bullet hole.

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Over the next fifteen minutes , Uesa operated on the bullets , in Floras side, neck, shoulder and leg, and one by one, the bullets slowly came out. the second cup was now carrying 5 bloody bullets, the blood had pooled over the bullets and sloushed around as the boat moved through the waves. Uesa was now operating on the sixth and final bullet in Floras right shoulder.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 02, 2015, 02:58:13 PM**

As Uesa cut into the skin around the final bullet, Axel squinted in discomfort then pressed hard against Flora as he leaned in with the tweezers. "Alright... last one..." The boat suddenly rolled against the water and the tweezers he was gently edging into the wound were jolted forwards, the sharp edges stabbing into her raw, exposed flesh. "*Shit!* Sorry, I'm..." Gritting his teeth, Axel tried again, clamping the metal around the bullet and easing it out steadily.

The bullet clinked into the cup when he dropped it in. Heaving a breath, he leaned back and patted Flora's hand. "Alright, they're out. Jesus, she's bleeding everywhere..."

Rowing beside Atrua, his attention focused on the shore which was fast approaching, Rio blinked, the scrunched his face up as he focused on something in the distance. "Guys, something's coming."

Glancing back at Rio, Axel quickly followed the boy's line of sight and gritted his teeth. Rio was right - coming from the direction of the plant, a large, heavy-duty vehicle was trundling across the sand, a cloud of dust trailing behind. It was still much too far away for Axel to tell how many people were inside the car.

"Atrua, one of our team spotted you," the voice from the woman's radio crackled. "We've sent out a vehicle to your position to retrieve you and the tourists."

Axel turned panicked eyes to Rose. He didn't say anything but his feelings were obvious: *How are they gonna buy the fact that a tourist is full of bullet holes?*

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 02, 2015, 05:19:29 PM**

Copy that. i see them. ETA to shore 5 minutes. Atrua out.' Atrua replied as she then turned off the radio.

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Rose picked up the cup filled with the six bullets, and dumped them over the other side of the boat away from shore."Keep calm Axel. We'll have to pass it off as treating a previous injury.' She said." 'injuries from the accident revealed prior undisclosed injuries' that kinda line.' she said setting the cup back down.

_ You'd better be VERY convincing with that. ' Uesa said as she dug through Maries bag, coming up with a spool of thread and a needle, and began sewing up the incision sites, starting with the shoulder she had just operated on.. 'But if thats the line you're going with, I'll back you on that. Best for all concerned is that you guys head out of the country as soon as possible. once all the areas are sewed up Axel, help me bandage them. And try and ACT like tourists, panicking will only arouse suspicion."

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we were just in an accident, some trauma is to be expected ' Rose replied, and she went over to refill the water cup with a fresh amount, dumping the bloodied water out. the blood was from Uesa cleaning her hands off between treating each injured area. uesa sewed up each area, going cunterclockwise for the right should, neck, left shoulder, left side, leg and right side. the boat reached the shore as she finished with the final area. ' alright, bandages' Uesa said to Axel.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 02, 2015, 08:08:22 PM**

"Yeah... yeah sure..." Tony nodded, hooking his thumb claws in his waistline and nodding. "Go ahead... I'll just... stay here and... keep a watch..." he gulped, giving one last look into that cave. "Just hurry back... sounds like there's trouble back at the boat..."

"Worse than that at this rate..." Vergil murmured, shaking his head as he sensed pain... anguish... but he couldn't be sure who it was or the circumstances. Tony exhaled and vibrated his lips as he watched the group start to descend into the cavern.

"Shit... I hope this goes OK..." Tony muttered, looking about him at nothing in particular.

Vergil didn't need lights, as he could see relatively well in the dark, his eyes adapting rather easily. If others wished to switch on lights, that was up to them. The cavern sloped gradually downward, and Vergil tensed up and gasped as bats suddenly charged overhead, zooming over them in those uneven flight paths that Vergil always found to be chaotic. "Guess we're disturbing their resting place..." He murmured, feeling a shiver pass down his spine.

As the passage sloped downward, a blue glue could be seen softly playing off the walls. It looked almost like water but... not quite. Narrowing his eyes, the gecko could see a bend ahead, and beyond that bend... the computer terminal of the waypoint! "There it is!" he exclaimed, nodding. "Except..." he stopped now, noticing the ceiling seemed to be... moving. "Uh... am I hallucinating or is that... not a solid ceiling?" he asked.

A faint clacking noise could be heard too, and Vergil strained to see what it was that was bustling about up there... and felt his stomach lurch as he saw what looked like giant millipedes crawling around in circles and spirals and twists. "OK..." he trailed off here. "Haven't encountered them yet... maybe... they won't... do anything..." he said slowly, but noticed they were starting to crawl in their direction now. "Or not..." He sighed, pursing his lips and drawing his energy blade before lighting up the area surrounding him with its red glow.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 03, 2015, 03:27:23 AM**

"Guys!" breathed Flora. "Guys guys guys guys...what if..." she took a weak ragged breath; all of her bullet wounds were bleeding profusely due to being opened and her flesh was pale white under neath her fur. "What if we wait till they board, kill them, and *steal their boat*..."

Emilena didn't even spare a glance as the others departed. "So. Tony. This is the best opportunity I'm going to get to be straight with you. If you could please hear me out."

She took a deep breath. "Look, we both know that we don't like each other. And that's likely not going to change. But I am worried about you, because of the danger you're placing this team in by ignoring the circumstances of your return to the land of the living."

She folded her arms. "'Sleeper agents' are captives who are mentally-altered and allowed to return to their allies. They can be unwittingly transferring information and even 'activated' to become hostile at a later tactically-opportune date. I think it's incredibly likely that you are one of these, but your refusal to even consider the fact is putting us all in incredible danger."

She met his gaze steadily. "If you're willing to take some basic steps, I can guide and assist you to minimize the damage you can cause. I might even be able to help you discover if you are indeed a sleeper; I have special training in this regard because of an incident in my past. But it's going to require you to stop being in total denial and admit that you can't fully trust what your mind and body are telling you right now."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 03, 2015, 10:05:38 PM**

Dont talk ' Uesa said, as she stitched up the wounds, the loss of blood made it easy to locate the wound areas. within a couple minutes, all of the wounds were sewn up, and Uesa wrapped them tightly in bandages, covering them with clean ones. the bloody bandages were left in the boat, as the vehicle pulled up and three guards got out and headed up to the boat, two jackals and a leopard ' we need to get this one to Algal Medical fast . she has pretty extensive injuries 'Uesa said."one of the jaguars picked up Flora and carried her to the vehicle, the leopard motioned to Rose, Axel and rio " come with us please. we'll have you folks undergo some medical tests to make sure you didnt suffer any internal injuries." the leopard, a male said." just climb in the back of the vehicle.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 04, 2015, 04:20:23 AM**

Blinking as the leopard carried Flora away, Axel nodded and stepped out of the boat hesitantly, Rio beside him. Despite everything, being able to step on dry land again felt good. "Alright, just keep cool. Maybe this is gonna be okay."

"Maybe..." Rio kept his eye on Flora as the guard carried her out of sight around the rear of the vehicle.

Carrying Flora around to the rear of the vehicle, the guard gently placed her down in the large, open area that was normally used for storing heavy equipment... then surreptitiously unclipped the holster securing the pistol to his hip. He'd noticed the gun that Rose was clutching - an AK-47. None of the security team at the facility carried that type of gun, so it belonged to the tourists... but what would tourists be doing with a gun?

The folf below him didn't seem to be too aware of what was happening around her. Slowly, he eased a claw beneath one of her bandages and gently pulled it up, just enough to see beneath. The leopard's lean face stiffened. The wound was stitched, but it had clearly been caused by a bullet. *What the hell's going on?* Satisfied that Flora didn't have a weapon on her, he left her there and walked back around the side of the vehicle, stopping Rose just before she followed the rat and the kid inside. "Let me take that, Miss," he offered, extending his hand towards the gun. "You must be in quite some shock, you should be taking it easy."

"Shit..." Triste slid her knife out of the sheath on her inner arm, her eyes trying to keep track of the multitude of bodies crawling down towards them, their metallic legs making thin clacking noises as they clicked and scraped on the rock, small red lights glowing in the darkness along the length of their bodies. But there were just too many - and they were all swarming towards the group. "Stay together," she warned. "Don't get separated. And try not to shoot," Triste said, glancing quickly at Marita and Marie. "The bullets'll ricochet in here."

Breathing slowly to keep calm, Triste spoke lowly to Vergil. "It's more defensible by the console. Maybe we should -"

Almost as if they were of one mind, the swarm of sinister looking guardians suddenly surged forwards, speeding across the walls and ceiling of the cave and lunging towards them.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 04, 2015, 09:43:46 AM**

with all due respect sir, I need to hang on to this. we're headed through the Middle East once we pass through this country, and as you know that region has been unstable for thousands of years. best to have a weapon on you, just in case. Rose said.' that is true." the guard said slowly.' can you explain why your friend is in such bad shape?' he motioned to the the back of the vehicle. ' those bullet wounds look pretty new to me." well Flora is shall we say a bit of a free spirit, and thus gets into a lot of trouble some times. she got into a scrap in Khartoum, got shot a few times and we originally just left the bullets in. but well she got banged up in the wreck and her injuries got reopened, as it turns out she was shot more back in Sudan than we previously thought. never complained a bit, shes a tough girl."
_ Fine fine, just keep your weapon at your feet and in front at all times until we reach the medical wing.Get in" the guard motioned, and Rose climbed in, next to Axel. Atrua and uesa climbed in next, and took seats opposite the the ' tourists'. Atrua turned on her radio ' Algal this is Atrua we have reached the vehicle and are headed your way with injured tourist. Tourist, named ' Flora' is suffering injuries consisting of a combination of a prior shooting with injuries suffered in the river accident. she'll need some blood to be transfused, as removing

the bullets caused quite a bit of blood loss.'
-
do you know when she was shot, came a doctors voice on the other end 'tourists.. say in Sudan.. where in that country is unclear. ' well, we'll treat her injuries as best we can. were there any bullets fragments in the wounds ?' no from what i saw all of them were intact. the bullets were lost when a wave hit the lifeboat we were in so further forensic testing is impossible."" the Nile is a harsh mistress, just get her here as quickly as you can. Dr Musura out" the radio was turned off.
_ Millipedes.. giant millipedes this is something new- and very creepy' Marita said as she looked at the giant swarm of metallic creatures on the ceiling. ' what are milli- Marie started to ask before the swarm rushed towards them. " get to the console " marita called as the gap between them and the creatures rapidly shrunk.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 09, 2015, 10:22:44 PM**

I have literally never seen so little happen in such a long time... Lily thought with annoyance, watching something diagetic up on the spaceship.

Even while talking to Tony, Emilena wondered what the hell was taking the others so long.

"Could we move things forward *please*?" asked Flora dully. "I'm almost out of blood..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 09, 2015, 11:40:54 PM**

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the vehicle carrying Rose flora and the others headed towards the medical wing of the algal headquarters which was one of several buildings the corporation had built on this side of the river. ' rose turned and looked back at flora through a window in the vehicle a guard had placed some blankets under her ' just hang in there Flora ' rose said , trying to be reassuring.' we'll be at the medical area prtty soon, so you can get the treatment you need for your injuries..
-
Marita waited until a number of millipeddes got close, then fiored. the sounds of the thud as the bullets hit the mettallic creatures was loud and disconcerting, yet even with the bullets finding their mark in a few milipedes theres were still many many more to take down.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 11, 2015, 06:47:30 PM**

Axel fidgeted uncomfortably with his fingers, staring at the squat, pale building drawing up outside his window as the vehicle started to slow. The medical section he assumed.

"Alright, we're at medical," the driver said, confirming Axel's thoughts as he drew the handbrake up and turned around. "Samuels, get the wounded in first, she's lost a lot of blood. The rest of you should also wait inside while we figure out what to do next. If you'd like, we can take a look at you if you were injured during your accident on the river."

"No... No, I'm good," Axel said, keeping his expression grateful.

"Me neither." Rio blinked at Flora's bleeding body. "She'll be okay, right?"

Swinging himself out of the vehicle, Samuels leaned into the back and pulled Flora out. "She'll be fine kid. We know what we're doing." He glared suspiciously at Axel, Rio and Rose for a second longer, then started towards the building, Flora in his arms. *Their story doesn't make sense... why are Atrua and Uesa backing them up?*

As Samuels walked away, Axel gulped then glanced at the others. "Alright, I, ah, I guess we should go in."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 14, 2015, 11:52:23 AM**

((Please keep the OOC references to my time in posting OUT of this RP LB&T. Just a reminder OOC SHOULD NOT be implied IC in any RP I'm running. We can all respect each other and the fact that real life sometimes kills our inspiration to post I think. Sorry to single you out but it was pretty blatant on your part. I'm sorry I'm taking awhile but I just don't find any inspiration for the characters I'm writing anymore. When it stops being fun and starts feeling like work, it's hard to keep at it. I admire the enthusiasm you have for at least one of my characters, and just wish I could muster that up myself.))

Tony chewed his bottom lip and looked over at her. "You're implying I've refused to consider it... I have. I have no other explanation for how I ended up where I was... but I can't confirm if I was ever in enemy hands either. Either I was found by them or I wasn't... though of course, wouldn't have been in that situation had you not been mindlessly rooting through our belongings in the first place." he said pointedly.

"Still... I have an even simpler solution. One that has absolutely 100% chance of success: I leave the group. If I'm a sleeper, Kalis obviously wants to screw with us, and he can't do that if I'm not there. An ADDED benefit is that I'm not actually seeing the waypoint right now, so I have no idea WHERE we're going next, and if I leave soonish, that prevents me from being triggered, if that's what's wrong with me, and it prevents the party from getting harmed... problem solved. Believe me, I've BEEN thinking about it. Last thing I want is to do that so... while you guys go off and kill Kalis and solve that little problem, I'll be warming the bench from home and preventing any sort of issues that could crop up. Everybody wins, right?" he asked, spreading his arms a bit.

"You take away the NEED to trigger me... or... spy on the others, I'm no more different than the average Joe on the street to Kalis. The party moves on to their next destination, I have no idea where it is, and we're all safe. Do I like it? No. Do I think it's necessary? Yes." He nodded here. "Thanks for the offer too... it's surprising me I admit, but appreciated."

Inside, Vergil glanced quickly at the console, and nodded. "Right! Get over there before they can get down! And don't shoot! Too much chance of a ricochet in here!" he called, his voice bouncing around the chambers. He ran towards the console, though was nearly cut off by a millipede that crawled down the wall towards him. Slicing into its head, he drew a nice line across its mouth (or at least, he thought it was its mouth) and saw fluid spray in every direction, coating him a bit in its viscous substance. "Ugh!" he declared, spitting some out of the side of his mouth.

Punching his fingers on the console once he reached it, he tried to gather his mind to work this through. "Uh... OK... so... it's like... uh... what's the..." He began reading the questions they presented to him, his memory suddenly springing to life. He'd been here before! He knew these answers! Hitting one, then another, he worked quickly. "Neural scan? Dammit!" He uttered, turning around as he began to fight off another millipede with his blade as the creature shrieked hungrily at him. "Lunch is gonna have to wait! I'm BUSY!" he roared back, cutting off a few legs, which didn't seem to do much in the way of helping.

"Ugh! Don't have time for this nonsense! I'm putting your lunch plans on permanent hold!" He sliced into the area under its neck, and watched it slump forward a bit. Rapidly turning around, the scan hit his head and gave him the all clear. Yes! Simple! The map sprang to life, and there was only one choice left to make: China. Vergil pushed his finger down on it, and the coordinates appeared. Studying them carefully, he committed them to memory, whirled around, and began hacking away at another one. "Got them! Let's go!" He called to the others. "Lead the way!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2015, 04:25:58 PM**

"Striking it out alone is one of the worst things you can do," Emilena explained. "Your trigger has nothing to do with distance, Kalis might even be capable of knowing that you abandoned us, and then he'd have no reason not to activate you immediately. You're a mafia don's son, you have uses beyond reconnaisance."

She looked him straight in the eyes. "I know everything you're feeling right now, and its natural. The fear, the self-doubt, the desire to run away. Like you're just a pawn, destined to die in a game you didn't even want to play. But you have to unlearn everything you're thinking of doing until I've taught you just what you've gotten yourself into. You can't even stop feeling hopeless, because some triggers are chemical and react to a positive change in state of mind."

She reminded herself to slow down. "There are three steps to recovery, and the third is optional. First, we need to determine what type of trigger you've been embedded with. There's a depressingly high amount of possibilities. Then, we need to take steps to mitigate the chances of you being triggered, and minimize the possible fallout if you trigger anyway. The last step...I'll get to if we succeed at the first two."

She took a deep breath. "God, I don't want to do this next part...but you need to understand just why I'm the only person you can place your trust in." She began taking off her shirt.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 14, 2015, 08:17:35 PM**

Tony blinked as she began removing her shirt. "Wait... what the hell are you doing?" he asked, backing up a little here. "Pretty sure there are certain things I don't need to see right now with the possibility of the others... coming back." he said, gulping. "I mean really..." he held up a paw, as if that would stop her (it wouldn't of course). "Can't I just... leave? I don't know anything about our next destination and I'm planning on leaving it that way..." He trailed off here, pausing as he couldn't help but wonder just what she was attempting, his nagging curiosity getting the better of him.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2015, 11:37:40 PM**

Emilena showed him the lowest point of her nape. "Look at my neck. You see that scar? Right at the base of the medulla. That's where mine was, because it had to override my instincts. It needed to operate without me thinking."

Her eyes clouded. "When I was a junior officer in the Lanthae Police Corps, I woke up hogtied in the basement of the First National Bank with no memory of how I got there. I freed myself and quickly discovered the bank was in lockdown, surrounded on all sides by police forces with a team of criminals draining the place. I reached the sewers and opened up an entrance for a small four-man team of SWATs to infiltrate the bank. Then I insisted on accompanying them so I could get revenge on the men who had tied me up. Never once did I wonder what I'd been doing there in the first place. Just like your instinct is to run away, mine was to fallback on my combat training."

Emilena's cheeks flushed. "I was so stupid. We made it all the way to the hostages in the vault, me and the SWATs, and then...I blacked out. When I woke up, everyone was dead. I'd thrown a live grenade into the vault and locked the door behind my teammates."

Tears unwittingly stung her eyes and she couldn't meet his gaze. "Four highly-trained officers, Tony. Six innocent civilians. In one second I went from the hero of the hour to a mass murderer..."

(OOC: I'm not inventing this conveniently; this is part of the plot a story I wrote months ago. If you'd like to read it and other stories set during Emilena's police years, PM me and I'll give you the link.)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 15, 2015, 03:06:04 AM**

Triste nodded quickly, yanking her knife from the skull of one of the millipedes and letting its body slump to the side. "Alright! Marita! Marie! Let's go, move it!" She turned and started backing away towards the slope leading out, the cave becoming darker again the further they moved from the console's blue glow.

With the ringing in her ears from Marita's gunshot, Triste didn't hear t.he light scuffling as a large shape crawled overhead. "Hurry up!" she started to urge again... then cried out as something heavy slammed into her from above. Yelling, she felt something snap in her chest as her knife was sent skittering out of her grasp. Gritting her teeth, Triste rolled over... just in time to see the millipedes grotesque head dart forwards towards her neck. She threw her arm up, and hissed in pain as its mandibles closed around her wrist. Struggling to force her other arm past the millipede's body as it writhed on top of her, she closed her spare hand over one of the appendages slicing into her flesh and yanked hard, tearing it off the creature's 'face'.

The millipede reared back, and suddenly free again Triste took the opportunity to push herself to the side, reaching for her knife despite the burning pain in her chest... almost...

Triste was yanked back back again, the knife beyond her reach once again as the millipede recovered and bit down on her leg, clamping firmly on the limb. Dragging her claws on the rock, Triste tired to stop herself, but the creature kept dragging her back - and then started to climb the wall, taking her with it. As she struggled uselessly, the pain in her side worsening, she ground her teeth in horror as she saw it was trying to take her up into the roof of the cave. Into the nest where countless more of them crawled and slithered over each other.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2015, 08:35:37 AM**

Marita and marie breathed heavily as a number of millipedes lay dead around them, the internal fluid spilling out on the ground around them. the clicking of legs alerted their attention , and the girls looked on in honor as trieste was slowly pulled up the wall. marita took careful aim and aimed at the millipeedes baxck, and began firing. her ai, was good and hissing from the millipedes indicated the bullets were making an impact.' the millipedes screeches became louder as each new bullet found its mark, and it stopped its ascent about halfway towards the roof. ' Marie get over there! Break her fall! that millipedes going to be dead soon and she'll need someone to soften her labnding! Marita said as she continued firing.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 15, 2015, 10:41:01 AM**

Tony stood there, frowning slightly as he listened to the story, thoughts running through his head. He then noticed... her... crying? Or almost doing so. She had emotions? His face fell here, and he looked her over. "I see... but you don't think... that would happen to me, do you?" he asked. "I mean how did you actually... get rid of it?" he inquired now, looking to the right, but couldn't see much thanks to the hills all around them. He didn't like this... way too easy for someone to get the drop on them... they were sitting ducks in this valley...

The bullets weren't very effective, thanks to the armored carapace of the millipede, and Vergil whirled as he saw Triste getting dragged off. "No... NO! TRISTE!" He shouted, heart leaping into his throat as he tore after her, blade at the ready. He swung, but halted its arc, afraid he'd hit her. Bullets began flying in every direction thanks to Marita's efforts, and Vergil yelled over to her as he followed after the bug: "Stop firing dammit! You have as much chance of killing us as you do them!" His point was brought home when a bullet buzzed the top of his feathers, ruffling them and causing him to gulp.

As the creature began to retreat up the walls, Vergil leaped onto the rock surface, his fingers and toes actually useful here, as like any gecko, he could scale vertical planes. "Triste! Hold on!" he called to her, scaling after her. He'd never catch up at this rate, as he couldn't compete with hundreds of legs, but he could do one thing...

Closing one eye, he held his sword like a spear, and tossed it like a javelin, the deadly blade hurtling toward the head of the creature. It lanced into the skin and caused the millipede to shriek, and as it expired, it dropped Triste. Vergil's arm shot out and he grabbed her, but strained as he slid down a few feet on the wall. "Agh! I think... I think I'm gonna have to drop you... you all right?" he asked. "Hey!" He called down to the girls. "Can you catch her? I can't climb down AND hold her at the same time! Can you get her?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2015, 12:19:12 PM**

Marita stopped shooting after hearing Vergil at her. " Alright. Look like you got it Vergil! Nice work. just hold on for another 15 seconds' marita said Running towards the wall where he and Trieste Was , She and Marie soon stood below Vergil at the bottom of the wall, looking up " Ok! you can let her go, we can catch her!" Marita called up " you can get down and we can get the heck out of here.
-
rose headed into the medical wing which had a smell of chemicals in the area- likely to disinfect any surfaces in the vicinity. a row of small chairs stood in a corner ' just have a seat in those chairs ' one guards said to Rose rio and Axel. once we treat your friends injuries and shes stable, then you can visit, might be an hour or so though.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 15, 2015, 02:24:31 PM**

"That's the thing, Tony..." Emilena sighed. "I didn't have to get rid of it. The routine ended after I killed my allies. I wasn't even important enough to get a suicide command included."

She realized she was balling her fists. Counting silently down from three, she relaxed a bit and met Tony's gaze again. "Do you know what my trigger had been? The sensation of safety. As we walked into that vault, and the hostages were alive, and I had four highly-trained officers to rely on...for the first time that whole day I felt like I was going to survive. Like things were under control."

Emilena had a number of metal straps around her chest and hips; she removed them before putting her shirt back on. "That's what I'm trying to explain to you, Tony! You CAN'T just try to live life avoiding what the trigger might be! It could be *any*thing, and it'll probably be whatever Kalis expects you to do! If you remain ignorant, it'll only hurt more because you aren't prepared when it'll finally strike."

She handed Tony the metal straps along with a dial remote. "I'd purchased a Faraday dampener in preparation for this conversation; it prevents electronic signals from penetrating a small field around me. That was in case they bugged you, because if they heard us talk like this they might send the trigger signal right away. You should put it on. Once we're somewhere safe I've got all sorts of precautions I'll be able to teach you, and training that might help us narrow down the possibilities for triggers. I've...kinda spent a lot of time researching this topic..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 15, 2015, 02:42:59 PM**

Triste felt Vergil let go of her. As she fell into Marita's grip, something crunched and she let out a choked gasp. "God*dammit*!" Triste stooped to retrieve her knife and pressed a hand to her side, grimacing. "I think it broke a rib... Shit." She glanced back at Vergil, Marita and Marie. "Thanks... they - "

Her eyes widened as she suddenly saw a surge of movement just above Vergil. "There's more coming! We need to move!" She started backing away painfully, watching to make sure Vergil wasn't about to be snatched by the mass of millipedes.

Axel nodded to the guard and smiled. "Alright. Thank you sir." As the guard walked away, his smile vanished and he turned to Rose and Rio. "Crap... the others are gonna be stranded..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2015, 04:48:38 PM**

Run!' Marita said, grabbing onto Trieste Shoulder and helping her stagger towards the exit as fast as she could , Marie ran in front of them trying to put as much distance between her and those monsters

_
 Not much we can do about that" Rose replied, picking up a magazine off a table next to her seat- it was a magazine about the history of Egypt. she opened it up to the first page.'we'll have to wait until they try to call us..'

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 15, 2015, 04:58:05 PM**

Vergil telekinetically retrieved his blade from the millipede, and dropped downward now, landing hard and wincing. "Ugh! Yeah... let's move! I have a bad feeling about this!" He started charging down the tunnel, as it was high time to get the hell out of here. Vergil slid to a stop, and turned to face Triste. "You're gonna have to move, I'll support you, but we gotta go now!"

Outside, Tony bit his bottom lip. "But even if I'm triggered while I'm away... it'd be useless..." He speculated, looking at the metal straps. "Uh well I may as well... suit up..." he said now, but turned his head rapidly to the right again, seeing dust rising in the canyon as vehicles were headed their way. "Oh son of a..." he trailed off here as a convoy hove in sight around the corner. "Dammit! We've gotta warn...!" he turned to head into the cave before he stopped dead in his tracks, seeing the others emerging now. "Shit!" he exclaimed, stamping his foot and turned around as the convoy began screeching to a halt.

The lead vehicle's door opened, and a scaly leg placed first one foot on the ground, then a second followed as the hulking monitor Varanus stood before them now, a toothy grin etched on his face as he rolled his shoulders and cracked his neck. "Well... well... well..." Soldiers belonging to Kalis's Empire quickly debarked behind him, leveling their guns at the emerging party. "Looks like I've bagged me quite the catch!"

"Varanus!" Vergil uttered, his voice deep and his eyes narrowed as he assessed the situation.

"Yes! And I've been looking forward to this for a long... long time! Now that I know who you are... if I kill you... I'll be even more powerful than Kalis himself! His empire will be mine!"

"You remember me?" Vergil asked, surprised by this. "Who am I? Did I serve with you?"

"It won't do you any good knowing that!" Varanus activated his blade. "Once I take your head... I'll have surpassed you AND Kalis in every way imaginable!"

"But sir... our orders are to capture..." One of the soldiers began, before suddenly, he was lifted off the ground and thrown violently against the side of the buggy, gurgling as his body was mangled beyond all recognition.

"Shove the orders! This is MY chance! Vergil... YOU'RE MINE!" Varanus began charging towards him, and Vergil quickly shot his eyes around.

"Take cover!" he ordered his group. There were plenty of rocks to hide behind, as well as their armored vehicle. "They plan to kill us anyway, so we may as well fight!" He shouted, activating his own sword and leaping into the air to come down on Varanus from above.

"Too slow!" Varanus shouted, whipping his hand out and tossing Vergil aside at the last minute telekinetically. Vergil cried out as he rolled along the dusty ground, coming to a stop half buried in sand. Spitting some of the gritty substance out of his mouth, he barely had time to rise and block Varanus's next blow as the big monitor began fiercely attacking him as the soldiers opened fire on the party. Varanus's powerful body was like a sledgehammer slamming into Vergil's arms as he parried and backpedaled, trying to get into a better position to attack...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2015, 06:05:01 PM**

marita and Marie dove behgind rocks as veranus' guards began firing on them." great just great. first giant millipedes, now these guys ' Marita scowled as pieces of the rock she weas hiding behind were chipped off by Veranus' crew.." and i thought we were done with stuff like this.. guess not. I'll need a good stiff drink after all this " Marie said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 18, 2015, 04:11:32 AM**

Triste grunted as she rolled behind cover along with Marita and Marie, pressing herself against the rock and gripping her knife tightly. She glanced out from behind cover... just in time to see Vergil only just manage to block Veranus' attack. *Shit...* "Stop talking and kill them all," she snarled to Marie, vanishing as she activated her cloaking augment.

"Keep firing!" One of Veranus' henchmen yelled. "Flank them! Get behind their cover, they-" He grunted as something knocked into him, his body armour jerking as something pulled on it. "What the..." He gaped as a spindly lizard suddenly appeared in his face, yellow eyes narrowed in rage. "*Fuck!*" the man started to scream, but he was cut off by the hooked blade punching through his throat.

Triste twisted the knife, the man's windpipe crunching as it broke open even further, turning his scream into a pitiful wet gurgle. She heard a surprised yell from behind as one of the Veranus' other soldiers noticed. Vaulting over the henchman she'd just stabbed as he staggered, his body trying in vain to resist the fact that he was dying, she wrapped herself around his back and yanked out the pistol from the holster on his waist. Aiming over his shoulder, she put a bullet through the skull of one young-looking soldier then turned the barrel to the man next to him, pulling the trigger even as he opened fire. The bullets from his assault rifle slammed into Triste's human shield at the same time that hers took him in the chest.

Triste felt the impact of the shots as the man she was piggybacking was hit. He let out a final gasp and fell heavily onto his back - right on top of Triste, causing her to cry out in pain. With effort, she pushed the body off herself and sucked in a deep breath, her chest feeling as if it was collapsing in. She was interrupted when the sand around her erupted as yet another soldier standing further away opened fire on her, a few bullets tearing chunks off the corpse to her side. Hissing, she cloaked herself again. The soldier paused as his target vanished, then squeezed the trigger again as off to the side a cloud of sand was kicked up. Her hand gritted from the small rock she'd just thrown, Triste snatched up the pistol again and fired off its final bullet. It took the soldier in the side of the neck and he screamed, collapsing to his knees and clutching his wound as blood spurted between his fingers.

Staggering to her feet, Triste yanked the knife from the man's throat and looked around. More soldiers were moving in on Marita and Marie's position, but off to the right Vergil and Veranus were still hacking away at each other. Leaving the two women to deal with the soldiers themselves, she broke into a sprint, ignoring the screaming pain in her side. As she drew closer behind the huge monitor lizard she leaped, drawing back her knife and aiming to plunge it into Veranus' cervical vertebrae.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 18, 2015, 02:58:11 PM**

(Egypt)

Soren and Anne had been standing guard with the dune buggy as the rest of the crew descended deep into the caves.

"Are you fucking kidding me!?" Anne exclaimed as she saw the battle raging in the distance with her comp-noculars.

Soren snatched the comp-noculars from the mare's grasp and looked in the distance. "Oh great, looks like Marita and her crew got themselves into another shitfit."

He grabbed the turret's control panel. "Anne, you drive!"

Anne got out of the rear passenger compartment and into the driver's seat. She pressed the button and listened as the motor started up with a low hum. Her ears pricked up in excitement as she disengaged the parking brake and set the vehicle in motion.

Soren looked through the viewscreen and tried to figure who was the enemy. Not an easy task given the incredible amount of gunfire and dust that was present.

(Corona)

Marion sat down on a bench as she looked at the electronic notepad containing information she had gleaned from the Corona PD. All around her were tourists and locals enjoying the spring air. Indeed, banners festooning the streetlights indicated that a street fair was going on.

The Human took a bite of her deep-fried catfish sausage as she browsed through the information. She did not need to worry about eavesdroppers as the notepad's screen had a coating designed to prevent such encounters. Unless one was wearing the specialized glasses (which also doubled as rather sleek looking sunglasses), all that was visible on the screen was a solid silver surface, like a mirror.

She sighed as she scrolled through the notes. The phone number linked with Vergil led to a disposable cell phone. On the other hand, she did have the address of someone named Axel Whent.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2015, 06:41:12 PM**

Got it! Marita said noticing the arrival of 5 more guards, who set up positions near the area where the two dogs were situated. Marita took aik with her gun and fired, catching one of the guards in the shoulder and causing him to scream out a violent oath. both Marita and Marie had to duck as the 5 guards opened fire, the bullets deflecting of the top of the rock and sending razor sharp rock chips onto the girls. it became a game attrition, the girls returning fire in-between breaks when the guards loaded fresh ammo clips into their guns. Marie managed to fell one of the guards with a well-placed shot to the temple,, Marita got another guard in the throat. slowly the rock providing cover began to crack and be chipped away from the rain of bullets striking it. marita covered her head to protect it from the shards.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2015, 07:06:06 PM**

Emilena crouched and slowly crawled to the left; nobody seemed to be paying attention to her and Tony thanks to the attention Vergil's entrance commanded, which gave her ample time to scout out the perfect spot.

Taking cover along the crest of the cave, Emilena focused on trying to sniper with her revolver, finally grateful for the flash dampener.

Her ears pricked when she heard the duggy coming. "Hope the others are ready to jump..." she muttered, not even sure if Tony had remained in earshot.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 22, 2015, 12:01:01 PM**

((Sorry guys; I have a lot of tours right now so I don't have much time to post.))

As Triste went to plunge her blade into Varanus's back, the big monitor whirled around, kicking Vergil's chest and staggering him backward while he brought his blade up and slashed towards her, striking her knife and throwing her off to the side. "What is this? Your little friends have to help you finish me off? Can't do it yourself?" Varanus mocked as Vergil charged back in, their blades connecting once more. "I'm far too skilled a combatant for EITHER of you! Neither of you stand a chance because you're both worthless and weak! Bugs that I'll squash under my heel!"

Tony meanwhile was lying flat on his stomach. Because of the others' insistence, he had no weapon, and was completely defenseless, so all he could do was hide behind the buggy's numerous wheels and hope no one came around and executed him from behind with some shots to the back of his skull. He had extremely limited vision from his position, but tried to look around whenever he could to preserve his own life.

Vergil hacked once, twice, but was met by Varanus's powerful blade every time. "You're really pushing me, you know that?" Varanus asked, slamming another blow against Vergil's blade that rattled his body to its core.

"Yeah well... you're someone I won't be sorry to see gone!" Vergil declared. "I urge you to stop this! I have no quarrel with you after all!"

"On the contrary... you represent everything in our way... and a personal ambition of mine!" Vergil tried to see where Triste was... if she could get in another attack... he might have a chance... Varanus tended to pivot his left foot before his kick... Vergil would be ready next time... and go for the vital spot he knew there'd be no recovery from...

"Heh... well then... you're just gonna have to accept the fact that you failed to kill me the first time... and you'll fail again!" Vergil smirked, hoping to rile Varanus up, as he seemed to be a very emotional fighter.

"Ha! Big talk for such a small lizard! We'll see who gets the better of who! I know I'm superior... I KNOW I AM!" he yelled, launching into another flurry of heavy-handed blows that Vergil managed to turn aside every time, his confidence growing as the battle continued...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 24, 2015, 02:20:45 AM**

Triste grunted as she managed to avoid landing flat on her face, twisting to come down awkwardly on her feet. Her knife arm was throbbing from the impact of where Veranus had blocked her attack. *Son of a bitch...* Gritting her teeth, she steeled herself for another run at him, but movement in the corner of her eye drew her attention - the buggy! Soren and Anne must be making a run for them... if they could just last until they arrived...

Looking back to the fight, she could see that it seemed Vergil was slowly getting the better of the larger lizard - and Veranus wasn't taking it well. If she could just help Vergil hold him off until Soren arrived, the extra firepower of the vehicle's turret could make all the difference. Triste felt the buzzing in her head subside, letting her know her augment had recharged. Cloaking, she moved to flank Veranus again, keeping her eyes on his attacks. Triste waited until he started to step forward to attack Vergil again... then she struck. Darting forwards, she sliced through the flesh of the back of his leg in an offhand sweep then leaped back again, dodging to avoid his blade.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2015, 09:28:37 AM**

Just for the hell of it, Emilena also attemtped to snipe Veranus. She doubted she'd succeed, but perhaps it would give Triste and Vergil an opening. *Gotta love enemy commanders that draw attention to themselves in battle...*

She glanced at the approaching buggy, willing it to arrive as soon as possible so they could all escape.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2015, 04:46:20 PM**

a doctor entered the room ' where Rose Axel and Rio were . " Alright you folks we have your friend stabilized ' You may visit her for a half hour or so, please keep your voices down so she is not too distressed. Follow me please" He motioned to them to follow him.

Marita and Marie continued trading gunfire with the guards, the guards bullets slowly chipping away at the rocks which provided protection for the girls.. finally marita killed one of the guard with a shot to the head.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 27, 2015, 11:35:52 AM**

"Our ride's here! Let's book it!" Emilena vaulted into the buggy as it reached the combat site. She glanced at Vergil and Veranus' melee. "Forget about him, we got what we came for! Come on!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 29, 2015, 04:27:14 AM**

Triste swore, glancing at the buggy that had pulled up a short distance away and backing up towards it. "She's right! Vergil, let's go! We need to get out of here!" Even with the few deep wounds she'd managed to land on Veranus, the huge lizard still wasn't going down. If reinforcements were coming, which she had to assume they were, they'd be at a serious disadvantage.

She jumped on the side and banged her fist on the window. "Soren! Fire on..." She gritted her teeth. If he used the turret to open fire on Veranus, the chance of hitting Vergil was too high. *But we can stop them from following us.* "Take out their vehicles, make sure they can't come after us!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2015, 09:06:12 AM**

Marita and marie rushed to the buggy and jumped onto it clinging onto the side. they had managed to kill the 5 guards who had fire on them. both were exhausted and nearly out of ammo. ' give Vergil as much help as yopu can Soren" marita said " if you havve to.. shoot Veranus

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Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 29, 2015, 01:15:12 PM**

"YOU forget about him!" Vergil snapped back at Emilena. "You honestly think he's just gonna let me walk away?" The combat was too close and far too heavy for Vergil to escape, as Varanus was between him and the buggy... then Triste struck, and Varanus screamed out in pain and anger as he briefly turned his attention to her, swiping and missing but landing a scalding blow on her tail.

Vergil struck, but Varanus blocked, though Vergil twisted his blade upward, nearly managing to land a blow on Varanus's neck. "Dammit!" He could see everyone falling back, but he wasn't capable of doing so at the moment... he was stuck.

"Ha! I'll kill you in one minute! Time it! You're already growing weaker! I can sense it!" Varanus appeared to be using pure adrenaline and his kinetic abilities to supplement his strength, despite his injuries, but Vergil by now had analyzed the way he had moved before striking, and Vergil decided on one last desperate act. He faked downward, Varanus blocking the blow. Gauging his time, Vergil did it again, once again getting blocked. But next time...

"It's OVER! I AM...!" Varanus went to swing to cut Vergil in half when the gecko seemed to make a blunder and leave himself open, but the small gecko was faster, and as Varanus lifted his blade, Vergil used his own to lop off the monitor's head, severing it at the neck and leaving a clean cut with an orange ring around it to indicate the burn.

"Oh sorry to CUT you off!" Vergil declared, grinning as the big lizard's body remained upright for a moment before falling off to the side. He'd purposely opened himself up to an attack to let Varanus think he had an advantage... but when the monitor moved to strike, Vergil struck back faster... and it was over. Glancing at the other soldiers were who still alive, he threw his blade, impaling one through the head before retrieving it with his telekinesis and charging towards the buggy. "All right! We're out of here!" he declared, but froze in his tracks as a massive force began acting on his body. "Agh!" he cried, frozen in place as he was suddenly lifted off the ground and began hovering in place. "What the hell?"

He could see the buggy was starting to levitate as well, and his gaze shot upward, to see... a massive aerial battleship blocking out the sky overhead. They were caught in some sort of force field... and there was literally nothing Vergil could do... his limbs were frozen where they had been moments before, and his legs were equally stiff, his mouth barely able to move as they all began to be pulled towards the *Leviathan*, which was the name of the ship on its side.

"Shit!" Tony called, equally as powerless as he was pulled through the sky towards the ship. He hadn't yet entered the buggy, so was exposed out in the open. As they drew closer to the ship, a large bay opened up to welcome them in, like a sinister mouth as on the bridge of the ship, Admiral Saul Carrack smirked. Varanus had stupidly exceeded his orders... but no harm done... Vergil was his now... and soon... his plans would be his as well. He sent a flash transmission to Kalis's flagship, informing him he had Vergil in his possession, knowing his master would be pleased to finally confront the small white gecko with the orange eyes.

The buggy, Vergil, Tony, and anyone else not in the buggy were deposited in the bay, and finally released, though the buggy was kept in the containment field, rendering its turret inoperable for the time being. Vergil assessed the situation, but was met by what looked like an entire company of soldiers, rifles all leveled at the group. There were too many to try anything... if he resisted... chances were one of them would get shot... so the gecko did the only practical thing he could think of. He raised his arms out to his side, and made no sudden moves as he lowered his head, accepting the fact they were beaten... for now.

"Oh shit..." Tony gulped, seeing a least a hundred rifles leveled in his direction. He stumbled backward, getting used to using his legs again, and meekly put his arms up as well, knowing there was no fighting their way out of this one...

A probe suddenly detached from the ceiling, and impacted with the buggy, burrowing into its side. "You have precisely 15 seconds to exit that vehicle with your hands in the air." came a voice over some speakers. "Your alternative is extermination... by cyanide gas..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2015, 02:43:38 PM**

marita and Marie reacted in horror as they were pulled into the huge ship, and upon hearing the voice give them the order, marita tossed her gun aside' Cant do anything against that many guns marie" marita said as she got off the vehicle her arrms raised. marie followed her, her eyes scanning the gathered forces- the group was outnumbered 10-1, at least. still they had not gotten all of them.. yet..

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 29, 2015, 03:55:55 PM**

Just before the vehicle had been lifted aboard the ship, Soren's (not)-so skillful use of the dune buggy's turret had reduced most of the enemy vehicles to smoldering wrecks.

Upon feeling the vehicle shake and float both he and Anne opened the doors and prepared to jump...only to change their minds when they realized that they were already a few hundred feet off the ground.

The vehicle landed with a *thump*.

"All right, let's--oh fuck no." Soren looked out the window and saw hundreds of soldiers beyond a shimmering blue wall. He immediately recognized that shimmering wall as a containment field (he had used miniature versions of them when working with augments that contained potentially defective batteries to prevent a battery explosion from harming him or causing damage).

Anne's ears rapidly swiveled back and forth as she wrung her hands. "Shit! Shit! Shit!"

"We need to do something that--"

The sound from the loudspeaker cut the Human off. He looked at his shotgun and pondered if shooting himself would be a better fate that what Varanus had in store for him. But he was aware that the rest of the team was on board and they'd be able to do something.

With a sigh, he opened the dune buggy's door and stepped out with his hands in the air. Anne followed, though her bared teeth and pinned ears indicated her displeasure.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 29, 2015, 04:14:23 PM**

"Don't have to tell me twice." Emilena was the last person to exit the vehicle, casually tossing her scoped pistol to the nearest guard. "Couldn't hit a damn thing with this anyway."

She did a quick headcount as she raised her hands in the air. *At least it doesn't appear they got Axel and his team...for now...*

"Murr..." Flora's tongue lolled out as the doctor applied anesthesia. "Mmm...more of that please. Could we...like..triple the dosage? I want to be *swimming*..."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 29, 2015, 05:09:39 PM**

"Shit... *shit, shit, shit!*" Triste snarled under her breath as she felt the buggy jolt against the floor of the ship's bay. Her eyes scanned the area for any way they could escape, something that could be used against the enemy - but there was nothing. There were too many soldiers, too many weapons trained on them. Even if she cloaked, she'd only be able to take out a few before the rest gunned her down.

She forced herself to calm down. If Kalis' men wanted to kill them, they'd be dead already. They were going to keep them alive for a while. *Vergil at least... he's the most important one.* She just had to hope that whatever was going to happen to them, at least some of them would have the opportunity to do something. Triste sighed and stepped down from the buggy, putting her hands behind her head. *If there was a way we could contact the others...*

"Alright, thanks." Axel nodded at the doctor, then turned to the other two. "Let's go-" He blinked as he realised Rio had already dashed out of the room. "Ah..."

As the doctor opened the door to Flora's room, Rio barged past him, hurrying over to her bed. "You okay? How're you feeling?" He squinted at what was being administered to her. Whatever it was, it seemed to be having an effect. "Can I have some? I twisted my ankle..."

Axel stepped through the doorway, smiling apologetically at the doctor Rio had pushed aside as the man rightened himself then left, muttering under his breath. As he walked out of the room, Axel looked at Rose and gestured towards Flora. "Well, she... doesn't look like she's having a bad time, at least." He lowered his voice. "The others are taking a while to get back to us... Think they got lost or something?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2015, 10:07:05 PM**

i have no idea" rose said as she took a seat. a monitor sat next to the bed, registered floras condition, an iv dripping pain medication into her in one arm, while the other arm was transfusing blood to replace the blood she lost from being shot and treated for her wounds.' for now we just have to make sure flora is ok.

Title: **Racing the Storm**

Post by: **Pterano** on **May 02, 2015, 09:21:46 PM**

As the party exited, the containment field dropped, and the soldiers began to move in to restrain them. Vergil narrowed his eyes, and directed his gaze to Anne. As they brought his arms down, he began sending her a telepathic message. *Anne... I've been on this ship before... back when I served under Rex... it was his flagship for a time... the locks are electronic based in the cells... if you can... you might be able to override them somehow. Help free the party and get the rest of us... they're going to split us up soon... I can feel it...*

The captain of the company strode forward as binders were put on their wrists, and pointed at Vergil. "You..." He looked around, then smirked. "And you." he pointed at Triste. "You're gonna have a personal interview with Admiral Carrack. The rest... take them to the holding cells. If we can't get what we want out of these two... we'll work on the others later."

Vergil gave Anne one last look, then shifted his gaze to Triste. *Don't worry...we're going to get out of this... I just hope they don't use you to... get to me...* he sent to her, looking straight ahead now. Vergil and Triste were separated from the main group. About 20 soldiers followed them, so there was no hope of Vergil trying anything drastic... it would only take one shot after all to end either of their lives...

The other party members were led to the cell area, which were basically mini containment fields. As Vergil told Anne, the locks were electronic based. Not overly sophisticated, but obviously not easily accessible from inside the cells either.

Vergil and Triste were led into a room with two test tubes like... things, similar to what Vergil had been kept in before when he'd woken up. Shoved inside, the binders were removed, and they were sealed in their own tubes. The soldiers soon departed, and Vergil looked over at her. "So... here we are. I don't think this is going to be a friendly chat the admiral wants to have with us. I remember him... former hero of the Federation who defected to Rex's cause and became a mass murderer. Not the kind of guy I'd want conducting these things. I could try and crack the glass but... something tells me we wouldn't get very far just yet... they can seal this room with blast doors I notice... and I don't want to try anything until I know the others are safe... we bust out... we risk their lives. I instructed Anne on... well I'd better not say, just in case they're listening in." Vergil said now, looking around him. "We'll just have to stay put... and hope they can get to us sooner rather than later..." he said softly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 07, 2015, 01:33:58 AM**

Triste nodded. "Alright." Standing in the middle of the tube, she clenched her fist tightly and took a deep breath. She wasn't used to being taken prisoner - it made her feel so helpless. So *useless*. On the other hand, at least they now had a way to infiltrate the ship... if Anne was able to figure out a way to get to them in time.

Looking around, Triste felt a strange pang in the back of her head as she looked at the other tubes around the room. Something about them seemed familiar... She shook her head and ignored it. She'd probably seen them from surveillance footage at some point... they had more important things to worry about.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **May 13, 2015, 10:22:55 AM**

The door hissed as in stepped Admiral Saul Carrack... a man Vergil was fairly familiar with. He knew him from before... he'd been a hero of the Scorched Earth War, but then had turned traitor and joined up with Rex... and had become quite the butcher by all accounts. He was a well-built man in his early 60s who had a rugged, craggy face. A five o'clock shadow adorned his chin, and his cold, steel blue eyes regarded them with triumph before a thin smile slid across his features.

"So... Vergil... what is it? Speicher now? And Triste Alcyle. You'll have to forgive me if I get your names wrong... they're rather immaterial... ahem." He looked from one to the other. "Where is the last waypoint? What is your objective for the Devastation's Inception?" he inquired.

Vergil said nothing, giving him a stony look. "Very well... let's see which one of you breaks first." Admiral Carrack responded. He took out a controller, and hit a button on it. Vergil was suddenly slammed back against the tank by thousands of volts of electricity that suddenly coursed through his body.

"AGGGGGGH!" he screamed, the lightning danced off the tips of his fingers, toes, and tail, his feathers beginning to fry as he sank to his knees. The tank was clearly rigged to jolt whoever was inside, and Carrack smirked as his eyes moved to Triste. "Feel like talking?" he asked, Vergil crying out again as another burst hit him, throwing him back once more as he writhed like a worm in agony.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 07, 2016, 04:40:12 PM**

Lily observed the waiting room of the flagship’s infirmary. The pristine white space was sanitary and sterile, with soft white lights that used photoscopic technology to eliminate the effects of night-blindness and vision-induced color bleed. It was more advanced than any hospital she’d ever experienced back on the planet.

“Miss Whent?” The doctor came out. He was clad in a multi-purpose unisuit and carrying a waterproof datapad. “The results are back.”

Lily felt her nerves flutter. He didn’t seem happy. “And?”

“And...by our tests, your psionic abilities should be completely functional.”

Lily bit her lip. “Well, they aren’t. What the hell did Vergil do to me?”

“I don’t know,” the doctor consoled. “But it’s nothing medical.”

“Well, then what am I supposed to do?” Lily balled her fists. “Kalis brought me on board to revolutionize your medical facilities with my abilities. What use am I if I don’t have those?”

“I don’t know, I’m sorry.” The doctor returned to his business, leaving Lily exasperated and frustrated.

She marched out of the infirmary, shooting a glare at a crewman who had the misfortune of walking past the door right as she was leaving. As soon as Vergil is dead, her only claim to fame is her healing powers. If she had any hope of rescuing Ejlert, she’d need to figure out what the hell is blocking those, sooner rather than later.

She found Foley drinking in the technical manuals and logs on the warship's computers. "You look like you're keeping entertained," she remarked idly.

"This is amazing!" he breathed. "The technology on this ship is off the charts. 3D replication of any material, cold fusion, infinite food...surprised that these people are so barbaric considering they've basically got a utopia up here. Did you know Kalis assumed control by backstabbing his former commander? And so did Carrack. And practically all of the senior officers. I'm lucky I'm bottom of the totem pole."

Lily pursed her lips. "Go back to the technology. How are they holding Vergil and team prisoner?"

Foley switched windows. "Um, Vergil and Triste are in restraining pods, the rest are more traditionally incarcerated in the brig. Looks like Vergils' being interrogated right now. But I think you'll find this most interesting." He shifted to a related tab. "Couple of the others are being held in a police station on the ground. Looks like they pissed off the coast guard, completely separate incident. They're not even flagged as being involved with Vergil and the others, I don't think anyone knows who they are."

Lily noticed Marie's and Axel's names among the list. "Hmm. Maybe we could work with that. Can we contact that station?"

* * *

Thirty minutes later, Axel, Flora, Anne, Marita, Marie, Rio, and Rose were rolled into the infirmary strapped securely to gurneys. They wore only thin hospital gowns, and a pair of armed security guards flanked them carrying heavy caliber rifles. "Ma'am. The prisoners you requested for experimentation."

Lily nodded as she walked out of her office. "Ah, excellent. Thank you."

"One last thing," the guard handed her a promissory warning. "Carrack was not pleased with the fact that you bypassed the Chief Medical Officer when requesting these test subjects. In the future, any further breaches of rank will result in swift disciplinary action."

"Of course." Lily could sense a threat despite the politeness in his tone. She glanced at the figures. "I will thank the admiral at the next opportunity for authorizing this. I believe that experimenting on these lowlifes will allow me to unlock my psionic powers."

"So does he. Which is why he's giving you a second chance." The guards turned to leave, their last words echoing as the door slammed shut behind them. "Dispose of the survivors when you are done. Don't disappoint the admiral again."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 12, 2016, 09:37:46 PM**

As Admiral Carrack cut the voltage to the tube, Vergil was left panting, smoke trailing from his body as his skin had heated to super intensity in the span of seconds from the jolts. Carrack turned his attention to Triste now, scowling. The female lizard was left disconcerted by the suffering of Vergil, but she had to stand firm... she couldn't give him any information. "Well?" Carrack asked, folding his hands behind his back.

Triste bit her lower lip and looked to Vergil again, who gave her a slight shake of his head. Nodding once, Triste's eyes hardened, and she glared at Carrack. "Blow me." she replied simply.

Carrack appeared only slightly surprised at this, and smirked. "Very well... we'll do just that." he said, his thumb going down on the button once more, this time throwing electricity into Triste's cell. She screamed and fell back against the walls of the tube, and Vergil managed to get shakily to his feet.

"No... NO!" he yelled out, though could do nothing inside the tube, as his powers were stymied by the barrier in place, keeping him in check as he slammed a fist on the glass, trying desperately to break out but failing rather miserably as Carrack kept up the voltage.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 13, 2016, 08:13:32 PM**

Marita Stirred first among the prisoners brought out to be ' tested' by Flora. AH.. MY Head " she murmured, Before quickly realixong she couldnt move much.. She looked down and realized she was restrained very tightly.. She then looked around and Noticed Lily " Ah.. crap.. ' she said softly.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 14, 2016, 03:37:45 AM**

Flora was swimming with the lofty haze of the painkillers the police had pumped her with. Dreamily she opened her eyes at the sound of Marie's voice. "Don't worry, I'm sure they've got some for you too..." she purred, attempting to rub her eyes and only then realizing she was tied down. "I...whu...huh..." Her eyes focused and she recognized. "Oh! Hi Lily!"

Lily shushed her quickly. "We've never met and you're terrified of me because I'm going to kill you," she ordered urgently. "Try it again."

"I don't...you are?" Flora cocked her head in confusion.

"*Nooooo!*" Rio supplied dramatically, thrashing his bonds for added affect. "Please don't kill me, scary doctor lady! I'm just a kid, got so much to live for!" Very convincing tears welled in his eyes. "I just wanted to join the circus!"

Lily sighed. "Perfect. If we get interrupted, everyone follow Rio's lead. Maybe with a bit less Broadway. Now, what are you even doing out here?"

"We were following Vergil!" Flora supplied. "I never really caught the details, but we came to find something in Egypt."

"Yeah, he wanted a...worldpoint or something..." Rio racked his brains. "Stuck all of us on a boat, we were the getaway, uh, then Flora shot everyone and things went tits up."

"I snogged Rose too!" Flora supplied. "It was *awesome*!"

But Lily had already taken Foley aside. "They're talking about waypoints, aren't they?" Foley muttered, having been filled in somewhat beforehand. "Vergil either saw it, or knows where it is."

"Yes. And if Vergil found it, then Carrack is extracting the location as we speak." Lily opened a first-aid kit and removed the standard issue pistol, a testament to the violent culture they were currently working for. "And we become a lot less valuable the second he finishes."

She marched out of the infirmary without another word.

"Hiii Foley!" Flora piped up excitedly. "I'm so drugged I'm not even mad you ditched us like a little prick!"

* * *

Lily quietly slid open the door to the room where Carrack was interrogating Vergil and Triste. She took a deep breath and opened her mouth to ask the admiral whether Vergil had revealed any fruitful information.

It doesn't matter, she suddenly realized. This was no time for role-playing the submissive medic. Carrack was already dangerously close to executing her, and anything he's learned couldn't leave the room and return to Kalis. *Time to act like I'm a true part of this crew...*

Triste's torture was giving her more than enough of a distraction. Bracing the pistol with both hands and placing it a millimeter from Carrack's back, Lily bit her tongue and pulled the trigger.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 14, 2016, 06:10:32 PM**

As Triste was tortured in front him, Vergil was trying to resist the urge to just break down and give away information... but was he really that strong? There was... he couldn't just sit here and watch her be tortured... the pain looked immense as it coursed through her, and Carrack's evil smirk just made things far worse. "Stop it..." Vergil said softly, pushing his hands on the glass. "Stop... stop it... STOP IT!" He roared, unable to do anything still. This got Carrack's attention though, and the admiral halted the proceedings and directed his attention to the gecko. "Yes?" he asked, looking from him to Triste.

Triste was curled up in the tank, trying to snarl and indicate to Vergil he shouldn't say anything but the gecko cracked, and clenched his teeth. "I... we found the final waypoint... and the last coordinates... you can't... do this to us anymore."

"Then tell me where it is!" Carrack snapped.

"Hong Kong..." Vergil snarled, glaring at Carrack.

"WHERE in Hong Kong? It's a big city." Carrack shot back.

But Vergil paused as he saw Lily head up behind the admiral, and then promptly shoot him in the back. Carrack's mouth twisted in agony, and his eyes bulged, as if wondering just what the hell was going on. He turned, staring at Lily briefly in utter surprise before he collapsed, his face a contorted mask of horror and disbelief. "She hasn't... told you..." He whispered, shifting his eyes to Vergil before all life left him.

"She?" Vergil asked, looking to Lily but wondering briefly he meant Triste. He inhaled sharply, looking at Lily now. "What are you.... doing here?" he asked.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 15, 2016, 02:45:20 AM**

Lily shot him a glare of pure venom. "I just took your advice to heart. What was it you called me? Lying, reckless, untrustworthy? Sounds like I'd fit right at home here."

Noticing the remote lying next to Carrack's lifeless body, she snatched it up and switched the voltage back to Vergil's cell. "Not that you could even understand a motive like loyalty. You think it's all about you and literally nothing else matters. Everybody needs to get down on their knees and sacrifice their lives, their dreams...everything for you and your hidden plans, and if they don't they're worthless! You don't need to explain things to your team, or protect them. They don't matter. They should just march to their deaths fueled only by your indifference, condescension, and exasperation, shouldn't they?"

She flipped the electricity on. She had questions, she had demands for him. But for now she just wanted to see him in pain.

Rio struggled with his gurney. "Hey, fatty. Untie me or I'll spit on you. Real grosslike."

Foley bit his lip. "I want to. Really. But I don't think that'd be a good move. Lily's in charge here, and they really don't like uppity underlings on this ship."

"*Foley why do you suck so much*???" Flora screamed, making a complete 180 from her previous lucid dreaminess. She shook her gurney so hard it threatened to tip. "Why can't you do anything useful? What the hell happened to you?"

Foley tried to stabilize the gurney but Flora thrashed and sent it tumbling over him. Angrily screaming at her former teammate, she began biting and teething at his face, leaving him trying to defend himself in a panic.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 16, 2016, 03:24:32 PM**

Flora! Stop it! This isnt going to help matters ' Marita rebuked her, as one by one, both Rose and Marie came to abnd realized they were prisoners." let Foley up, and let ME talk with him."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 16, 2016, 04:42:22 PM**

Foley shoved Flora's gurney, sending it skittering across the floor. Flora gave a screech when it pinned her against the wall. "I didn't want to get involved in this shit again!" he shouted angrily. "I'm only here because I want to survive after Kalis glasses the planet!" He angrily grabbed the first aid kit and disinfected his face. "What the hell do you want to say?" He glared at Marita.

"Lucidity is the key."

Emilena was sitting next to Tony in the brig. She was chained to the wall, but free to talk. "You're supposed to practise taking control of your dreams first. Don't let them guide you along aimlessly like everyone else gets the leisure to." She gritted her teeth as her hands fell asleep from the awkward position she was trapped in. "I know you probably don't feel like sleeping right now, but unfortunately it's all about remaining in control even when your subconscious is calling the shots."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 16, 2016, 07:44:55 PM**

" what Do I want? Well, first and foremost to be let go' Marita said. "That goes for all of us currently shackled to these gurneys. Now you said, "you want to live " well if you force us to tell you all that we know, well then you will have done your job,but then you'll be expendable to Kalis, he'll have no further use for you. You're useful to him, only as long as we have info he doesnt yet possess. Our lives, and their lengths, are tied to yours. Now I'd wager your counter will likely be something aling the lines of " as long as I am useful, Kalis won't kill me". Well thats not true at all. Kalis is a grade A-Psychopath, like Stalin. Guys like him don;t need a reason to kill someone, in fact they get their jollies from killing people, simply from being able to kill people.

Foley sighed ' You're smart, I'll grant you that. Smarter than the bitch who was clawing my face and screaming at me just a few seconds ago. But You are aware of how hopeless your situation is, don't you? Ok, One side, you have a ruthless warlord with an entire fleet of psionic warriors, with the power to crush just about every government on Earth in a matter of hours.. and on the other side " He smiled darkly " You have you guys, 6 or 7 or 8 blokes, who are all now prisoners aboard this ship, and who are currently being (or soon will be) brutally tortured until they snap.You want me to throw my lot in with you guys?' Foley laughed mirthlessly. Why?"

" Because he doesn't have the ship yet' Marita pointed out. "That ship is powerful enough to destroy his entire fleet. As long as he doesnt have it, There's a chance he can be stopped. and frankly, as unlikely as it may seem, we are the only ones who can stop him at this point. Like you said, the government wont be able to do it, once he gets ahold of it. They'll be mincemeat in a few hours. And then the entire world will be like a Soviet-era gulag, a living nightmare for all those subject to his rule. How long do you think he'll let you live, once he has absolute power? 'Loyalty, Honor, and mercy' mean zilch to him." Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 16, 2016, 09:58:25 PM**

Vergil looked wide eyed at her, astounded by what she'd just done... he wouldn't kill in cold blood like that himself but just seeing how far she'd fallen it was... but he didn't have time to think as he felt the electricity slam into his body and he shriveled up into the tube, screaming out and then being hurled back against the walls.

"No that's... that's not true...! I revealed the location of the... the waypoint!" He said through clenched teeth as the lightning danced all over his body. "Aggggh! I just... revealed it so they'd stop... torturing... Triste!" He exclaimed, trying to open his eyes but finding the searing pain far too difficult.

"You don't... need to do this!" he pleaded. "Please... this is... not you! You heal! You don't... inflict pain!" He was curled up in a practical ball on the floor now, in sheer agony from the jolts.

Tony glanced over at Emilena, shackled the same way he was. Their prison door was a force field, so breaking out was... tricky at best and probably impossible without some outside help. "I think... that makes sense... I..." he closed his eyes here. "So I have to sleep? At a time like this? I... yeah that's gonna be difficult but I'll try... of course... I suppose I could cause a ruckus... force the guards to come in and beat me senseless... or into unconsciousness." he suggested, though figured that wouldn't probably work.

"ugh... all right... I'll try and relax... shit I feel like I need some alcohol for that to happen." He stuck out his tongue here. He tried to just... picture himself in a comfortable bed back home... or driving one of his father's cars... it was hard though. "what... happens after I master lucid dreaming?" he asked now, still with his eyes closed.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 17, 2016, 02:32:09 AM**

"Triste?" Lily shouted over the crackling of the electricity. "You mean the *only one* you ever share anything with? The one you're infatuated with? The one you took with you during the cruise, and Voltaic Station, and the only one who shares a personal history with you? Forgive me for not prostrating myself and renouncing everything I've said just because you were nice to *TRISTE!*"

She cut the electricity and observed the twitching, prone figure lying pitifully in front of her. "And you know damn well I can't heal. I can't do *anything*, thanks to you." She fired the pistol again, but this time to shatter the protective glass window separating her observation room from the chamber with Vergil and Triste's pods. "And I don't give a damn about your waypoint," she spat, marching forward. Lily pressed her hands up against the glass of Vergil's pod. "I want you to give me my powers back..." she growled. "No bargains, no conditions. Just give them back to me *now*."

"Look Foley..." Rio rolled his eyes. "I get it, you're hedging your bets. That's just peaches, good for you. If you really lost your balls and need to stay some evil guy's bitch, how bouts you let us go, then we can take turns kicking you in the head and lock you in a broom closet. Say we jumped you, fucking perfect alibi."

Foley sighed. "You guys suck..." he grumbled. He undid Rio's gurney, and the youth quickly scampered round freeing everybody else. "What exactly are you planning anyway? You wouldn't even be up here if it weren't for me and Lily. No way in hell you're not completely improvising this."

"It's all about your brain maintaining control after control gets taken from you," Emilena explained. "Dreams are kinda a natural way the body goes into autopilot, so its the best form of practice. There's a reason they're called 'sleeper agents.'" She thought. "There's other stuff we could do, like attempt to extract the trigger using hypnosis or piecing together memories you have of Bolivia, but I highly doubt we've got any shot of pulling that off. Better you spend what time you've got becoming ready to fight back once the trigger drops."

She jumped when they heard heavy footsteps approaching their cell. "Hey, listen to me," she whispered urgently, making unblinking eye contact with Tony. "You've made the biggest step already by accepting the possibility and becoming prepared. Now the trigger *cannot* completely take you by surprise, and that's huge."

Two burly guards, one with a shiny bald head and the other with a red goatee, marched into the room. While the bald guard levied his rifle at her, the other unclasped Emilena's handcuffed wrists from the wall.

"Just keep practicing," Emilena said evasively, looking in no particular direction. "You can only get better..."

The guards marched her out of the room.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 17, 2016, 09:16:33 PM**

No this is going according to the plan "Marita said sarcastically as she worked circulation back into her hands ' We PLANNED to be captured and endure brutal torture, so we could get close enough to Kalis and kill him. Of COURSE we're improvising this. Look, we need to get out of here pronto. you wanna live longer than a few minutes, you come with us..we need to get out of here and get to China..Hong Kong to Be specific. Finding the waypoint wont be easy . that place is made up of over 200 islands. the definition of finding a needle in a haystack..' Marita said as she waklked over to the first aid kit and pulled out some bandages ' Flora , come here, and let me bandage your wound.."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 18, 2016, 01:33:48 PM**

After Ryo helped extricate Flora from her gurney prison, the tired folf stumbled over to the operating table and lay down, giving Marita full access to applying her first-aid. Foley handed Marita a tube of fast-healing nanogel, an extremely effective healing salve that only Kalis has the technology to make.

Ryo glanced at the unconscious Axel. "Erm, the big guy's still out. Anyone got a bucket of cold water?"

"Are you sure we shouldn't just wait for Lily to get back?" Foley asked nervously.

Emilena stared at the piece of paper. "So wait. I just sign this, and tell you everything I know about Vergil, and you let me go?"

The science officer nodded. "You're not our target. Vergil is."

"But you've already got him." She was hand-cuffed naked to a hard metal chair in an interrogation room. Two burly but unarmored guards stood behind her with high-powered rifles. "I know I'm not in a position to nitpick, but really I'm not seeing why you're wasting your time with this."

"More information can never hurt." The science officer was getting annoyed. "We saw you have a background in psycho-analytics, Admiral Carrack felt you might be worth a second chance. Perhaps you saw things Vergil didn't even know about himself."

Emilena raised an eyebrow and sighed. "No no no. The correct bait would have been to claim he'd died during the interrogation. That would have demoralized me and made me think there was no use continuing the fight. And for god's sake put the jarheads behind some one-way glass next time," she jolted her head dismissively at the guards. "The hidden show of force is always more effective than the displayed one, lets the perp fill in the blanks with her worst nightmares. Heck, the bald one even has his safety on."

The bald guard growled, undid the safety and whipped the back of her head with his rifle butt.

"So I take it you aren't going to cooperate?" The science officer pressed, but Emilena was slumped over in the seat, unresponsive. "Of course. Bloody waste of time..." he muttered.

"Did you kill her?" the other guard asked. The bald one stepped behind her and checked her pulse. Suddenly Emilena took that opportunity to smash the back of her head into his face. Kicking the inside of the desk, she sent her chair skidding into the wall, pinning the bald guard and giving her the angle to kick the other guard in the crotch. Grasping the pinned guard's rifle and firing wildly, she blasted the bald guard in the pelvis, also shattering the seat of the chair out from underneath her.

The remaining guard opened fire but Emilena wrenched her handcuffs out of the shattered chair and rolled under the table. Firing up through her own cover, Emilena winced as rivets of molten metal sprayed across her face, but a cry informed her that she'd landed an incapacitating hit on her target.

She blasted the science officer's leg for good measure before leaving cover, which turned out to be a good call because he'd had his pistol out and was waiting for the shot. Pouncing him, Emilena grunted and endured a knee to the stomach as she garroted him with her still-locked handcuffs. "One...last thing," she panted in his ear as she choked the life out of him, "I knew you were going to kill me no matter what answer I gave."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 18, 2016, 09:56:23 PM**

Vergil finally felt the electricity cut off, and he looked up now with pained eyes as Lily approached the glass of his tube. "I can't..." He whispered, not rising. "I can't... if I could... I would do it... please... believe me... but I don't have them... I never did... if I could help you I would... but I can't give what I don't have... believe me... more than anything... I would return them to you if I could." he said here, panting and not raising his voice above a whisper.

"Please..." he reached out now, his head touching the glass where hers did. "You can still do... the right thing... I will try and research... why your powers are gone... I promise... but I don't have..."

A loud alarm suddenly blared throughout the ship. "*Attention all personnel. Lord Kalis's ship is docking in five minutes. All personnel, prepare to receive the Red Castle. Attention all personnel of the Leviathan... prepare to receive the Red Castle and Lord Kalis.*

Vergil looked up now, still panting. "Lily... you have to get us out of here... Kalis will kill us... *all* of us... but I can... help... I'm sorry you feel this way... but we aren't enemies... please... help us." he whispered, pleading with her now.

Tony thought about this."I'd be willing to try it! Hypnotize me... reconstruct my memories, I'll do it!" he said now, becoming frantic as guards approached them now. "Shit!" he hissed, clenching his teeth as they came in to take Emilena away.

"Get off her! Emilena!" he called out, struggling against his bonds, though this did nothing. She made eye contact with him and told him he had an advantage over the trigger, but for the first time since being brought aboard this ship... he felt genuinely scared... scared he'd give in to this trigger without her there. "GET OFF HER! Don't you touch her you bast-OOF!" he was promptly rifle-butted in the gut, causing him to nearly double over (except he couldn't fully do that as he was still chained to the wall) in pain. "Uggggh!" he moaned, hearing the blaring alarm to announce Lord Kalis's arrival as Emilena was led off. "Dammit..." he muttered, trying to regain his breath.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 18, 2016, 11:27:08 PM**

"I don't believe your lies for a minute..." Lily growled, maintaining the same withering glare as she shot the hinges to Vergil's cell. The door creaked open. "You took my powers, and you're going to give them back. Until then, I need you alive."

She marched over to Triste's cell and freed her as well. "And no mama bear business from you either," she warned, keeping her pistol trained defensively on the both of them and standing so a wall was behind her.

Emilena broke the air vent from the wall with the butt of her rifle. It was a tight fit, and the only reason she could even move was her relatively small frame and her fur being slicked in cold sweat. She reluctantly had to swap the rifle out for the officer's pistol and knife; it would only clatter and make unnecessary noise.

Wouldn't say no to detouring for a drink... she thought, fighting mightily to stifle any coughs from the incredible amounts of dust she was kicking up around herself. *Where the hell am I even going...* Her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the announcement of Kalis' arrival echoing thunderously through the pipes, leaving her ears ringing and her teeth gritted.

Unfortunately the air duct developers neglected to install windows for her to figure out where she was even going, and before long she found herself staring at a straight drop. Cussing quietly to herself and well aware of her incredible chances of dropping right into a tighter path that traps her, she slid 90 degrees downwards and found herself plunged into a wave of hot steam. Seconds later, the pipes around her grew hot to the touch.

Cursing furiously and completely abandoning any hope of keeping herself quiet, Emilena rubbed her blistering hands along the pipes until she found a groove, then started shooting it to break the integrity of the solder. After expending her clip and jamming her knife into the cracks, the pipe finally buckled and dropped her into pitch blackness. She smacked her head on something metal, then her leg, then her arm...finally she slid to a stop amid a mess of pipes.

As she clutched her head and tried to get her bearings, Emilena took her first extended break. Right now she was buried deep within the internal mechanisms of the ship, an area not built for people to walk in. She saw light above her, but she couldn't be sure that was just her vision exploding with phosphenes. For the moment, she needed a moment to catch her bearings and nurse her burns.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 19, 2016, 07:53:54 PM**

Vergil managed to get shakily to his feet, resting a hand on his knee. "Thank you... we need to get the others and get out... they'll be coming for them very soon and... thank you." he said, looking to her now. Triste rolled her eyes, Lily apparently forgetting about her ability to cloak and go invisible, but since Vergil and her were a bit... worse for wear, she figured she'd regain her strength first and then try something later on.

"You don't need the gun." Vergil said softly. "At least... not for us. And I'm telling you the truth... if I knew... I'd give them back immediately. But I honestly don't have your powers." he made his slow way over to Carrack's corpse, retrieving his sword as Carrack had apparently decided to keep it for himself, perhaps as a trophy to present to Kalis. "OK... We've got five minutes... let's get to the prison cell area and free the others. Then make for an escape shuttle and get the hell off this ship." he suggested, heading for the door now, leaning against it heavily as he opened it, and then moved out into the hallway. "Ugh..." he exhaled wearily, starting to move off down the hallway... this ship... seeming familiar to him... yes... maybe he had been here... having served under Rex in the past...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 19, 2016, 08:50:38 PM**

Marita applied the gel to Flora's injuries, then gave some of the gel to Rose and marie to heal the cuts in thier wrists. ; alright' Foley" she said turning to him." We have only a couple minutes to get out of here before Kalis's ship docks with this one. whats the quickest way off of this ship?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 21, 2016, 03:30:08 AM**

"You want to get OFF? We just bloody got you on the ship!" Foley exclaimed in frustration. He looked at Rio angrily.

"Hey, I'm not the strategy guy, I just pickpocket bitches," the youth shrugged.

"Ugh." Foley checked Axel and Flora's vitals. "Neither of these two are in a position to travel. I'll stay with them here and send them after you once the nanogel has fully healed their wounds." He glanced at Marita. "If you're honest that you think you can defeat Kalis, then they're not in any danger. But even if you fail, I'll make sure I get them off the ship alive." Behind him, Flora gurgled happily as the nanogel sedated her.

Foley drew some quick directions to the escape pods. "You can take these to get off the spaceship. They'll be guarded so I hope you're ready for a fight. Alternately, take a left here and you can rescue your friends from the infirmary. It's up to you."

Lily nevertheless kept her guard up as they made for the escape pods. Triste in particular had been unsettlingly silent, and Lily remembered her pulling off some impressive combat feats in the name of protecting Vergil.

Another part of her couldn't keep a tiny nag of doubt worming into her thoughts. Could Vergil be telling the truth? Did he truly not steal her powers? If that's the case, what happened to them?

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 21, 2016, 10:26:09 PM**

Thanks ' Marita Said, taking the directions From Foley " Get them to safety, and you as well. We'll need you, I'll wager, before the end. we'll need all the help we can get to defeat Kalis. After all, theres only a handful of us.' Marita said as she began heading down the hallway, following the map she had been givenn. Rose and Marie followed close behind her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 22, 2016, 10:35:51 PM**

The ship was coming back to Vergil now, its corridors and twists and turns becoming familiar. "Yeah... yeah down here!" he said, stumbling along as he took a left. Fortunately, interrogation wasn't very far from the holding cells, and Vergil could see them up ahead. Staggering through the doorway, he saw two guards on duty outside the main row of cells.

"Hey! What the hell?" called one, shocked to see the prisoner out and about. Vergil attempted to draw his sword, but Triste, apparently not as rocked by the torture as Vergil has been, flashed by him, cleanly picked up a knife hanging on the wall by the door, buried it in the throat of one guard by tossing it before she hit the deck, avoiding the shot of the second and then tail whipping him to the ground, his skull cracking on the floor with a sickening noise.

Blinking, Vergil simply stood there and nodded. "Uh... right..." he said, moving to the switch that opened the cells and dropped the force fields. Soren, Tony, and the rest were released from their bindings and the fields dropped, the ferret nearly collapsing to the floor from surprise as his wrists were released.

"What the hell?" he asked, pushing himself out of his cell to see Vergil, Triste and... Lily. "Lily?" he asked. "What are you... doing here?" He jogged up to one of the prone guards, took his assault rifle and slung it over his shoulder. "This is... a rescue or something?" He had been trying to focus on falling asleep before he'd been released, so to suddenly be dropped to the floor had been a shock to say the least.

Vergil tensed up as he leaned over the control panel, sensing Kalis's presence on board now. "Oh no..." he groaned. "He's... he's here... we don't have much time..." he mumbled, still regaining his strength.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 25, 2016, 02:20:30 AM**

Emilena took a deep breath. Her back wasn't going to get any less kinked in this position...with a strangled grunt she forced herself to her feet. Using her knife to pry a handhold out of the tiny ridges in the pipes, she started scaling to the light above her.

Her legs were burning and her arms felt dead when she finally crawled over the edge of a catwalk. She was overlooking something that looked like a huge boiler. She kept her eyes open for interruptions since she was now in a section designed for humans, but everybody appears to have sodden off to go watch Kalis arrive or something.

She approached the large isolated structure curiously, since it wasn't giving off enough heat to be a boiler. Scaling the catwalks, she reached a hatch above it and took a peek within.

An absolutely awful smell hit her like a sack of bricks. This chamber was a portion of the waste disposal system! Sealing it quickly to keep from retching, she nevertheless considered this a valuable discovery, since a waste disposal system would naturally lead to the edge of the ship.

As she traced the septic pipe along the catwalks, she weighed her options. Technically she should be locating her allies, but she suspected they were either dead or being tortured to death. It hurt to abandon everyone, but she was severely over her head already. Better that somebody live to tell the story of those who fought.

Eventually her intuition proved correct and she reached a hallway with windows revealing the open skies. She couldn't see the ground, but she hoped they weren't moving. Thousand-mile falls to the ground were perilous enough without beginning with thousands of knots of forward movement.

The hallway led her to a small hangar. She looked wistfully at the fighter jets stationed and briefly toyed with attempting to fly one. Instead she smashed the cockpit window and seat-belted herself into the pilot seat. It took a couple of clicks to find out which button on the joystick did what, but considering she was looking for the missile launcher, it wasn't too traumatic when a single missile rocketed out of the right wing and blasted the hangar door open. The hangar immediately depressurized and sucked everything not nailed down, which included Emilena's jet.

Immediately all the blood rushed to Emilena's head and she almost blacked out. The sheer coldness of the outer atmosphere threatened to give her a heart attack, and she thanked her lucky stars she'd located the ejection button beforehand.

A blind press of the button, and her seat rocketed out of the nosediving jet, a parachute popped out with a stomach-wrenching jolt, and she began her unpleasant descent to the desert ground.

"So are we going to the escape pods, or are we grabbing the guys locked up in the space jail?" Rio asked in confusion as he, Marie, Rose and Marita reached the fork in the road that demanded they choose a more specific direction.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 25, 2016, 01:27:13 PM**

Escape Pods ' Marita Said. "We need to get out of here, pronto. Trying to get them out is basically akin to a suicide mission. We Have no Weapons, and the element of surprise isn't enough to free everyone, we'd need weapons for that. So Escape pods it is. Then once we reach the ground. we'll need to get to Hong Kong, as the last waypoint is somewhere in there. We need to get there and find the ship before Kalis does. Otherwise, its all hail Evil Overload Kalis.' Marita said.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 25, 2016, 09:01:49 PM**

Not having time to catch up, Vergil led the way towards the escape pods. He paused briefly, sliding to a halt as he looked at a map of the ship on a bronze plaque and saw they were ahead and down a level. OK... easy enough. But as he rounded a corner with the others, there he was... his long flowing red robes... his metallic face from when Rex had sliced it off... his spiky, threatening looking skin and those dead, yellow eyes.

Panting, Vergil leaned against the wall, in disbelief at being headed off like this. "K... Kalis..." He said, leaning heavily to support himself.

"Vergil..." Kalis said in his raspy, robotic voice. "I've been meaning to confront you for years... but then again... my last attempt to kill you didn't work out as I'd planned." He took a step towards them, and Vergil could see Eljert was with him.

"E... Eljert!" Vergil whispered, moving forward himself before stopping as Kalis glared at him.

"That's far enough..." He ordered. "Old friend..."

"What?" Vergil asked, panting heavily and raising his brows. "I don't... specifically... remember... being friends with you... or.. even knowing you all that well."

This elicited a rumbling laugh from Kalis now, who glared cruelly at him. "Really old friend... they really did a number on you... didn't they?"

"Who? What?" Vergil asked now, unsure what Kalis was talking about.

"The Federation you IDIOT! Do you really THINK that you've been dancing for them of your own free will and volition? You've been more brainwashed than even I thought was capable... but I suppose they have that technology... don't they?" he asked, fixing his eyes on Triste now, who seemed frozen and extremely agitated by something.

"Vergil... Vergil..." She whispered to him. "Don't listen to him... he's lying..."

"Hahahaha yes... yes I'm lying... I know all ABOUT you Vergil... who you are... where you came from... what you were born of... and what you became... the Federation's slave... a new identity... a new life... brainwashed into thinking you're some big new hero... a weapon for them to use... that couldn't be further from the truth because I KNOW who you are!" Kalis challenged him now. "You and I go WAY back in fact."

"Vergil! Don't listen! We gotta get outta here! Screw this guy!" Triste yelled, throwing a knife towards Kalis, who simply deflected it with his mind and let it clang into the wall.

"Well what a fetching handler you've acquired for yourself... 'Vergil'..." Kalis said mockingly. "She manipulates... she makes you think you're this what? Federation hero or something? Hahahahah you are their greatest ENEMY! The one they FEARED would destroy them! And then they got their hands on you and remade you into their perfect puppet... defeated you so thoroughly you didn't even realize it had happened!"

"The fuck are you talking about? Triste? What's he mean?" Vergil demanded, looking at her darkly now. "I AM a hero! I know who I am! I... I..."

"Yes... you WERE a hero... 'Vergil'... but that's not even your real name... is it?" Kalis asked, chuckling evilly here. "You want to know the truth? The HORRIBLE truth?"

"I... no... no I... served with you yes but... I... I..."

"Hero of the Scorched Earth War... the Federation's greatest general... suddenly turned traitor with his best friend... launched a rebellion... brought the Federation to its knees... until he was betrayed... betrayed by his friend who wanted it all... wanted what he had... and now I've TAKEN it from you. I am YOUR superior... isn't that right... REX?"

Vergil was trembling in fear now, his legs wobbly and like jelly as he struggled to hold himself upright. "R... Rex?" he whispered. "No... no I'm... I'm Vergil I'm not... I'm not... Rex..."

"Rex... my friend... mentor... superior... supreme warlord... leader of Rex's Rebellion... you should stop denying what you KNOW to be true!" Kalis insisted here.

"I... I'm not... that's... that's a fucking lie..." Vergil panted, backing up unsteadily. "It's not true... liar... LIAR!" he yelled, springing forward now and activating his sword, with Kalis's own blade out like lightning and blocking Vergil's blow easily enough and turning the weakened gecko aside.

"Just ask HER." Kalis replied, nodding to Triste now. "She's the one who knows who you are... whose mission was to lie to you... to tell you lies about who you are to reinforce the Federaton's brainwashing... brilliant really... I THOUGHT I had killed you but... she infiltrated your ship to kill you... was caught up when my guns began hammering and destroying your vessel... you must've been knocked unconscious or something... and she brought you back... brought you back to be reprogrammed into their slave... in just ONE fell swoop... Rex was returned to them... you... IDIOT... you couldn't see what was right in front of you... who you REALLY were?"

"I... I..." Vergil looked back to Triste here, who only looked at him with a pained expression on her face. "That's not true... it's not true... please tell me it's not true... I'm NOT... Rex... I'm VERGIL. Vergil Speicher... right?" he asked hopefully, but Triste closed her eyes and looked away.

"Vergil... I'm... I'm sorry... I'm... I was going to..."

"You were going to tell me? WHEN? AFTER I'd killed Kalis? AFTER I'd saved the Federation? When the FUCK WERE YOU GOING TO TELL ME?" he roared.

"If you need confirmation... just look me in the eyes... tell me you don't remember slicing my face off Rex... old friend... TELL ME!" Kalis ordered, and Vergil turned his head slowly, his eyes in agony as he gazed upon Kalis's... but there it was... the eyes... yes... the eyes that had gazed at him after he'd... torn Kalis's face off... his fleet... his life...his betrayal... his rebellion... his... his everything. Rex... he was Rex... HE was Rex... HE... was... Rex... his false life was collapsing around him now... and his memories... his REAL memories... they were pounding him like Niagara Falls... and he couldn't escape... couldn't escape it at all...

"I... I..." was all Vergil could say.

"You know the truth now... the very great truth they've been hiding from you this entire time... well... I'd say it's time to end things... Rex... you were my superior once but no longer... I'll kill you and take your place as supreme warlord... the way it was ALWAYS meant to be..." Kalis began advancing on Vergil now, who seemed rooted to the spot, hypnotized and unable to move.

"BASTARD!" Triste shouted, leaping forward to attack Kalis now. "Vergi! GO!" she yelled. "GET OUT OF HERE! I'll hold him off... kill him for good!" she snarled. "GO! you're in no condition to fight!"

Vergil watched Triste struggle with Kalis, the two coming to mighty blows as they fought, twirling, parrying and attacking. He then slowly turned to Lily, staring at her. "I... I'm Rex..." he said softly to her, unblinking. "I... I'M Rex..." he said, holding his hand to his chest, apparently paralyzed and unable to react from the revelation.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2016, 01:04:24 AM**

Lily bit her lip. She wanted to hate Vergil, but it was hard to hate someone who was so pitifully being stripped of every quality they'd ever held dear. Kalis was brutal, and didn't pull a single punch. But Lily didn't have long to worry about Vergil, because someone more important was in the room.

Ejlert North was a heavyset youth, with sunbleached blonde hair that clashed with his dark skin. His eyes, the same shade of amber brown as hers, widened in surprise at recognition. "M-Mom?" he said, his genius-level intellect quickly putting the pieces together.

Then Kalis backhanded him in the throat with a dagger. "No interruptions," he reminded his guard casually, as both pairs of amber brown eyes in the room widened in dawning horror.

"*Ejlert!!!*" Lily screamed. Every single cell in her body felt as if it shut down; her brain ceased to think, and time seemed to travel in slow motion; she could only watch as her son staggered and clutched his throat, trying in vain to stem the bleeding. She dropped to the floor; this wasn't a controlled fall, she practically face-planted next to Vergil, even as her son maintained standing with what little strength had not yet faded away.

Rio strapped Marita, Rose, and Marie into an escape pod. "Only room for 3 in each one!" he mentioned cheerily. "I'll take the next one down, you guys don't worry! I'm right behind you!"

Closing the escape pod door securely for them, he instead jogged back down the hallway towards the infirmary. Even if Marita's speech hadn't inspired Foley, Rio was convinced. This was his chance to *save the world*, and like hell he was missing out on that.

Down in the deserts of Cairo, two camouflaged individuals had assumed an observational position and were observing the warship. The smaller of the two was a lightly-armed tracker, who had volunteered his services to track down a woman who had done him wrong in the past.

"The *muchacha* is moving around a lot, *SeÒor*!" informed Nando in a thick Spanish accent. He refocused his binoculars on the ship, but the lion's share of his attention was on the tracking device receiving signals from his brain. "Her trajectory is *muy extraÒo*...but..."

He suddenly switched focus when he spotted something falling from the sky. "SeÒor Stryker! *Arriba*!"

With a pained grunt, Emilena felt her ejection seat embed itself into a sand dune. Undoing the seatbelt, it still took her an extra minute to free her legs from the burning sand that had quickly covered her lower body.

Cursing brilliantly, she balanced precariously on the seat. Her pawpads may be calloused, but they weren't prepared for the burning heat of the Egyptian afternoon sand. Taking her knife, she stabbed into the seat and began cutting the leather coating out to cobble some rags for her feet. She'd been on the ground less than a minute, and she already felt like she was getting first-degree sunburns.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 28, 2016, 01:21:33 PM**

Marita pressed the eject button and the pod with the three of them it was flung, out into space at a rapid pace. the speed combined with the friction of the atmosphere, began to make the pod become very hot. " Cant You steer this thing/ Marie shouted. ' No! its flight path is pre-determined' Marita responded. ' we'll land somewhere in the desert, how close we';ll be to civilization, i don't know. Lets just hope Rio, Foley and the others find their way off as well.' The pod red across the sky streaking down towards the lights of a city lying on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea-Alexandria, Egypt.. the pod landed with a crash in an tuned area to the south of the city.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 30, 2016, 10:24:17 PM**

Rio raced down the hallway, passing several crewmembers who mostly ignored him. One of the perks of being a kid, apparently.

He emerged to see a pretty unpleasant site; Triste in full combat with Kalis, dead guards everywhere and the remaining crewmembers looking pretty worse for wear. "Crap, next time I'm taking the escape pod..." he breathed.

Lily closed her eyes, unable to process the flood of emotions coursing through her. It was if every possible negative emotion was flowing through her, destroying her very being and crushing everything she'd done, everything she'd sacrificed to reach Ejlert. She'd lost it all. And there was nothing more dangerous than someone who had nothing to lose.

Suddenly she grabbed Vergil's arm. "Get up." Locking eyes with him, she glared at him for the umpteenth time, but this one was full of fiery molten rage. "I don't care who the hell you are." Pulling him unequivocally to his feet, she pirouetted him to face Kalis. "I don't care what you've done or what your real name is, but you've got a shot to make that bastard pay. It's *his fault*." She withdrew a syringe from her labcoat, a painkiller/adrenaline booster, and stabbed him in the arm with it. "We can debate philosophy when that space lizard is dead and buried. Sounds like you used to be his boss or something, why don't you show him what happens to uppity lieutenants in this fleet?"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 30, 2016, 10:41:58 PM**

Vergil watched in horror as Eljert was merely clubbed in the throat, and he couldn't react... couldn't move... Lily collapsed next to him, and he watched as he slowly... slowly started to come round. His breathing was slowing... Rex... he was Rex...

He felt Lily drag him up, but couldn't acknowledge her, and winced as she stabbed him with something. Something... his adrenaline was starting to course through him again, and he tried to register her words? Fight? No... no he couldn't do that... there was something more important he had to do...

He stumbled forwards, arms reaching out, and grasping Eljert now. "Come on!" he hissed, tugging the wounded youth away now. "To the escape pods! They're just ahead! I'll try and heal you!" he exclaimed, running now past the battling Triste and Kalis. "Come on!" he shouted back to Lily, and dove into an escape pod, shoving Eljert into a seat and strapping him down as he sat violently into the next one, buckled himself in, and slammed his fist down on the launch button. The pod blasted off from the ship's side, hurtling down the few hundred feet to the desert sands, firing its retro rockets to slow its descent and keep it from slamming too hard into the ground. As they touched down with a cloud of sand, Vergil was moving, up out of his seat, springing to Eljert and dragging him out to lay him down on the ground, trying to focus... trying to gather up enough strength... trying to... save the youth.

He closed his eyes, laid his hands upon his form, and tried... tried to do... something... but it wasn't enough... it wasn't... he could feel the boy expiring, his life leaving him... no... no... "NO!" Vergil roared out, eyes popping open as he tried but failed... the life force leaving him... there was nothing... nothing he could do. "I... I did... no... Eljert..." he whispered, gazing down sadly now at the lifeless youth. "I... I'm so... sorry..." he said, and he must've been speaking to Lily... or maybe Eljert... or maybe both. "I'm so... sorry." he got weakly to his feet now, looking to Lily here, pure hopelessness written on his features. "I tried... I tried... I... I don't have your powers." he said now. "I wasn't enough... I only wish... I had gotten to him sooner." he said here, apparently struggling to stand, his legs wobbling even after the shot she had given him.

Behind the advanced scouts, a large form rose up from the desert sands. He was now different... a red, cybernetic eye was connected to his face, overlapping his left eye. A metallic spine ran down his backside and culminated in a massive metallic tail. His right arm was a missile launcher, and his left was a Gatling gun that doubled as a bludgeon if he needed it. Smirking here, the now enhanced assassin began bounding over the sands.

"All right bitch... I'm coming for you..." he muttered, his powerful legs practically leaping him over the desert.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 31, 2016, 06:54:26 PM**

Emilena winced with every step she took through the scorching sand of the afternoon desert. She was lucky it isn't midday, or she'd almost certainly have passed out from dehydration and heatstroke. As it was, her makeshift footrags were doing very little to ease the discomfort of walking, and she was pretty sure she'd already developed a severe sunburn across her entire body.

But about ten minutes later, that suddenly became the least of her problems when an old enemy arrived to stand before her, barely recognizable due to his new cybernetic enhancements. "Oh for the love of...I thought you died," she groaned, her knife continuing to hang limply at her side. She knew she didn't stand a chance against him, and he knew it too, which was why he didn't even bother to hide his presence. "I don't suppose there's any chance

Don Stracci requested you keep me alive for interrogation?"

"Ejlert!" shouted Lily, pushing Vergil aside when it was clear he wasn't going to heal the boy. "Ejlert, can you speak? Stay calm!" She had no medical supplies whatsoever, and the boy was suffering from a dagger wound to the throat. Said dagger was missing, meaning that there was severe bleeding. She didn't need a medical degree to know it was a fatal wound. "Vergil," she cried, fighting to keep from breaking down in front of her missing son, "if you're telling the truth that you didn't steal my powers, *where did they go?* How do I get them back?!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 31, 2016, 08:34:50 PM**

Mom...' Eljert Gasped weakly, air hissing through the hole in his throat, with every labored breath- I"m sorry.. I ran away.. please forgive... me..' he coughed, blood shooting out of the hole in his throat.. The youths eyes were dimming. his end was very near.. ' Just.. don't forget me mom.. please? Promise me" he murmured then his eyes rolled back and his head went limp as his last wisps of life left his body and he slumped to the ground. Eljert was no more.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 04, 2016, 08:50:45 AM**

"I... I don't know!" Vergil panted, trying to think here. "But... but if... if there's... a reason... the only thing I can think of is your own self-doubt... it's suppressing your abilities because you've become lost... you don't know who you are anymore... you want to retrieve them so badly that it's causing further frustration and anger and you're now stuck... you can't move forward... you can't move back... you're stuck. Lily..." he approached her now. "You have to believe... believe in WHO you are and not lose sight of that! You've lost that... and yes I feel I've contributed to that... but you can't lose yourself."

He placed his hands on his hips now, and shifted his weight onto his left foot. "Lily... you were a determined individual of our group starting out... determined to find your son... and I'm sorry that neither of us could save him... but the enemy... the *real* enemy... is and always HAS been Kalis. He's the one who corrupted your son... he's the one who who destroyed Lanthae... he's the one... partly responsible for why I'm now Vergil and not Rex... but I... like you... can't run from my past... I *am* Rex whether I like it or not! I... I can't deny that anymore because my memories... my past... that exists... it wasn't a lie... I... I don't *want* to be Rex but at the same time... that... that is who I am... you must... accept who you are... and the powers you have..."

He thought a moment now, raising a brow. "Sure I don't want to be Rex but... knowing I am... that's... I suppose a bonus in some way just because I can USE that to my advantage against Kalis... I can use... who I am... against him. As you said... I used to be his superior... I can once again prove I am... but you have to step up and believe in who you are as well." he said, still weakened from the torture, though the adrenaline shot was helping. "You show the world... everyone... what it means to be you..." he said now, finding strength in his own words for himself as well, despite Kalis's revelation.

"I was responsible for you losing faith in yourself... just as I... was responsible for turning Kalis from a hero... a young... impressionable hero... into what he is now... but we must bear responsibility for our actions... and it is what you CHOOSE to continue being... or not being... that... is your real test now. I set you and Kalis on your respective paths BUT... you both chose to continue on them... you must make... a different choice now... not just for your sake... but for mine as well." he concluded, looking at her with imploring eyes.

"I no longer work for Don Stracci... my mission... is termination of *you*." he said here, sneering. "Your end is nigh Emilena Echo..." he then sprang forward, violently whipping his Gatling gun across Emilena's face and sending her flying back through the air to face plant in the desert sands.

Stryker was over her in an instant, a combat knife appearing from the middle of the Gatling gun, which he promptly shoved into Emilena's spine, missing her vertebrae by inches. "I've made it my life mission to kill you and terminate your existence! Now... I will finally have that chance!" he exclaimed, crowing over his victorious position. Withdrawing the knife from the now screaming Emilena, Stryker picked her up, then used his metallic tail to whip her into the air, firing off a missile in her direction and causing it to detonate close by, the concussion burning her and throwing her through the sky and behind a nearby dune. Grinning, the sungazer lizard began bounding after her. "You can hide!" he exclaimed. "But you can't run! I'm now superior in every way to you!"

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 04, 2016, 01:23:23 PM**

Lily could only look at her son's dead body in shock. The light had gone from her eyes, and she could vaguely hear Vergil trying to comfort her, but what did it matter? What did anything matter with Ejlert dead?

But then something Vergil said broke through...she had lost her path. She'd made some terrible decisions in her quest to rescue Ejlert, put her faith in the wrong people and left the right people to die. Her cheeks burned when she thought of how things could have been if she'd stayed with her team. If she'd remained a healer.

But her path was crystal clear now. With Ejlert dead, her new goal was to avenge his death. Kalis needed to pay for what he did to her son. "Vergil..." she started. "That's your name. Vergil. You don't have to think of yourself as Rex, that was a different man whose ideals you don't share. Remember that I was reborn once, too. I could continue to think of myself as that horrible mutated creature from Lanthae...but that would only hurt my ability to change my future." She touched him reassuringly on the shoulder. "You are now Vergil. You have Rex's powers, but you are going to use them for your own ends, and his memory holds no power over you."

She started in surprise as she felt a familiar sensation through her fingers. Slowly, Vergil's wounds were transferring onto her. With the renewal of her purpose came the return of her powers!

Emilena cried out as Stryker punted her directly into the scorching sand. Her new wounds burnt with a dull ache, more painful than usual; leave it to someone like Stryker to wield weapons designed to favor agony over damage. She tried to get to her feet, spitting a mouthful of blood onto the dune below her. She still had her combat knife, and a lucky swing was almost certainly her only hope of survival. "Are you sure you dont want to take me prisoner?" she asked desperately as he bore down on her position. "You could torture me to your hearts desire. It'd be just like old times."

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 06, 2016, 11:39:17 AM**

Vergil considered what she said now, and even though his memories were still painfully flooding back, he was growing to accept them now... it was better than having "amnesia" and not knowing anything. He had sought the answers... and he had found them. "Yes... yes... that's... that's something... I should look at it as. It's my life... but just as you are choosing now... I too have to choose WHAT sort of person I will be from here on out... that... that is the most important thing." He agreed, nodding.

He tensed up as he suddenly felt her powers return, the wounds moving away from him and the great burns that had crisscrossed his body were now fading, as were the internal injuries he had suffered.

He inhaled sharply, and looked at her now with amazement. "You did it... you did it!" he grinned, holding her arms now. "I thought so! I thought it was because you had lost your way! This is great! Oh but... Triste!" he exclaimed now. "If she's still alive... we have to rescue her... and everyone else."

Tony sputtered as he came out of an escape pod nearby. "Hey!" the ferret said. "I'm all for that! But... what about the others?" he asked now.

"They have phones... well... did have phones. We can send them messages... tell them to meet back at Corona or something... chances are Kalis will know where Devastation's Inception is... so... we'll regroup... and hit it with everything we've got... hit HIM with everything we've got!" Vergil declared now, looking to Lily. "But first... we should try and find the others... their pods would be scattered." he pointed out now.

Stryker slid to a halt near her now, then shoved the tip of his tail right through the back of her thigh, impaling her rather handily as blood spurted out. "Like hell! There are no good old times!" he declared. "Only the new... but yes... I fully intend to make you suffer before I finish you off!" he crowed triumphantly. Withdrawing his now blood stained tail, he wiped it off on her backside and then whipped it roughly across her face.

"Bitch!" He spat right in her face next, then activated a new feature on his Gatling gun, a device which super-heated the barrels as quickly as an electric stove, and placed it right on her backside, scorching through her clothes and starting to burn her back. "Heheheheheh! How you like THEM apples?" he asked now, smiling evilly down at her.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2016, 10:59:52 PM**

"You're right," Lily nodded. "I don't know how many of them got out...but we can't give up now." A cold fire burned in her eyes. "I won't rest until either me or Kalis is dead."

She crossed to the controls of the escape pod. "These can communicate with each other. Our comms are out, either damaged in the crash or being actively jammed by the warship, but I've got a few coordinates for other pods." She glanced at Tony. "Did you see anyone else reach the escape pods? I saw Rio for a second at the end, and I'm not even sure if Soren left the holding cells."

Foley gritted his teeth as he pushed Axel's and Flora's gurneys down the hallway. "Coming through! Medical emergency!" he shouted people out of his way.

He'd been following the progress of the little coup, and it was clear that Vergil's escape had halfway worked, and the other half was probably about to die horribly at Kalis' hands. That meant Flora needed to be off this warship ASAP. He'd already dressed her and Axel in nurse outfits, in the hopes that they'd look slightly more like crewmen instead of thugs.

He went for the further pod bay, just because the closer one was probably a little populated due to Rio and the girls visiting it. Unfortunately this meant that he'd had to use the much smaller auxiliary pods, which could only hold a single person each. He wasn't 100% sure how these things worked, so he did Axel first. Sucks to be a pragmatist, but Foley honestly didn't care if Axel's pod crashed into the ground at terminal velocity and exploded. However, it shot out perfectly and began its slow trajectory to the ground.

Flora was next. Strapping her into her seat, he began preparing the pod for launch, when he heard crewmen enter the bay. "You there, stop!" one of them yelled. "Step out of the pod!"

The sound roused Flora, who looked sleepily up at Foley. "I...huh? Where are we?" she asked in a daze.

Foley pushed the button to close the pod bay door, when a bullet struck him square in the heart. It was a poison-tipped round, bloodless but still lethal. He grunted, and Flora squawked in surprise at the sound of gunfire. "Foley, what's going on?" she stammered, as her memories slowly returned. "I was so out of it, I--!"

"No, you weren't," Foley interrupted, stumbling backwards so the pod door would have room to shut. "I was. You were right about everything, Flora." He got one last resigned look at her terrified face as his vision slowly faded to black. "I backed the wrong horse. I'm sorry."

"Foley!" shouted Flora in a panic as the guards fired at her pod. "*FOLEY!*"

The pod rocketed off into the sky.

Emilena grunted as she hit the sand for the umpteenth time. A sharp pierce in her leg, and she cried out again as she felt her thigh slice open. "Jesus..." not really feeling capable of her usual banter, she simply attempted to bury herself in the dune, where maybe she could play dead more effectively.

But Stryker wasn't done with her yet. A searing pain, even worse than the burning sand, dug into her lower back, sending her into uncontrollable spasms, but she couldn't even crawl away. "Aaaugh!" She gritted her teeth as both sides of her body were singed, but there was nowhere to go. She was too dehydrated to even cry.

Well, I'm not fighting my way out of this one... she realized with dawning resignation. *And he won't listen to negotiation...my only real option is to play dead...at least if I die it won't be groveling for mercy...*

So even though her nerves were screaming, she forced herself to lay perfectly still. It was worryingly easy, she was already so close to passing out from sheer pain...

From behind Stryker, Nando had silently assembled his automatic rifle. Getting as close to the dueling pair as possible, he took a deep breath and prepared to open fire on his master.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 08, 2016, 07:03:21 PM**

"Ri-right! The pods!" He said now, nodding. "Good thinking! We'll send out a message for everyone to meet back in Corona!" Vergil said now, heading back to the pod now that he was at full strength thanks to Lily. He got to work tapping out a message, and nodded for Lily to join him so she could deliver the coordinates.

Tony followed them, a grim look on his face. "Well... some got out but shit... I don't know about Soren... I'm not sure if he ever made it out of the holding block!" the ferret said warily. "He wasn't with us when we encountered Kalis so... I... I fear the worst!" he said, his voice dropping out from under him.

Stryker then proceeded to raise his bludgeon and smash it down with extreme force on Emelina's back. He then repeated the motion, lifting up the battering instrument and bringing it back hard for a second time... again and again he did this, and finally, he heard the satisfying snap of her spine as he broke it in two. "Heheheheheh!" he chuckled evilly, grinning mirthlessly down at her.

It was then Nando opened fire, his bullets striking Stryker's metal spine. This caused the lizard to whirl around, an angry glare in his eyes, wondering what this was all about...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 08, 2016, 08:58:57 PM**

"Let's focus on who we can rescue, before taking headcount," Lily suggested. "Soren could have been in any of these pods."

After the scan finished, she pointed to a spot just north of them. "Let's go there first. One pods' already landed, and its got another inbound."

Nando emptied his magazine into Stryker, aiming for vital organs. He knew he'd only be buying himself seconds, so the kill needed to be fast.

It wasn't fast enough. Stryker was on him in an instant, his tail swiping Nando across the face and sending his rifle skittering. Spiraling to deflect, Nando drew a sidearm with his backhand and fired a shot right through Stryker's cybernetic eye. Stryker screamed with rage and smashed his assailant in the chest with his battering ram. Nando grunted but fired his grappling hook, pinning Stryker to him while being crushed into the ground. Simultaneously his tail realigned and buried itself into Nando's arm. Grunting, Nando used his remaining hand to thumb something on his belt. "Checkmate bitch," Nando grinned weakly as the EMP grenade went off, shutting down both of their cybernetic arsenals. Stryker cried out and tried to wrench free, but without his cybernetic skeleton his body was shutting down.

Emilena moaned pitifully, barely observing what was happening around her. She could only register that something had happened that likely saved her life. Staring over at the pair, locked forever in terminal combat, she realized Nando's identity with a flash of shock. "Oh my god, Nairda..."

Nairda was as doomed as Stryker. He looked weakly over at Emilena. "I'm sorry...I didn't act sooner..." Tears fell from his eyes. "Now we're both going to die..."

Emilena coughed up blood. "Well...it happens to everyone...it's...good to see you again. Didn't think I'd get to... How did you find me...?"

Nairda chuckled, then winced in pain. "Remember back in Lanthae...? After we saved Soren in his house. I registered that tracker on you. You never took it out."

Emilena's eyes widened. "You've been *tracking me* since then? That was...fucking months ago! Stalker creep..."

"I was going to tell you...eventually..." Nairda smiled sadly. "Also since we're dying, there's something else you have to know. Something I learned at Emile's and Lena's."

Emilena's eyes widened. "Wait, you went...to my parents?......Why?"

"Not yours. *Ours.*" Nairda didn't care that her face filled with horror at his revelation. "I always...knew I loved you, but I'd never realized it was also as a sister."

Emilena collapsed, breaking eye contact as her face filled with burning sand. This was far more information that she was prepared to deal with. And she'd been so close to never learning this before the sweet kiss of death removed her memory forever.

"Emilena?" Nairda asked, worried. "You still love me, right?"

Emilena's head spun. Her heartbeat, growing slower as her body lost critical amounts of blood, struggled to grasp the question. Finally, as she felt oddly cold despite the sweltering heat and realized it was the coldness of death, it gave her a moment of crystal clarity. She was going to die. Morals didn't matter anymore. "Yes," she sighed. "I love you."

There was a blinding flash of light, and Emilena shielded her eyes in horror and bewilderment. A wave of hot sand washed over her from a massive impact, and she clawed herself back to the surface with her hands, her legs remaining paralyzed from Stryker's final blow. Half of her was convinced this was God's divine justice, smiting her for her hubris in committing crimes against nature.

But no, an escape pod had merely landed right on Nairda, giving him that unmarked grave he'd always wanted. It also gave Emilena some much needed shade. Though her vision was getting darker of its own accord...

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 13, 2016, 02:27:10 PM**

"Right!" Vergil nodded firmly, pursing his lips and seeing it was about a mile away. They set off now, the gecko sprinting to make the time go faster, his trained body not needing to rest much out here for only a mile. Tony on the other hand... somewhat lagged, but he huffed gamely along, having taken some supplies from his escape pod.

They arrived just as the escape pod landed on Nairda, Tony and Vergil wincing as it threw up a cloud of dust. Sensing Emilena, Vergil's eyes widened. "Shit! Oh Christ!" he said, running around the pod now. "It's Emilena... god... goddammit!" he said, seeing her pitiful state. "I... she's gonna need healing!" He called, waving Lily over.

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 13, 2016, 02:47:47 PM**

"I can do that," Lily's gaze was steeled as she pressed her hand against Emilena's shoulder blade. "How...exactly did you end up in this state?" she couldn't help but ask once the most grievous of the injuries were healed.

"Aaugh!" Emilena cried out repeatedly as she felt bones snap into place and muscles seal themselves. Lily's healing was different now, more efficient and void of painkillers, but she also noticed that Lily no longer inherited the wounds from her patient. "Old friend of Tony's dad came to say hi..." she grunted, gritting her teeth in agony, "...but I think it just got dealt with. Glad to see we got our medic back, though I'm not sure where you came from..."

"Yeah..." Lily looked away. "Vergil and I patched things up. Do you know where any of the others are?"

"Only whoever just gave Stryker a viking burial..."

Emilena glanced at the pod. Lily threw open the pod door to reveal Axel, still blissfully unconscious in his seat. Rushing forward, she buried her husband in a hug. "Oh my god, you made it out, thank you God..." Lily whispered softly. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for everything..."

Emilena staggered to her feet and glanced at Vergil. "Any of you gentlemen have clothes to donate? And we need to move quickly; I can imagine the warship can track the landing locations of their escape pods."

Lily nodded as she freed her husband from his seat belt. "We just need to grab any other survivors, then figure out our next plan of attack. This fight isnt over."

(OOC: Do we wanna do a time skip to Hong Kong or some new location? Anything else need to happen in the deserts?)

Title: **Racing the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 31, 2016, 07:24:12 PM**

(We can time Skip. That will Allow Marita and the others to reconnect)

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The Gang of Five

Beyond the Mysterious Beyond => Hobbies and Recreation => Topic started by: aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato) on January 16, 2017, 02:04:38 PM

Title: **Racing the Storm epilogue**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 16, 2017, 02:04:38 PM**

This is an epilogue to the "Racing the Storm" RP, since it died without a proper one in the now-locked thread

A pair of cold furious eyes was the first sight Flora registered once she regained consciousness. “Finally awake, are we?” a taunting voice sneered.

“...huh?” Flora shook her head dizzily. Her last memory was of passing out in the hospital while the doctor tended to her gunshot wounds. Her head was pounding, and the eyes seemed to swim around her with the rest of the world. She tried to rub her forehead and found her arms were strapped to her side.

“No need to introduce yourself,” the eyes narrowed, and their owner slowly walked out of her field of view. “I honestly don’t care who you are. You’ve appeared in none of our reports up to now, so you can’t be worth anything.”

As Flora became more cognizant, her situation revealed itself to be less and less appealing. She was strapped to a long metal table, still dressed only in her hospital gown. The room was almost completely dark, explaining why her captor’s bioluminescent eyes were the only thing she could see.

“Nothing to say?” taunted the voice. “Please, feel free to join in on the conversation. You’ll be talking soon enough anyway…”

“Er, who are you?” Flora asked uneasily. She tested her legs. They were also strapped down, albeit in a spread-eagle fashion that left her uncomfortably exposed.

“It’s not important who I am.” The eyes reappeared frighteningly quickly, swooping close to her face and revealing a muscled gecko clad in royal military attire. “And we’re not here to talk about me…”

The gecko let his hand trail down her flank, leaving her shuddering at his touch. “I’m more interested in why your friends left you behind. Are you some sort of bioweapon? Or a master of espionage?”

Flora winced as his metal gauntlet scraped against the gunshot wound in her side. “I don’t...understand...what are you talking about?”

With lightning reflexes, her captor buried his thumb in the scar, tearing open the wound and sending her spasming and screeching wildly. “Don’t play games with me girl!” He laughed as she thrashed in vain. “Your act impresses nobody. I figured I’d have to resort to more drastic measures…” A blade slid out of his wrist, “...but I didn’t expect to have to so early ...”

Flora shivered as the light glinted off the blade. “Wait, I-- AAAUGH! ” A jolt of white-hot pain pierced her leg as the gecko jammed his knife into her kneecap.

“Don’t like playing games now?” he taunted, smiling for the first time as his victim descended into intelligible gibberish. “Tell me where Vergil went!”

Flora convulsed wildly, crying and screaming uncontrollably. Her shattered leg twisted the wrong way in her panicked attempts to escape her bonds, sending her into even worse bouts of agony.

“Answer me!” The gecko grasped her roughly by the neck and forced her to meet his eyes. “What you’ve experienced will be nothing compared to what I have in store for you if you don’t tell me where Vergil went!”

“I don’t know!” cried Flora, eyeing his stained dagger with blind fear. “I don’t even know how I got here, please don’t--!”

Her words were cut off when he wrapped his muscled hands around her throat. Stars erupted in her vision and her windpipe turned purple as he slammed her repeatedly into the table. “I’m not falling for your act!” he spat in her face. “Tell me everything and I might permit you to die a painless death!”

“I’m just a girl!” bawled Flora. “An ordinary one! I don’t know why we were here or what we were doing!”

“Ordinary?” laughed the gecko. “I suppose you were just born looking like this?” With one rough tug he tore the bloodied hospital gown off of her, revealing her pink fur and penis.

“It’s just...dye!” Flora thrashed in blind panic. “Fur grafts! Implants!”

The gecko grasped the tuft of fur right above her crotch and ripped a handful out, causing her to emit a high-pitched bellow. “No, I don’t think so…” he observed the natural pink coloration reaching all the way to the follicles. “You’re lying to me. Last chance.” He pressed his knife against her genitals, grinning sadistically as her eyes went wide. “Out with it…”

“Okay!” shrieked Flora. “I’ll tell you! I did this to myself!” Her voice got higher as he pressed his knife deep enough to draw blood. “I’m a psion! But a really weak one!”

“A psion?” The gecko paused. “Now we’re getting somewhere!” Placing both of his fingers on her temples, he closed his eyes and forced his way into her mind. “Mmmm…” he murmured, ripping down any mental barriers and searching her entire mind. “So you are. Not much of one though…”

“I can only change my own appearance, and it takes months for the new stuff to grow in!” Flora shuddered and hyperventilated. “Please just let me go…”

The gecko pulled a lever on the side of the table. Slowly the table began bending down the middle, forming a peak that stretched Flora’s back dangerously. “What did Vergil want with a psion?” he demanded. “What were his plans for you?”

“He didn’t know!” Flora cried, eyes widening as she felt the vertebrae in her lower back start to pop. “Nobody knew! I’ve never told anyone!”

“Vergil knows everything about psionics, you little fool!” the gecko snarled. He stopped the table just short of breaking her back. “But maybe you’re right. Maybe he didn’t care about you. He did leave you behind, after all, when the others escaped…”

Reaching into a heatproof compartment beside the table, he withdrew a single burning coal. “Perhaps he thought you were useless because you were wounded…”

He placed the burning coal on Flora’s belly-button, sending her screaming again. “Or perhaps your abilities are stronger than you’d ever known.”

“Stop!” screeched Flora. “Please!”

The gecko grabbed two more coals and pressed them into her nipples, waiting until they fused into the flesh. A fourth he nestled into her scrotum, sending her screams to higher pitches than ever before.

“Why!” Flora sobbed. “Why are you doing this? I don’t know anything!”

Her torturer grasped the table lever and pulled it back another inch. With a horrible snapping sound, he heard his victim’s back finally splinter under the pressure. “I know. You’ve convinced me you’re completely worthless. Which means at this point we’re operating solely for my amusement…”

* * *

Lily observed the waiting room of the flagship’s infirmary. The pristine white space was sanitary and sterile, with soft white lights that used photoscopic technology to eliminate the effects of night-blindness and vision-induced color bleed. It was more advanced than any hospital she’d ever experienced back on the planet.

“Miss Whent?” The doctor came out. He was clad in a multi-purpose unisuit and carrying a waterproof datapad. “The results are back.”

Lily felt her nerves flutter. He didn’t seem happy. “And?”

“And...by our tests, your psionic abilities should be completely functional.”

Lily bit her lip. “Well, they aren’t. What the hell did Vergil do to me?”

“I don’t know,” the doctor consoled. “But it’s nothing medical.”

“Well, than what am I supposed to do?” Lily balled her fists. “Kalis brought me on board to revolutionize your medical facilities with my abilities. What use am I if I don’t have those?”

“I don’t know, I’m sorry.” The doctor returned to his business, leaving Lily exasperated and frustrated.

She marched out of the infirmary, shooting a glare at a crewman who had the misfortune of walking past the door right as she was leaving. As soon as Vergil is dead, her only claim to fame is her healing powers. If she had any hope of rescuing Ejlert, she’d need to figure out what the hell is blocking those, sooner rather than--

“Lily!”

Her thoughts were wrenched back to the present as she registered Foley sprinting down the hallway at her in a blind panic. “Foley, what are you doing?”

"They've got Flora!" He gasped, coming to a halt in front of her and gasping for air. "They've got her in the interrogation room and they're going to kill her!"

Lily's heart skipped a beat. "Lead me. Quickly!"

* * *

Flora's fingers were splintered messes. Her scalp hair was completely torn out. Her tail bones were exposed and her screaming had degenerated into dull endless sobs of agony.

"Disappointing..." The gecko clicked his tongue, pacing around his broken victim. "I'd expected your psionic abilities would manifest themselves somehow. That they would save you from your own destruction."

Clenching his fist around her scrotum, he crushed her testicles into pulp. Flora winced loudly, but her mind had been broken to the point that she barely registered the assault. "But that really says more about me than you," he spat. "I take great pride in my powers, and have always believed that psionics elevate one to a higher state of being. At least Vergil is my equal, if misguided. You simply disgust me."

Drawing his wristknife one last time, he pressed the blade against her throat.

"Stop!" shouted Lily, bursting into into the room. "Lamink, don't kill her!"

The gecko's eyes flashed, and he rounded upon his interruptor. "Interrupting an interrogation is a misdemeanor punishable by death!"

"I need the girl alive!" Lily's voice caught in her throat as she observed the broken mess that used to be a plucky teenager. "Oh god...is she still alive?"

"Yes, and you have one sentence to convince me why I shouldn't rectify that." The gecko's eyes narrowed dangerously, and it was clear he was debating whether to place Lily on the table next for inconveniencing him.

"She's my contact," Lily lied. "The one who's been feeding me information on Vergil."

Lamink glanced at the figure slowly bleeding out on the table. "She said nothing of the sort, and I gave her more than adequate motivation."

"She doesn't know she's doing it," Lily's tongue caught in her throat. She knew Lamink, as one of Kalis' lieutenants, has more than enough psionic ability to read her mind and deduce she was lying, but she hoped he wouldn't consider it necessary. "I've been reading her mind. I don't know why, but if I want to...I can read Flora's thoughts very easily."

"That would be because she's an untrained psion," nodded Lamink. "That might even be why Vergil left her behind, he realized she was a liability."

"She's what? I mean, that explains it," Lily agreed hastily. "Give me a few hours to read what I can, and then you can kill her."

Lamink paused. "Very well." He withdrew his blade from Flora's neck and sliced her bonds instead. "Summon me when you are done with her. But I'd recommend you work fast, as I don't think she has more than an hour remaining to live."

* * *

"Jesus Christ..." breathed Foley, looking sick. "Holy shit..."

"I know..." Lily could barely look at the folf laying in the infirmary cot. With her medical standing she'd gotten Flora's wounds treated and set, but the blisters and aftereffects of torture were still unmistakable.

"Is she...?" Foley's words caught in his throat. "Will she...?"

"I don't know..." Lily shook her head. Her cheeks were burning; for the last hour she'd been holding Flora's hand and silently willing her healing powers to reactivate, to no avail. "Don't you have a post to maintain?"

Foley was tearing clumps of his ginger hair out. "Fuck my post!" he exclaimed. "How can you even think of that with Flora like this?"

"That's not how things work in Kalis's army," Lily countered, physically restraining his hands. "We both need to maintain our covers."

"I mean," Foley protested. "yeah, but I can't just leave her like this…!"

"You're leaving her with me. Go," Lily said sternly. "Now! You're no good to anyone if Kalis executes you."

It still took Foley almost ten minutes to depart. Taking a deep breath, Lily grasped Flora by the hand and focused. Come on...please... she willed her powers. I NEED you to work this time...

Flora shuddered and her eyes flew open, but when she started sobbing, Lily realized all she had done was wake the girl up.

Flora's ragged crying continued for almost fifteen minutes and Lily couldn't even try to calm the girl down.

All at once Flora's crying stopped as the girl stared blankly through her one eye not swollen shut. "...why…why doesn't it hurt...?"

"You're on the most powerful painkillers medicine can buy," Lily informed softly. "But they only work if you stay absolutely--"

Flora twitched and yelped. Her eyes glazed over and her mouth hung open.

"I'm so sorry Flora..." Lily said again, face flushing red. "I'm going to do what I can for you. But you have to know I can't do much..."

Flora curled into a ball, tearing up again at the effort. "It's okay..."

Lily fell silent. Once again, she took Flora's hand and tried to will her healing powers to reactivate.

Flora winced. "Can you not...? It hurts."

Lily flushed and stepped back quickly. "I--I'll go see if I can get you another dosage."

"No--don't go." Flora begged. "I'm...fine. It's just when you touch me. I want you here." She smiled weakly. "I'm glad to see a friendly face..."

Lily gave a small smile back, but then Flora began coughing uncontrollably. Lily leapt forward and steadied the folf, preventing her from tearing her stitches.

A trickle of blood ran down Flora's cheek. "Owww..." she shuddered.

"Try to stay still." Lily prepared a muscle relaxant and injected it into the lower part of Flora's chest. "Let that kick in. That should help."

Flora dribbled blood on her pillow. She tried to talk but could only babble unintelligibly.

"Relax, take it easy." Lily lay a hand on her shoulder. "You'll regain muscle control in a few minutes."

Lily's cheeks were burning. She felt hot tears sting her eyes. "This is all my fault, Flora. I helped Kalis find Vergil. I helped him find you."

She couldn't help herself; she told the folf everything. From seeking out Foley after leaving Vergil's team, to contacting Kalis and joining his medical staff to cooperating with Soren to keep Kalis informed as to Vergil's movements.

"I can't believe I did that to you all," Lily welled up, trying and failing to keep her control. "I just wanted to get back at Vergil, so I put you all in danger without thinking! Soren, Marita, Axel ...they could have all died! They might be dead because of me!"

Flora could only watch as Lily broke down in front of her.

"And here you are, a wounded patient in front of me who needs healing, and I can't do anything!" Lily sobbed. "I don't have my healing powers, the only useful thing I've ever had!"

Then Flora grasped her hand back, which surprised Lily so much she stopped crying. "That's...not...true," Flora forced out, fighting her unresponsive diaphragm. "You can't...lose...your powers..."

"Vergil took them from me." Lily glared. "When I healed his psionic block, I inherited it. And it never wore off."

Flora shook her head. "That's not...how it works." She met Lily's eye. "It's part of your mind...it's your thoughts. It's not some...magic force...it's one of your senses...like seeing color."

"But I can't sense them..." Lily sniffed. "Then why can't I heal anyone?"

"Probably because...you don't actually want to."

"What? That's crazy!" Lily knew she shouldn't be arguing with someone in Flora's state, but she couldn't help herself. "I'm sorry, but I want my powers back more than anything!"

Flora shook her head slowly and painfully. "I think...you want...to feel useless. You want to hate yourself. Deep down."

Lily fell quiet.

"Back in Corona..." Flora continued, "when Vergil kicked you off the team...you didn't fight it. You were trying to get kicked...You're mad at yourself and think you deserve to fail...and your powers are reflecting that."

Lily was stunned. Part of her wanted to argue, but another part realized the folf was right. "But...what do I do about that?"

Flora shrugged weakly. "Think differently. It's all about what you truly want. Stop wanting to be a failure...and start wanting to be the solution."

Lily took a deep breath. She focused on a point deep within herself. She thought of who she was as a person and the choices she'd made and tried to accept them. I want to be a healer, she thought to herself. I want to help others.

She gripped Flora's hand. Nothing. She sighed.

"It's okay..." Flora comforted. "It's hard to do. You need some time to think about it."

Lily shook her head. "There isn't time for me to think about it! Kalis expects me to be done interrogating you in less than an hour. Then he's going to kill you!"

"Don't worry about that," Flora consoled her. "It's not about me. It's not about right now. You've got to be thinking about you."

Lily regarded Flora with newfound appreciation. The folf had never struck her as someone particularly introspective. "How do you know all this?"

Flora shrugged again. “I’m a teenager. We’re all about hating ourselves. I’m just lucky because I was given the chance to reinvent who I am.”

“Yeah...Kalis mentioned that you’re a psion.” Lily lowered her voice when someone passed by the door. “How did you never tell anyone about that?”

“I guess...I didn’t think it was important.” Flora bit her lip. “I wanted people to see me, and not some weirdo with powers. Besides, my abilities are very limited anyway.”

“Would...you be willing to tell me more?” Lily tentatively asked. “Maybe if I learned more about your powers, I can come to grips with mine.”

“Well...I’ve never told anyone before...but okay…” Flora took a deep nervous breath. “Well you see...when I was young, I went to an all-boy boarding school, but even though I looked like all the other wolf boys, I'd always felt like I was...wrong. Like I'd been born in the wrong body. I couldn't act like them. I couldn't make friends with them..."

She shifted her position and winced. "At night I'd fantasize about being a fox girl. Of wearing bras and pink dresses. Just private daydreams, you know, I never told anyone or acted on it. Then, the year I was set to move onto high school, I noticed my fur was getting lighter. And I got curvier. It was really scary. I ran away because I was scared of what the other kids would do to me."

"So, did you live on the streets then?" asked Lily softly.

Flora nodded. "It wasn't hard, people throw out a lot of good food in Corona. The hardest part was accepting myself. I had the opposite problem you did...my powers were making me more feminine and foxlike even as I tried to make them stop. It felt wrong...even when it was exactly what I secretly wanted."

Flora smiled a bit. "And that was what I finally realized. It was what I wanted. It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks...So I embraced it, I decided I would turn myself pink just to prove it to myself. A pink fox girl. And well, I guess I never had the power to become a full fox, but I'm happy with what I've got. I like being a hybrid. Do you see?"

Lily did see. "That's incredible, Flora. You understand psionics far more than I ever did, and you're only nineteen."

Flora smiled. "Well, to be fair, I've had them my whole life, and you just developed them like a year ago."

Lily was already focusing deep within herself again. This time she didn't focus on her powers like they were an organ, or a separate sense. She focused on them as an interpretation of herself. My healing powers are a gift. A gift I can control, she told herself. I chose them. The monster who inhabited me in Lanthae had a whole swathe of powers, but I CHOSE healing.

As she embraced that choice, she felt the familiar sensation stirring within her. She felt her powers returning. Grasping Flora's hand one final time, Lily seeked out every broken bone, every flayed patch of skin, every damaged nerve...and inherited them.

Ten minutes later, Lily collapsed on the ground next to the hospital bed, a broken bleeding mess. Flora, who was only healed to the point where she could walk, staggered out of bed and tried to help her up. "You shouldn't have healed me that much!" she exclaimed, worried. "We need you in working condition too!"

"I will be," Lily assured her, smiling. "Just give me a few minutes. I'll be fine. Because of you."

Flora grabbed the pillow and laid it under Lily's head. "You know this damage inheritance...where you get all the wounds you heal...that's self-inflicted too, right?" she asked, looking worried. "You're doing that to yourself and you don't have to."

"I realize that now…" Lily nodded. "But I think I prefer it this way. It feels more fair."

Flora didn't argue the point. Several minutes later, Lily got to her feet once her back had repaired itself. Staggering to the locker room, Lily helped Flora into the showers and washed off as much of the blood as possible. "All right, now put this on and follow me," Lily commanded, fishing a nurse's outfit out of an open locker. "We're running out of time."

"Ensign Foley, come in please," Lily spoke into her radio as Flora finally stumbled out of the infirmary, wincing. "Priority one!"

"I read you, uh, Doctor North," Foley radioed back. "What is it?"

"Where are you?" Lily turned a corner and approached the escape pods.

“I’m manning auxiliary control, like I’m supposed to be--”

“I need you to override primary control on my mark!” Lily swiped her security card, and with a beep was granted access to the pod bay.

“What? Lily, they’ll notice immediately. I won’t be able to do anything--!”

“It doesn’t matter, it’ll distract them. While they’re focused on that, I’ll have a few seconds to launch Flora.” Lily shoved Flora into the black pods at the end of the bay; she knew those came with top-of-the-line cloaking devices.

“Lily, they’ll realize it’s me and kill me!” Foley sounded panicked. “You can’t ask me to do that!”

“If you don’t, Flora will die,” Lily said sternly. “Foley, you’re going to have to trust me. I have a plan, and you’ll survive. You don’t believe me, but you’ve got to.”

“I…” Foley hesitated.

“Lily, what are you doing?” Flora asked, alarmed.

Lily helped the folf into the pilot’s seat and buckled her up. “Flora, you’re going to have to fly one of these. Figure out how to get down to Earth, but even more importantly, turn on the cloaking device.”

“I...I…” Flora stammered, hyperventilating.

“Now, Foley!” Lily shouted, pulling the lever to depressurize the escape bay.

Alarm bells immediately sounded as each pod was wrenched from its parking locks. Lily had just a second to hoist herself into Flora’s pod and slam the door shut. “Lily!” Flora screamed, as the pod spun and sent the folf straining against her restraining belt.

“Get that cloak up, fast!” Lily kicked off the wall and reached the co-pilot seat. Hitting a large black button, she saw the windscreen shimmer and a warning light flashed informing them the cloak had been activated without preliminary preparations.

As the pod plummeted to the Earth’s surface, a similar flurry of activity sent the ship’s bridge into a tizzy.

“What the hell happened?” shouted a lieutenant, kicking down the door to auxiliary control and entering with rifle drawn.

“I, uh, I don’t know!” Foley raised his hands quickly. “It just spazzed out, I didn’t mean to!”

“What just happened with the escape pods?” demanded the lieutenant.

“Errr, something happened with the escape pods?” stammered Foley. “That’s news to me! Seriously!”

“Sir,” a voice crackled over the lieutenant's radio. “One pod is unaccounted for. Setting sensors to maximum sensitivity, but they’ve activated the cloak.”

“Who was on that pod, you traitor?” snarled the lieutenant, pointing his rifle right at Foley.

“Uh….maybe nobody, and it broke off on accident…?” Foley bit his lip, quaking like a leaf.

The lieutenant shot him right in the face. The powerful photon-charged laser caused Foley’s entire head to superheat and explode in a matter of milliseconds.

* * *

“What about Foley?!?” shouted Flora in a blind panic. “Foley was still there!”

“We can’t turn around,” Lily said sternly. “The pod literally doesn’t have that capability. Focus on landing.”

“You killed Foley!” Flora screamed. “You saved me by killing Foley! You didn’t have the right to do that!”

The pod caught on fire as it entered the Earth’s atmosphere. Cooling film quickly coated the tiny sphere in order to prevent the fire from giving off a revealing heat signature and in a matter of minutes it crash-landed into the mountains.

In roughly ten minutes a smothering envelope of airbags deflated, letting Flora extricate herself from the pilot’s seat. “Lily!” she shouted again.

Lily was in a similar state. Dazed, she slumped over onto the dashboard and rolled onto the floor.

Flora quickly checked the older woman’s vitals, but Lily shoved her away. “I’m fine…” she mumbled, staggering to her feet. “We’ve landed.”

Flora nodded, tears staining her face. “Lily...Foley...you…”

“I killed him, yes.” Lily reached into her pocket. “He had to die.”

Flora opened her mouth to protest, but her words died when Lily drew a few red hairs out of her pocket. “But he doesn’t have to stay that way.”

“Lily…” Flora’s pupils dilated. “You aren’t suggesting…?”

“I’m going to answer a question I’ve wondered ever since I woke up in a morgue in Corona.” Lily gripped the hairs tightly. “I’m going to put my powers to the ultimate test.” Her voice quavered. “I would avert my eyes if I were you.”

But Flora couldn’t look away.

Title: **I made a video!**
Post by: **ADFan185** on **January 16, 2017, 02:22:45 PM**

Ah it looks like you did a okay job it looks like you put effort in making it.

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The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Topic started by: Serris on August 09, 2015, 05:41:26 PM

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 09, 2015, 05:41:26 PM**

Soren sat on the tattered couch with a bottle of soda in hand. He wrinkled his nose; despite the copious amount of air freshener and the spices from Uziel's cooking, the sharp ozone-tobacco odor of chemical auto-cigs hung in the air. On the scavenged coffee table were the remains of lunch ó some plastic bowls of take-out ramen and some algae chips.

The program that was being played was some cheesy Spanish language *telenova* that Uziel happened to be a fan of. Speaking of which, Uziel was in the kitchen directly behind Soren.

"What's for dinner?" Soren asked.

Uziel tossed some onions onto the hot skillet. "Rice and beans with catfish filets in tomato salsa."

"Whatever, as long as it gives me energy for work tomorrow." Soren threw his empty bottle of soda into the recycling bin without even getting up from the couch. "I'm going to work on my stuff."

The Human got up and walked back to his room. Doctor Schatten's room was clearly marked by his diplomas on the door. Soren rolled his eyes; he may have been proud of his cyberneticist license but he didn't flaunt it like Doctor Schatten did.

Soren went to his room and closed the door. His room; the one element of Lanthae he kept. Sure Lanthae was a corrupt, crime-ridden hellhole but it was *home*. His bed lay in one corner of the room with his personal belongings stored in a dresser at the foot of his bed and in the closet. The space remaining was occupied by a workbench covered with all sorts of electronic bits and bobs.

He looked at the industrial-duty class-1 prosthesis on his workbench. It was pretty banged up but he was certain it was salvageable. Of course, he needed some parts.

Exiting the room, he knocked on Doctor Schatten's door. The door opened to reveal a rather gruff looking Rhesus Macaque. "What do you want?" It was then Soren noticed that Doctor Schatten hadn't changed out of his work uniform. His electrified baton and pistol were still clearly visible in holsters on his belt.

"Andyó"

"*Doctor* Schatten."

"*Doctor* Schatten." Soren emphasized the Rhesus Macaque's title. "Do you have any spare electroactive polymer actuators for the wrist assembly of an industrial duty class-1 prosthesis? Model number CGE-631?"

Doctor Schatten scowled. "Quit being a brick and find your own fucking parts!" The door was closed in Soren's face.

Soren sighed. "Well, time to check out the junkyard." He disappeared back into his room where he retrieved his pistol from his safe and tucked it inside his pocket. The other item in his safe, a souvenir from his escapade inside a Purifier base: a stolen M-19 select-fire rifle Unlike Lanthae, it was relatively easy to get a pistol permit. All he had to do was pass a class and background check. In Lanthae, he had to personally bribe a precinct chief.

He looked at the cell phone on its charger. Picking up his phone, he decided to give Axel a call to see if he had any spare parts he could use.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 09, 2015, 10:48:02 PM**

It was clear amber skies and warm breezes when Ashley Kinc came home from work at 5:00 pm on the dot. He never worked overtime. As far as he was concerned, he served his time when he was one of the groveling salesmen scrambling for sits and leads from the higher-ups.

Setting his hat on the hook by the door, Ashley tapped a few buttons on his phone and his autostove began pre-heating. He had some leftovers from his date last night with the shy woman from the gym. She wasn't anything special, but the ribs at the steakhouse had been the perfect level of moistness, just the way he liked it.

While waiting for the oven to beep, he slipped his virtual reality headset and sensor shoes on and played a few rounds of *Arena of Glory*. He'd recently unlocked the poisoned bayonet for his assault rifle and wanted to see some new death animations.

But he'd only just connected to a server when a different notification from his integrated house system popped up. It wasn't the oven; his guest was stirring. Ashley felt a twinge of annoyance, but he turned the console off and quickly got in character. This was his favorite part of a date. Mustn't let video games distract him from the real pleasures in life.

As the heavy door to his cellar slid open, the warm light from his living room revealed a shackled human woman strapped to the wall. The drugs were finally wearing off, and as she looked around the room her confusion was slowly being replaced with terror.

"Hello again," he greeted, smiling warmly and causing her to jump. "Did you sleep well?"

The woman gasped. Or tried to; a muffle was preventing her from opening her jaw or fully using her windpipe. Her eyes widened as the gravity of her situation dawned on her.

Ashley helped himself to her body. He let his fingers run along her dark brown skin, tasted the fear in her sweat. The woman began crying (they always did at this point) but the muffle kept her quiet enough. Ashley played with his toy for hours...they always fought so hard at first, then slowly the hours wore them down. Ashley always felt disappointed when their inner strength finally gave out and they slumped, broken and unresponsive to his touch.

When that happened to this one, he granted her a second wind through application of a multi-tailed whip. His current date cried herself hoarse as he flogged her mercilessly, slicing open her skin in a hundred different places. Then he graduated to knives. Then meat hooks.

Finally, as the sun finished setting on the outside commune, Ashley took a deep breath and observed the shredded remains of his handiwork. This one had lasted longer than any guest before; he'd had to bring out almost every tool in his chamber. It was his best date yet. The emotional release was palpable, and he savored the satisfying feeling. He wouldn't have to kill again for at least a month.

Then Emilena shot him in the back with a silenced submachine gun. "Ashley Kinc," she announced, as he spasmed in pain and fright, recoiling at the sudden intruder's emergence from the shadows. "Your crimes are recorded, and your punishment is left to the mercy of the Seryet Police Department."

With a cold look, Emilena locked eyes with the terrified Andalusian Horse and emptied her clip into his chest.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 10, 2015, 10:10:51 AM**

The fading light of the day managed to poke its way, here and there, through small patches on the window where the grime and grease was slightly less dense. From somewhere outside, the high, mechanical scream of a passing train rose to a piercing screech, and the paper thin glass rattled in its frame. After a while, the train's cries faded away and the dull, distance moan of traffic replaced it, accompanied by the more immediate sound of metallic squeaking and the occasional grunt.

What little light that did make it through was able to, just about, push back the gloom that shrouded the room, its glow thin and hesitant as if unwilling to permeate any further into the tiny apartment. Just below the window, a clunky, cheap TV was perched precariously on a small stand that was struggling to take its weight. A frayed cable wound its way down and snaked across the dusty, stained grey carpet, swerving out of the way to avoid the occasional crumpled beer can or takeaway carton. The cable jammed itself into a socket next to a small, dull yellow fridge. The door hung slightly ajar, revealing a few more cans of cheap, budget-priced beer and a carton of milk that was slowly warming its way to room temperature. Adjacent to the fridge, a doorway led into another room and, as the light peered inside it was able to illuminate a tiny bathroom that was only just able to fit a narrow shower, toilet and sink – and maybe a person, if they squeezed in.

The sound of grunting and heavy breaths became quicker.

Opposite the bathroom doorway, a thin set of drawers hugged the wall, on which a small cell phone was lying. Above the drawers, a metal rail had been hammered into the wall, which was being used as a place to hang t-shirts, jeans and other worn looking clothes. A few had fallen off the hangers and lay crumpled on the floor. Next to these, a rackety metallic bed was shoved into the corner of the room. The loose, wearing springs screeched rhythmically as the two shapes writhed on the threadbare mattress and thin sheets, one straddling the other. The rate of their movements increased, the shape on top pushing down harder and faster.

Finally, the thin figure below gave a last groan, bucked once, twice, three times, then lay back still. For a moment, the only sound drifting through the small apartment was the sound of the breathing. From the streets below came the light, distant sound of a car honking its horn, the vague sounds of an argument.

The shape on top gave a sigh and rolled off, clambering off the bed, moving closer to the light and revealing it to be a woman, her blond hair slightly straggly, the make-up she wore making it hard to say how old she was. The dim light cast a sheen to the curves of her body as she looked down, and then over her shoulder at the person still in the bed.

"I need to clean up."

The figure in bed shrugged, the bed springs giving another squeak as he sat up, leaning back against the wall. As the woman drifted into the bathroom, the shape in bed leaned over and pulled open the first set of drawers, pulling out a small carton and a lighter then resuming his slumped position against the wall as the sound of water splashing and toilet paper tearing came from the other room. A click, and the flash of flame as he lit the cigarette briefly showed a thin white rat, his messy hair falling over his blue eyes. Then it was gone and his features were once again concealed by gloom, the glowing end of the cigarette seeming to hover in front of his silhouette.

The woman padded back into the room, moved to the foot of the bed and started to pull her dress back on as the rat watched her in silence. When she finished, she stood up and cocked her head at him.

"So?"

The rat waved an arm to the drawer. "Same place as before."

She crossed to the drawers and pulled one open and fished out a wallet, pulling out a handful of notes. She counted it, then nodded to herself and slipped it away. Heading for the door, she turned back to briefly look at the shadow leaning on the bed. "Same time next week?" From the tone of her voice, it was clear that it was a question she was used to asking.

A small pause. "Maybe."

The woman snorted, as if in expectation of his answer. "At least clean your windows next time, I can't see shit in here." Rolling her eyes, she swung open the door, her shoes clicking as she stepped onto the wooden floor of the grimy hallway beyond, then pulled it shut after her, leaving the rat alone.

Axel sat in silence, staring at the door. As he dragged on the cigarette, his eyes started to wander around the room. He reached up and flicked a switch on the wall to his left. A solitary, bare bulb overhead flickered into life, casting a dusty glow on the state of where he was living. A muscle in his scarred cheek tightened, and he quickly switched the light off again.

The cell phone on the drawers suddenly chirped to life, and Axel jolted, recoiling against the far side of the bed, his shoulder knocking against the wall before his eyes narrowed on the small device vibrating on the wood. Axel's expression darkened. "For fuck's sake…" Taking a deep breath, he slid off the bed and picked up the phone, wandering closer to the window as he flipped it open and saw Soren's ID on the screen. His expression grew slightly distant, his metallic hand moving slowly up the device to hit the RESPOND button. "Soren," Axel said, his voice dull as he heard the human's voice on the other end. Reaching the glass, Axel rubbed an arm across the surface, sweeping the grime away and revealing more of the sprawling city of Seryet far below him. The daylight, though fading as the sun sunk lower into the horizon, now poured in with renewed strength, revealing Axel's lanky body.

His ribs jutted out prominently, and here and there dark bruises were just beginning to fade. The blue glow of his eyes penetrated the lank white hair that hung over them. They were lined with dark bags, combining with the faint scars crossing his thin features to give his stare a slightly threatening look. His tail hung limp to the floor, and the rat's left hand compulsively tightened into a fist and loosened again. Tightened, loosened. His originally young face had grown drawn in, gaunt. In the year since Lanthae, his face had grown to look like someone much older than 22.

He shook his head to himself as Soren's voice continued. His left ear, a long white mark along its base showing where it had been crudely sewn back, hung at an odd angle and twitched when he moved. "Actuators… No. No, I don't think so. Sorry." Axel muttered, looking around him. If he could feel another bout of anxiety creeping closer, burying himself in augmentation work could keep it at bay, and scattered around the apartment lay random assortments of augmentation parts he'd assembled in an effort to keep the panic attacks away… sometimes it worked. So in all likelihood Axel *did* have some of the parts Soren needed – but he couldn't face seeing him again so soon. Only last week Axel had gone up to see him, and the anxiety for the next couple of days had been particularly bad. What triggered it seemed utterly random to Axel; phrases, sounds, smells. Small things that brought back memories of what he'd been through…

Axel took another deep breath, bringing his mind back to the present as he realised he hadn't said anything for a while. "See you later Soren," he said and abruptly hung up. Glancing at the time on the screen, he saw it was getting on for 6 PM - almost time to get to work. Bending, the rat picked up his ruffled clothes from the floor and started to tug them on, his body bent as if under immense pressure.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 10, 2015, 11:19:47 AM**

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marita took a swig from a soda can sitting on the desk her face illuminated from the glow of a computer screen. she sighed, her eyes tired from staring at the screen from so long, a small

window looked out from the room, her small flat was on the 6th floor of a 10 story apartment complex ' the flat was smaller than the one she had in lanthae, and the rent was more expensive. but there was one small consolation.
Marita wasnt living by herself.

she had reconnected with an old girlfriend - Rose, who was currently on her way home from theater rehearsal. Rose was currently going through the very difficult process of biproxytol detoxification, which was extremely expensive and painful, the longer you had been hooked on it the longer it took to clean you out from the drug. marita had undergone the process herself after graduating from college. it had not been fun, but - for her at least- it worked completely. her other roommate marie had been a co-worker of Rose at a strip club called the electric sheep. she had been a waitress thee, servong drinks in a skimpy bikiini. after the club had been destroyed, she had latched on with rose and Marita,surviving the pulse emp and settling down in Seryet city. marie now worked as a grocer , bagging groceries. it wasnt much, but at least she wasnt oogled and fondled at this job. between Maritas computer gig (she cleaned out computers of junk spyware, porn sites malware, keyloggers, the list was just about endless), Roses theater roles and Maries credits from her job, the 3 made enough to pay the rent, just barely. every extra credit went to Roses detox, they had set up a payment plan that would require every extra credit they could scrap together for roughly 20 years. but it was working, roses teeth were returning to the bright white color they had been, her face was losing the large bags under the eyes associated with biproxytol use, she had more energy and pep, and- most importantly to marita- her breath was getting better so that she and marita kissed it didnt smell or feel like she was kissing an ashtray.
the door opened and close and Marita heard Marie call to her ' Hey! I'm home' the light flickered on in the kitchen, and Marie put a large pile of groceries on the table ' bought these off the half -off rack. still fresh, they were just made yesterday' marie said as she went into the entryway top the kitchen. Marita turned and saw a very fetching golden retriever, wearing a apron and green outfit, a large nametag hung above her right breast, spelling out her name ' hows your new boss? Toors? right? " right hes a boa constrictor. nice chap on the whole.
things are going well, hes cutting down on inefficiencies, and sales are up month to month, so the extra money trickles down to the cashiers and grocers. not much mind you, but an extra 250 creds over a month means a lot to us.'
he gets most of that I take it? Marita said. ' yeah a lot, but hes responsible for the whole store. anyway hes better than that macaw that was there when i first started . Penny. what a bitch she was. short -tempered and anal. next a good combo. anyway, how goes the computer business?
- working on cleaning a series of computers from a local business, its taking longer than i thought. all sorts of viruses and malware on there.. i've been whacking at it since 7 this morning and i;m still only 80% done.' but i might as well take a break and grb something to eat. ' i'm been living up a few cabns of pop . marita said. '

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 10, 2015, 03:37:21 PM**

"Thanks for trying bud." Soren hung up the phone and headed out of his room. It looked like he'd have to go to Egeson Street.

He groaned as he heard Doctor Schatten and Uziel argue about who has to sacrifice what to pay the rent this time. Soren knew all too well about this; he had resorted to selling the six-pack of moziafil for 1,000 creds he had bought two months ago to pay last month's rent -- a fraction of the actual price it was worth on the street but haggling with a shady street vendor who may or may not be armed was *not* a smart move. Despite their poverty, their furniture was actually rather nice.

Soren looked at the real sealskin footstool was in front of the flat-screen TV. Of course, they hadn't bought it; they had stolen it. It wasn't easy to come up with the 20,000 creds it took to bribe the bellhop to let them into the apartment building where a rich biotech executive had committed suicide but they managed to haul away some rather nice electronics and furnishings for their own use.

He shut the door and stepped out into the street. Unlike Lanthae, the houses at the edges of Seryet City were on elevated concrete platforms like much of the buildings in the core of Lanthae. That said, below him were numerous pipes and other infrastructure, including pedestrian walkways.

A gentle rain, illuminated by the cold white light of LED streetlights drummed against the grimy sidewalks. The air carried the distinct swampy-ocean odor of vertical farms.

Flipping the hood on his windbreaker up, Soren headed over to a call station and pressed the button. As he awaited the automated repulsortaxi, he wondered how his friends were doing.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 10, 2015, 06:12:56 PM**

Flashes of red, flashes of light, flashes of pain... the presence of sensation let her know her brain must be repaired. Her optics were getting there. Lily realized she was almost back.

She couldn't groan, she couldn't breathe...the first hour was always the hardest, as her body returned to a state approaching the most generous definition of intact. Finally, once the majority of her nervous system was in place, her body began pumping out the needed adrenaline to deafen the thudding reflexive aches coursing through her body.

Another hour, and she was a fully-repaired body laying in a pool of her own blood.

"That doesn't get any easier to watch," Emilena informed her as she got to her feet with a grimace. The vixen was sitting on the cellar stairs and gnawing on barbecue ribs.

"Thank god you didn't lose your appetite or anything." Lily regarded their latest quarry. "Jesus, Emi, did you kill him?"

"He'll live. I missed all the vital organs." Emilena offered Lily the rubs, but the human knelt down and placed her hand on the unconscious horse's body. "Hey now, what are you doing?" Emilena sat up. "You better not be healing that scumbag!"

"I'm not," Lily assured her grimly. "I'm flooding his system with tryptophan and reducing oxygen to the brain. Just want to make sure he stays out until the police get here. You know that if you always leave them looking like this, they're never going to accept you back onto the force."

"Yes they will!" Emilena's eyes flared, but she didn't press the issue. Lily had made it quite clear who was the alpha female in their business ventures.

"We bring a tranq gun for the next one," Lily decided. She tried to push the cellar door open but her body wasn't strong enough yet. "And lets try to get a more expedient killer, at least for this next one. Whoever's targeting prostitutes near the Warren lots doesn't appear to hold victims overnight. I'll pose there next."

"Whatever you say." Emilena knew it wasn't worth debating. "You know...if you want it to go quicker, you could let me nab them *before* they kill you. We always get plenty of incriminating footage anyway."

Lily shook her head and her gaze hardened. "No. They have to be caught in the act. The whole act..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 11, 2015, 12:03:29 PM**

Dressed in a ruffled green hooded top and jeans, Axel emerged from the dingy lobby of his apartment building and stepped out into the streets, feeling a cold prickling sensation run along his skin as the cold air hit him. Winter was rapidly approaching, and already the temperature was dropping – although Axel couldn't remember many days in Seryat when there *hadn't* been a frosty bite to the air. The architecture didn't help; in the city's centre for the most part the buildings were stark, grey giants, looming coldly over the city's inhabitants. Here and there the odd proprietor had attempted to add a splash more colour to their place of business, but these were few and far between and always seemed in danger of vanishing altogether.

The street lights had been turned on a few minutes ago as the sun continued its descent, casting a dim glow on those passing beneath them. Turning his head, Axel eyed the nearby autotaxi stand, but decided against it – he needed the air. Pulling his top tighter around his neck to try to stave off the cold, he set off, turning right. As he did so, Axel felt another, different chill run down his spine, and he quickly looked over his shoulder. Apart from the other pedestrians making their own way along the sidewalk, wrapped up in their own private worlds, he couldn't make out anyone suspicious, nobody looking as if they might be following him. *Doesn't mean they aren't there…* Angrily, the rat shook his head and forced himself to keep looking in front, resuming his brisk pace. "Stop it… stop it…" he muttered to himself. A couple Axel was approaching heard him and eyed each other, backing away from the rat as he passed.

Axel crossed the road and took a left, cutting through a dank alleyway and emerging on Bookard Street. He took another quick look over his shoulder, cursed to himself, and made another right, heading for Stuchen Avenue which would take about another 20 minutes. As he passed a cafÈ, a waiter pouring coffee for an elderly couple sat outside, the headline of the newspaper the man was reading caught his eye and Axel swallowed, his mouth suddenly bone dry.

REMEMBER LANTHAE

Axel's head suddenly went fuzzy, growing dizzy. Other words printed on the front page seemed to scream out at him;

Two weeks until the anniversary of the bomb's detonation …

Countless lives lost in the savage slaughter…

Terrorist group, The Purifiers, still ruling through fear…

Drops of rain began to fall from the sky. The old man muttered under his breath, folded the newspaper up and said something quietly to his wife. The two retreated further inside the cafÈ, leaving Axel standing outside, shaken. After a moment, he blinked and raised the hood of his top then slowly continued on his way, his face ashen.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 11, 2015, 06:22:55 PM**

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marita and Marie were toasting bread in the toaster when the door opened and a Great Dane dressed in a Victorian era dress strode in. ' hi girls! Rose said ' sorry I'm late, but i had to fit into this dress. I'm going to understudy for one of the roles in Great expectations! so not only do I have to wear this costume but i have to memorize my lines. Mr Fong was so nice!' rose said as she took a seat.' my next detox test is next week ' she added her face becoming more sober ' I'm nearly halfway though all the tests, or so my doctors says. if only we had more creds, so we wouldnt have to scrape by on day-old food. No offense Marie, of course."

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none taken Marie said as she pulled out a trio of plates and put slices of toast covered with jam on them. ' could be worse, could be living in the street.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 12, 2015, 08:50:15 PM**

The repulsortaxi that carefully landed in the designated spot. The door opened and Soren got inside. The inside stank of autocig smoke, alcohol and what smelled vaguely of vomit. He edged away from a suspicious looking dark stain on the seat and shut the door.

"Where to?" the voice of the "driver" was scratchy and harsh, reminiscent of a chain-smoker.

"Egeson Street," Soren said. "And don't try pulling shit on me by taking the long way around." He was aware that some less than reputable taxi companies would program their taxis to take long circuitous routes to inflate the fare.

The taxi's door shut and the engine spooled up with a low hum. The vehicle lurched slightly as it rose into the rainy sky.

Soren fiddled with the radio in the blank wall in front of him. There was a card reader for paying the fare, a button that would allow the rider to speak to a live representative and a radio that played music.

Soon, the soothing undulating beat of an electronic ambient track wafted around the dank space.

Soren looked out the window. By now, the sun was low in the sky and the lights of the concrete and steel monoliths of Seryet City began to twinkle to life. He barely caught sight of a news display broadcasting a story about the attack on Lanthae.

"Don't fucking remind me," he muttered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 05:26:41 PM**

So How is the computer cleanup coming along?' Rose asked as she started munching on the toast ' ok I suppose, I'm been at it since early this morning. those computers are linked and once one is cleaned the next one comes online and theres all sorts of stuff on each one. viruses spyware, malware, you name it, I swear Rose people dont use any cleaning software to get rid of the stuff. means work for me, but much of it is stuff the average bloke could handle, or should. ' Marita sighed ' well at least things are looking up for you. ' that dress fits you nicely, and you're going to understudy ' which means .. what exactly?' I fill in for the main actress playing the role in some performances. if shes sick, or needs a day to rest. I fill in. the job is so much better then grinding on a sleazy dance pole, showing my goods to all and sundry." Rose said." At least in theater theres a camaraderie, in strip clubs in every girl for herself."
Now, Rose thats not entirely true. remember the waitresses and showgirls support each other. I loaned you money on more than one occasion.. and you loaned me stuff in return.' Marie said '

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 08:37:46 PM**

"And what law is there that says I need to repay you?" The dark gold monitor lizard cocked one eyebrow behind his silver-rimmed designer glasses. "This is show business, not a charity."

Two livid twin jaguars were standing in front of his desk. Lourve, the elder by twelve seconds, let out a strangled cry of frustration.

"We were your *first act*!" snapped Bastille, the younger, balling her fists. "We gave you your big break, Bailey!"

"Yes you did, and thanks for that." Nigel Bailey tapped his fingers together in frustration. "And ever since that first gig, people have found you less and less funny. So now you're fired."

Louvre slammed her fist on his desk, almost tipping his small glass of liquor and spilling it on his fashionable cream suit. "Come on, it's just a little stand-up! An opener! We're not asking for much, Nigel, just let us do our routine like always...even for just one last concert, and then--"

"--And then once you've put everyone to sleep, Xyler can come on and work uphill to whip everything back into another critical success!" Bailey grabbed yesterday's newspaper out of his trash and dropped it on Louvre's fist, it was already open to the Entertainment section. "Everyone said your opener was the weakest part of Chancellorsville, and Xyler's complained that she had to prematurely pop her best song right at the beginning to save the show! Speaking of which, tonight's begins in *thirty seconds* so get out of my office!" He pressed a button and the exit door slid open invitingly.

Louvre's eyes bulged. Biting her lip, she grabbed her younger sister's hand and marched to the door. "You'd still be a *nobody* if it hadn't been for us!" she spat over her shoulder.

"You're right, I know." Bailey rolled his eyes. "That and a quarter will get you a gumball."

At the central amphitheater, the lights dimmed and he heard the crowd start cheering; the concert was about to begin.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 16, 2015, 04:11:39 PM**

The rain intensified as Axel approached 43 Farson Place, the sound of the water striking the sidewalk become a serpentine hissing in his ears. The occasional pedestrian skirted past him, clutching umbrellas or huddled beneath rain coats, but most people had already scurried inside for protection against the sudden downpour. Axel shivered, drawing the hood of his increasingly sodden top tighter, and picked up his pace as he passed beneath the white glow of a giant plasma billboard. His eyes briefly flicked up to it as he recognised the company name that had been plastered everywhere for the last couple of months:

Brennan Synthetics - Thousands Have Stepped Towards The Future. Receive Your Discounted Augmentations, And Join Them Now!

Finally, the rat slowed outside a low, squat looking building, unremarkable aside from the red neon lettering above the doorway; ë*Thompson's Brightsmile Bakery'*. The severe appearance of the building and the remaining confections in the display window, misshapen and blackened, promised anything but a bright smile. He could see two shaped moving around inside through the rain streaked window. Axel gave an irritated hiss, then pushed the gold handle down and skulked in.

Within was a small bakery. A small, middle-aged man with skin that had already started to look like leather was handing over a paper bag to an elderly woman from behind the counter. "An excellent choice madam. The chocolate chips you so keenly perceived truly add a distinct flavour," the man was saying, his head bobbing eagerly. The corner of Axel's eye twitched. They weren't chocolate chips.

The man looked past the old woman at Axel and his expression briefly changed before he turned back to the customer, all smiles again. "I'm sorry madam, I really must be closing now. My… cleaner has arrived." He swept past the counter and started ushering the old woman out. "I hope you enjoy your doughnuts! Please come again!" He pushed her out into the rain, gently closed the door and flipped the little sign hanging in the window from OPEN to CLOSED. Then he turned to Axel, who was standing silently to one side. "You stupid motherfucker!" he hissed. "You know nobody's supposed to see you come in!"

Axel stared down at the little man irritably. "You were meant to be closed, Thompson."

"The old bag wouldn't make up her damn mind," Thompson huffed. He snarled at Axel, looking more rat-like that the rat himself, then jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "Just get down there. We got a new delivery."

Shaking his head, Axel moved across the room, his wet shoes squeaking on the floor as he moved behind the counter. Bending, he pried open a hatch set into the floor and exposing a metallic set of stairs that led down. Pulling his hood down, Axel descended, pulling the hatch closed behind him, and emerged into a brightly lit cellar. A workbench was placed in the middle of the room, with tools arranged over it, while around the room shelves were set into the walls on which were stacked a huge number of whole and stripped augment parts.

An augmented leg, two eyes and a hand were arranged on the workbench. Axel's own hand clenched into a fist. *David's been busy.* With a sigh, Axel sat at the bench and slid an eye towards him.

Once stripped, individual augmentation parts could be sold for hundreds of credits to the right buyer, but the act of stripping them was difficult - you had to be precise, and know exactly what you were doing, or risk damaging them and plummeting their value to almost nothing. Luckily for Thompson and his illegal chop shop operation, Axel knew exactly what he was doing, and once he'd heard about it through the seedier residents of his apartment block, he'd wasted no time in proving it. Subconsciously Axel winced, his bruised rib panging. Proving he wasn't a cop had been a lot harder.

As he picked up a screw-driver and bent in close to start working on the eye, he noticed a smear of blood that hadn't quite been cleaned off. Of course, most of the parts had to be stolen, and a lot of the time the owner wasn't too happy about it. *Especially if the part was still attached to them...* His face hard, eyes cold, Axel spat on the blood spot and wiped it off, then got to work.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 16, 2015, 06:58:59 PM**

"*27 Egeson Street. The fare comes to 100 creds.*"

The repulsortaxi lurched as it slowly landed in the pad. Soren could hear the drumming of the rain against the vehicle's outer hull. Saying nothing, he swiped his credit chit in the reader and opened the door. He flipped up his windbreaker's hood as he looked around.

Egeson Street was a lively -- albeit, rather grungy -- commercial area with lots of street vendors, restaurants and stores. Dilapidated neon signs in Chinese and English advertised all sorts of wares and stores. Snatches of Cantonese, Mandarin and other Chinese dialects mingled with English and other languages to form the soundtrack of Egeson Street.

Soren passed by an elderly Chinese woman sitting under a tarp and selling ginkgo nuts for fifty credits a bag. Streetside fruit vendors hollered at him to buy their wares.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2015, 06:26:46 PM**

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marita turned on the tv, which was turned to the news channel. a bison read reports of the daily news, which involved the usual Seyret fare- murders drug deals, corporate espionage, and a 5 second blurb about some pop star coming to town to perform ' just like in lathae, the news almost always sucks..' Marie muttered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2015, 09:45:39 PM**

The cheering in the crowd only grew louder as the music swelled to a pumping, rythmic crescendo. It was pitch-black in the stage area, leaving nothing to distract the raucous fans from the slowly heightening techno beat.

It took a while for the audience members to notice that the floor was illuminating, a dull staccato of strobing colorless pulses casting dancing shadows across their feet. And then a deep voice boomed out from the stage: *What is white? What is black?*

The diehard fans began shouting the opening monologue along with the voice; 'Black and white' was one of DJ Xyler's most famous songs. On the stage, visible only due to strips of reflective tape, a bowed figure hung in the sky with no obvious means of support. *It is a choice,* the voice boomed, as the lights from the dance floor retreated from underfoot, skittering along the walls to encompass the stage in a swirling ever-changing pattern. (http://codepen.io/xposedbones/full/aOrQVy/) *It's an absense of compromise, a freedom from the tyranny of color.*

The music and pattern pregnantly paused. The figure in the air rose higher, the white lights betraying the thin wires keeping them in position.

A freedom to dye for.

The figure exploded, sending a wave of fuscia particles flooding the crowd. The massless colored specks quickly granted their color to the stage lights, and the crowd cheered as DJ Xyler revealed herself. She'd been on stage the entire time, but the featureless white light had blanched out her metamaterially-cloaked jumpsuit.

DJ Xyler didn't dance; as was her trademark routine, she never moved from her spot. Her lights and her music treated her like any other prop, but the ever-shifting landscape of sound and color, along with her custom-designed jumpsuit's pre-programmed ability to morph its material, reflectiveness and textures, created a constant optical illusion that the motionless standing figure was flipping, weaving, and teleporting around the stage. It was a display incapable of being adequately recorded on video, and no concert ever reused a routine.

Which was why when a second figure darted onto the stage during the fourth song, fired a concealed pistol at DJ Xyler and bolted as she staggered and fell to the floor, it took a few seconds for everyone to realize that wasn't part of the act.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 20, 2015, 10:10:15 PM**

"Ah you so you find what you are looking for?"

Soren placed the aforementioned parts on the counter. Behind the counter was lean Tokay Gecko and a half-eaten meal of oil-roasted catfish from a nearby Chinese eatery. Soren noticed that in the dim light of the store, the scales on the Gecko's face seemed to shift and shimmer slightly. His trained eyes immediately recognized it to be a subdermal active camouflage implant that allowed the Augment to seemingly vanish into thin air.

"600 creds."

Soren scanned his credit chit and the battered printer next to the cashier spat out his invoice/receipt. As he picked it up, he noticed a sign in both Chinese and English that read "Please show receipt to doorman".

The Human nodded as he took his parts (helpfully bagged by the cashier) and headed to the exit. A dour-looking and rather burly Chinese man looked over the invoice and the contents of Soren's bag.

"Have a good day," he said in heavily accented English.

Soren tucked his purchases inside his raincoat and stepped out onto the rainy street. All around him were various stores selling all sorts of bits and baubles ranging from augments to Chinese herbal medicines to various drugs. He quickly put up his hood as he made his way down Egeson Street.

He stood by the repulsortaxi landing pad, protected from the driving rain by a rain shelter. Rain shelters were cubes that were made of corundum and open on two sides (front and left/right) that served as places to get out of bad weather or hot sun. OLED sheets sandwiched between the thin corundum layers allowed advertisements, weather forecasts and announcements to be broadcast.

Noticing an ad for his workplace, he smiled as he pressed the call button on the post.

A young Mouse wearing a t-shirt and seemingly oblivious to the rain that poured down from the sky entered the shelter and stood next to him.

"Hey bud, got an auto-cig?" the Mouse asked.

Soren turned to face the man. "I don't smoke."

"Got some creds so I can buy one?"

"No." Soren got up to move to a different area when something slammed into him, causing him to pinball off the corundum pane of the shelter's rear wall. He grunted as he broke the impact with his left arm, sending a jolt of pain up to his shoulder. He quickly whirled around and spotted his assailant.

It was the Mouse who had bugged him for cash. The people who were passing by the shelter paid no heed to him -- except some who were recording the attack.

Soren sized up his opponent. He was bigger than the Mouse by a decent margin but what his assailant in his right hand significantly evened the odds.

A set of electrified knuckledusters.

Soren's heart raced as the crackle of the electric arc between the electrodes reached his ears. The scent of ozone slammed into his nostrils, sending his mind racing.

His free hand dug into his raincoat, groping for his pistol. Just as the mugger closed in, Soren raised the pistol and fired. His adrenaline had sent the shot flying wildly off course; a hole suddenly materialized in the corundum wall. The crowd panicked and scattered. The mugger paused and hesitated.

Emboldened, Soren pushed himself to his feet and trained the pistol squarely on the mugger. "Get the fuck out of here!" he snarled.

The Mouse raised his hands in defeat and scurried away. Soren put his pistol away and waited for the repulsorcab to arrive.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 21, 2015, 05:21:14 PM**

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the program the girls were watching was interrupted by a breaking news bulletin ' Flash! Pop Superstar DJ Xyler has been attacked! the singer was performing a show tonight when she was shot by an unknown assailant! her condition at this hour is unknown, and her attacker is still at large!'
-
my God1' Marie said, her face showing surprise and horror she listened to some of Xylers music, her favorite song of hers was ' Black and white' ' who would do such a thing?'

- the world is full of stalkers and crazies marie' Marita said " didnt know you were a fan.. i don;t listen to music much.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 22, 2015, 04:50:04 PM**

The shots hit Flora like a ton of bricks. In seconds she was breathless and her head was spinning, and it took a moment for her to realize the gun was still pointed at her. Curling into a ball, she screamed as the shot missed her spine by less than a foot.

The crowd was just beginning to realize something was wrong, but the majority response was to draw back as quickly as possible. The assailant approached Flora's position unopposed, shouting something that Flora couldn't distinguish.

Her hand thumbed the sequence of controls threaded within the gloves of her suit. On accident, she swiped the illuminator and cried out as several frayed wires zapped her. Her suit, malfunctioning from the multiple ballistic traumas, cranked the luminators to maximum and shorted out in a massive spark that radiated from her figure in a split-second of pure, blinding light.

Her assailant fell to the ground screaming and clutching his eyes, and seconds later security guards were on the scene, splitting the two up and raising their guns in Flora's defense.

* * *

Lily waited passively as Emilena struggled with sliding open the entrance to their current hideout. Lily wasn't interested in helping out even if the vixen was still stewing over what she'd found when she scoped out the SPD's mailbox.

"Eeeurgggh!" With one last push, Emilena slid the fenceboards open far enough for her to squeeze into the crawlspace. At the moment the two were holed out under the deck of an abandoned co-op; they'd temporarily upgraded to the inside of the building after the previous tenants were evicted for failing to pass a health and safety inspection, but after being almost startled by surveyors last night Lily opted for the original, less conspicuous location.

"Why the hell wouldn't they even *pick up the application*?" Emilena panted in an angry whisper, crawling into her favorite spot in the corner and glowering at the resealable cans of non-perishable food propped on a flat rock. "There was other mail when I put it in there, and those are gone, so they *saw it!*"

"Maybe you should put stamps on it so it looks more legitimate." Lily tilted a fake rock before entering the crawlspace and withdrew a thin power chip. Once she was inside, she slid the solar-powered cell into the compartment on her laptop and booted it up.

"Maybe I should go kill their chief and record *that*!" Emilena unsealed her can of baby corn and began spearing and eating them with her claws. "I'm already doing his goddamn job, I can supply his golden parachute too." Lily ignored her, focusing instead on connecting to the neighbor's wifi and downloading the latest batch of public domain police reports for the day. "Hey," Emilena continued, breaking her concentration, "We're going to need more food soon. Wish we'd thought to raid that guy's fridge, bet he had loads of rich-person hors d'ourves and shit."

Rather than answer, Lily waited patiently for the download to finish and then scanned the police codes for signs of homicides. There were a few, but none of them linked to the Warren lots. The killer hadn't struck tonight, meaning this was the longest time between two of his hits. Lily needed to be out there as soon as possible. "Tonight's our last night here;" she announced, "we move to the stakeout in Warren early tomorrow morning."

Emilena groaned. "Christ, we just got home. At least let me take one last shower." She moved towards the hatch that provided access to the top part of the deck.

"No," Lily shook her head. "No touching the plumbing, no touching anything. We have no idea if the surveyors turned the water off, and if they did the water company will be alerted if anyone tries to use it."

Emilena threw her empty can at the hatch. "Goddamn, fine!" She peeled her shirt off, grabbed the nozzled bottle of evaporative hand soap and began lathering her pits. "You sure are a bitch sometimes, you know that right?"

Lily ignored her. The sky had been particularly cloudy today, and her solar chip only had charged enough to give her ten more minutes on the computer.

"I mean," Emilena continued, "here you are, getting your dreams accomplished of sticking it to men and getting murdered over and over to assuage your survivor's guilt or whatever, but you don't notice any progress being made on *my* goals! Maybe you could pick a target that the cops would actually thank us for? Nobody cares about some guy killing hookers, they're hookers!"

Lily continued to ignore her. Grumbling with resigned indignation, Emilena curled up in her favorite corner and tried to fall asleep.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 22, 2015, 05:16:07 PM**

Fuming, Soren paid the fare as he exited the repulsorcab. By now, the rain had stopped, leaving a grey sky evocative of a Seryetian sidewalk. Much to his displeasure, he saw Doctor Schatten and Uziel standing over the bullet riddled body of a Golden Retriever on his doorstep.

Stomping up to the two, he jabbed a finger at Doctor Schatten. "Okay, *Doctor*, tell me why the fuck there is a dead guy on my doorstep"

Doctor Schatten said nothing but pushed Soren's accusing finger away. "I just saved the house from being burgled."

Soren kneeled down and pulled out the man's wallet. It was full of fresh creds and an employee identification card. Soren sighed.

"Great going, Doc. You just shot up a salesman! I'm going to clean up this mess up. Do whatever the hell you want with this guy. Just remember, if the cops come calling, I didn't see shit." He gestured to the bullet holes and blood spatter on the front of the house. The small shrubs and low ground cover plants could be cleaned up with a simple hosedown but he'd have to manually scrub off the bloodstains from the concrete sidewalk.

Soren then slammed the front door shut.

"So, *Senor Schatten*? What do we do?" Uziel asked.

Doctor Schatten shrugged. "Steal whatever the guy's got and then overside 'em."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 24, 2015, 11:17:58 AM**

"*On your mark.*"

Craig leaned further forward on the springboard, his body growing tense. He stared into the rippling water as the echo of the electronic voice died away. The loud cheers and excited talking of the audience faded along with it as everyone focussed their attention on the long swimming pool before them, on the taut, well-built swimmers preparing to launch themselves in.

They'll all be looking at me soon… Craig allowed a small smile to flit across his face before pushing his expression back into one of neutrality. He'd been preparing for this race for months, pushing his body to its limits. Craig was tired of always being second or third. This time… he'd be *number one.*

An electronic beep sounded, signifying the start of the countdown. *3*.

Craig clenched his jaw.

2.

He slowly let out a breath.

1.

Craig's augmented leg glinted as he shifted position. Across the thigh was a small, simple symbol of an eagle, wings outstretched. The manufacturer's name was written in small letters beside it: **Brennan Synthetics**.

This time, a high pitched beep rang through the venue and instantly Craig threw himself off the springboard, arrow-like, tearing through the pool's cool water. In the instant silence, he could see his competitors on either side of him, and he felt a defiant rush pass through him. *This one's mine*. Angling his body upwards, his felt his fingertips break the surface of the water. Then Craig's arms and head followed, the audience cheering once again. Immediately, Craig started to kick his legs, to work his arms.

There was perhaps the briefest tingling sensation as the signal was issued from his augmented leg, travelling along and incorporating into his nervous system. It reached his spinal cord, and travelled upwards through the spinal tracts. This was not unusual – all augments worked through the nervous system.

But then the signal reached Craig's brain.

As soon as the electrical pulse arrived at his brain stem, it exploded outwards, the energy shredding nerves, destroying synapses, tearing through axons. Craig felt a split second of pain as his brain was ripped apart. He opened his mouth to scream. Water flooded his throat and for a moment he had the urge to gag. Everything went dark. His limbs twitched as various functions of his body were forcibly shut down. His body drifted slowly, almost peacefully to the bottom of the pool.

In the next 42 hours, identical signals would be released from the Brennan Synthetic augmentations of almost 80 civilians in Seryet city.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 26, 2015, 04:03:10 PM**

Soren was scurrying from place to place. Normally, as a Sky Farms mechanic, he'd be called to inspect and maintain nearly every piece of equipment in the vertical farm. Occasionally, he'd need to fix an augment that got damaged.

But what happened now was way out of his league. Tarps were laid out onto the soft soil where other workers carefully laid out the bodies of numerous Augments. From what the Human could see, most of them appeared to be tree-workers or high-climbers with specialized climbing augments like electrostatic pads on their hands and feet. And apparently, the augments had suddenly failed, causing them to plummet to the ground.

Soren examined the arm of one of the high-climbers; it bore the logo of the an Eagle with outstretched wings and the company name: Brennan Synthetics. He frowned; he had never heard of this company before. Were they a recent start-up?

"Soren!" the foreman exclaimed as he stumbled upon the scene. "What the fuck happened here?"

Soren shook his head. "I dunno, I'm trying to found that out myself. Ambulances are on their way."

"Look, I don't want this happening again. Find out why the hell six of my workers just fell out of the sky! You're authorized to look at their any of their health records pertaining to their augments." The foreman walked away towards the lift tube in the corner that would carry him to another growing level.

The Human swore and kicked a clod of dirt with his boot and headed to the lift tube in the corner that would take him to the administrative levels.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 26, 2015, 06:24:05 PM**

Lily tugged at her fishnet stockings, which were *again* riding up her thighs. She almost certainly was not working the look adequately enough, but the thrift store didn't have a great selection of sexy lingerie and pantyhose. Oh well. Looking hopelessly out of one's league was probably a plus when dealing with someone who murders their hookers.

Her heart skipped a beat when an unmarked car drove slowly past her and rolled to a stop. The driver was the only occupant. "Your rates?" she asked, rolling her window down and looking disinterestedly over her sunglasses. She was a mousy woman, very small for her age, with blonde hair and pale skin. Lily didn't get many female serial killers, and part of her was intrigued. *I wonder if I can wrangle some sort of a motive or backstory out of her before Emi has to--*

The woman suddenly jolted as her driver-side window was shattered by a rock. Seconds later a heavy tranq dart stabbed her in the neck and with nary another word the woman slid down in an unconscious stupor.

"Emi, what the hell‽" shouted Lily as her confidante darted out of the bushes and frisked their target. "We didn't even get any *evidence!* She hadn't even hired me yet!"

"Screw evidence, she's obviously guilty. There aren't any license plates and the back windows are hand-tinted." Emilena dialed 911 on the woman's phone and threw it in the backseat. "The cops will figure it out. Something *much* more important just happened according to the national news, and we need to check it out right now."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 26, 2015, 08:23:13 PM**

rose entered the apartment, her face red. a number of staff at the theater, who had augments on their bodies, had suddenly died during a rehearsal, and the shocked director had sent everyone home as a precaution. rose took a seat down on the couch and began to sob openly. marita.. something terrible happened at the theater today..' she began, her voice halting.. ' augmented people having their augment fail and kill them? marita said from her computer ' its happening all over the city. swimmers, car drivers, actors, theres now almost 100 cases being reported, and likely more to come. whoever made those augment parts , well they arent going to be in business too much longer. the lawsuits will see to that...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 27, 2015, 10:35:14 AM**

Axel jerked awake, his horrified gasp cutting through the apartment's silence. He sat bolt upright, eyes darting around as he struggled to remember where he was, the images churned up by his mind refusing to leave, sticking like leeches. When it eventually dawned that what he'd been experiencing was yet another nightmare, the construct of memories he'd tried and failed to repress, he sank back against the wall with a thin whimper, pressing his hands against his face, his fingers threading through his greasy hair and wrapping the strands painfully.

Fur drenched in sweat, the rat sat motionless for a minute, gasping for air, his breaths quick and ragged. When he felt like he could bear to move again, Axel let out a trembling breath. "Alright… okay…" Letting his hands fall from his face, he kicked the sheets from his legs, tangled and twisted from his thrashing during the night and staggered out of bed, blinking from the daylight leaking into the apartment. Leaning down and tapping a button on his phone, Axel blinked when he saw the time flash up on the screen. **11:53.** Normally the nightmares would have woken him up hours before. Shaking his head, he crossed the room and pushed the switch for the TV, desperate to try and clear his mind, his body feeling chilled.

The TV screen flickered to life. Staring out at Axel was the face of a reporter he vaguely recognised, Martin Schul or School, or something else beginning with an S. In the top left hand corner of the screen, a golden **SD** was rotating slowly, the symbol for **Seryat Daily**, the city's most popular news station. The beefy man was standing just to the side of a large group of people clustering outside a building, a concerned look plastered to his wide face.

"… and it's been 4 hours since the 78th victim of these string of mysterious deaths *has* been confirmed."

Leaving the reporter's gravelly voice to fill the apartment, Axel turned away and bent down to yank open the fridge. He leaned in and started to pick up the old milk container, recoiling when he caught a sharp smell escaping from the top.

"… So far, the only information that the Seryat police department has been able to release is that all of these deaths have involved some kind of malfunction within the augmentations produced by Brennan Synthetics."

Axel froze, then slowly turned around to look at the screen.

"Police haven't released whether they have been able to deduce if there is a pattern to these sudden and tragic deaths, with their widespread and apparently random nature. In addition, experts still have not been able to deduce *what* has actually gone so terribly wrong in the augmentations of these poor individuals." Martin indicated behind him, and Axel now saw that the group of people he'd seen were standing outside a hospital. "Officials are encouraging those with Brennan Synthetic augmentations to report as soon as possible to their local hospital for an examination of their circuitry, although they are *also* reassuring the public that there is no need for panic – they are confident the cause will be identified and dealt with shortly."

Feeling weak in the legs, Axel held onto the fridge for support. This was feeling too close to what had happened before. Much too close.

"… But what is *far* from certain is the fate of the company responsible for these augmentations. 6 years ago, Brennan Synthetics emerged as a company capable of producing cheaper, more affordable augmentations, giving many more people access to this technology. Whether the company can recover from this tragedy has yet to be seen – as does the fate of the company's owner, Richard Brennan, who has yet to release a statement." Martin turned to look behind him at the small crowd, then turned his concerned expression back to the camera. "We can only hope this situation is resolved as quickly as possible. This is Martin Schuul, reporting for –" Martin trailed off, looking at something off camera, his eyes widening.

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM. A rattle of gunfire, and Martin was thrown backwards, dark red droplets spattering the camera screen. Axel jerked back, knocking the carton of milk on the floor. Onscreen, the camera had been dropped to the sidewalk, the lightly twitching foot of Martin Schuul obscuring most of the view. Just past the heel, Axel could see the crowd of people outside the hospital had scattering, terrified civilians running for their lives. The rattle of gunfire continued, getting louder, and every now and then someone in the distance was thrown to the floor. Suddenly, the camera was snatched from the floor, heavy breathing drowning out the sound of distant screaming. The image shook as the camera was turned, as suddenly another figure stared out. The face was covered by a burlap sack. On the forehead, a large cracked gear emblem was painted on in red. From two small eye holes, eyes glinted.

"*This is just the start!*" The figure screamed into the camera. "*The work of the Purifiers has only just begun! By the time the Purifiers have finished, the augmented scum of Seryat will be on their knees, and-*" He paused as the faint sound of police sirens started to emerge. He looked around off camera quickly, almost desperately, then turned back to the screen. "*- and what was started in Lanthae will continue. Fear the Purifiers!*" The camera suddenly went dead.

Axel's legs buckled, his head growing faint, and he sagged to the floor, feeling as though he couldn't breath.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 27, 2015, 06:04:41 PM**

Soren massaged his temples as he examined all the personnel files. He was inside Sky Farms's personnel records room. Several terminals, their LCD screens an inert grey were lined up against the wall. A digital clock was above the terminals but the Human paid it no heed.

He looked down at his tablet and brought up the web pages he had saved: namely a Wikipedia article on Brennan Synthetics and said company's "About Us" page. He had learned that Brennan Synthetics started out as a high-end augment manufacturer.

"That explains why I haven't seen their stuff before, he mused.

As he continued reading, he noticed that just recently, they had rolled out an affordable but yet high-quality line of augments that they had called *Aquila*.

The Human then looked at the deceased workers' records. None of them had any neurological problems and the recent examinations of the neurolinks to their augments all showed that they were perfectly functional. In addition, all of their augments were less than a year old.

What could have caused six Augments, all in perfect health and with high-quality implants to suddenly plummet to their deaths?

Soren then noticed something interesting when he looked more closely at the type of augment the workers had gotten.

All of them were from Brennan Synthetics. And all of them were from the *Aquila* line.

A chime emanated from his tablet. He brought up the messaging application and was confronted with a new text from Uziel:

Amigo, watch the news! Crazy shit's happening!

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 31, 2015, 01:08:43 AM**

"Heeeeyyy, how's the talent?" Bailey smiled warmly, swinging into the hospital room without bothering to check himself with the receptionist first.

The fucsia-furred teenager smiled from her cot. "The hell have you been? I was halfway convinced you'd dropped me for being too much trouble." Her eyes glanced at a tantalizing rectangular bulge in his coat pocket.

"God, I wish," Bailey grumbled, throwing her the pack of smokeless smokes before she asked. "Putting out legal fires. Some assholes are suing for eye damages from your little private Vela incident."

"Mmmm." Flora lit up a fag, checking the hallway to make sure no hospital personnel. "We're claiming self-defense, right?"

"Nah, we're settling. It's cheaper." Bailey lit his own cigarette. "How they treating you? I got you the best."

Flora groaned. "Listen, Nigel, you gotta get me out of here. it's been *two weeks*, I'm healed and I'm fucking bursting with ideas. They don't even allow synthesizers in here, supposedly it screws with the equipment."

Nigel cut her off. "Flo, you got shot. Twice." The two hid their cigarettes as a nurse walked by the room. "Gimme a little more than a fortnight, kay?" he continued.

Flora tried to jump out of the bed, but a network of diodes and an IV drip stopped her. "Goddammit, I'm fine! Look at me!" She angrily pushed the heart rate monitor hanging over her chest and it didn't budge. "I could run a decathlon! Don't make me take my gown off, I'll show you, there's not even a scar!"

"Oh yeah?" Nigel cocked an eyebrow and smiled. "Show me. Gimme a good shot of the backside in there too, you know I'm a butt guy."

Flora stuck her tongue out at him. "If you're gonna trap me here, at least get me a laptop with ethernet. Tablet hasn't had wireless for two weeks cause of their goddamn special snowflake equipment. I need to look shit up, talk to people." The teenager motioned in frustration at the pristine but soulless environment surrounding her cot.

"I'll do the next best thing and answer any questions you may have." Bailey declined silently when Flora motioned for another cigarette. "Press is great, before you ask. You're everywhere."

"I wanna know about the guy who tried to kill me." Flora folded her arms. "He shouted something, but I was too busy preparing to join the Black Parade to notice. What was his beef?"

Nigel sighed. "He said '*sic semper machinis*'. He was one of those anti-Augment nutters."

Flora's eyes widened. "Jesus Christ. They just got a lot less funny."

(OOC: Splitting this conversation into two posts because of length. For now, two-week tie skip is a go, let's start rolling towards everyone uniting and the actual plot moving forward.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 31, 2015, 10:55:59 AM**

Uziel noticed that in the two weeks after the televised live shooting of an SD news reporter, Soren had gotten *much* more paranoid. In fact, the Human routinely took his rifle with him everywhere. Hell, he had even seen him go to the bathroom with his rifle slung across his back and his pistol at his belt.

The doorbell rang as the trio were sitting down to a lunch of Soren's breaded catfish and rice pilaf. Soren put down his utensils and got. He reached down and unholstered his pistol.

Peering through the peephole, he saw another Latino man. He opened the door a little bit.

"Hello, is *Senor Bautista* home?" the man replied in heavily accented English.

"Uziel!" Soren shouted. "Someone wants to see you!"

Anne lay back in her motel bed. The room was musty with the scent of marijuana and years of service. The mare was clad in a filthy t-shirt and some jeans. A corner of the room had all sorts of electronic gizmos that she had picked off the street or stolen.

A mini-fridge filled with all sorts of junk food was next to the bathroom.

She got up when there was a single loud knock, a pause and then two quiet and quick knocks in succession. Peering through the peep hole, she spotted a Dhole. He held up a tablet to the peephole.

The mare grabbed the item the Dhole wanted: a signal spoofer that allowed one to capture wireless information transfer by pretending to be a relay point.

The credit chit was slid under the door and she opened the door just enough to pass the package through.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 31, 2015, 06:15:02 PM**

For what seemed like the hundredth time, Axel peered out of his apartment window, his eyes wide, the corner of his mouth twitching. *Purifiers... purifiers...* The words repeated, over and over in his head, and memories of the things they'd been responsible for, the things he'd had to live through *because* of them, kept flashing through his mind like a broken record. Every time he looked out the window, he almost expected to see an army of them, coming straight for him.

Gritting his teeth, Axel stepped away and turned to look at the small table by his bed. On top of it sat his cell phone. Walking over, the rat hesitated, picked it up, then scrolled through the list of contacts slowing down as he began to pass through *their* names. **Marita**, **Marie**, **Soren**... For a moment, his thumb hovered over the call button - but with a hiss of anger, he flipped the phone shut instead. To try to contact them about this would be almost like allowing himself to get swallowed back up into that world again - and he wasn't sure he would be able to do that. Tears welling in his eyes, Axel threw the phone angrily onto his bed.

The sound of tyres squealing disturbed the almost total silence surrounding the old, dilapidated warehouse district. An unremarkable black car came screeching around the corner and stopped before one of the large, empty structures, abandoned years ago. Another car, silver and similarly plain, was already parked in front, apparently empty.

For a moment nobody got out of the black car. Then a lone figure, a man, his hair ruffled and clothes disheveled, climbed from the vehicle and stared around with wary eyes. Blinking, he approached the other car quickly. "Hello?" he called out, his voice strained, tense.

The metal door to the empty building suddenly screeched open, and the man jumped. His hands clenched into fists when he saw a small, young looking asian woman walk out. Shoulder-length black hair framed her amiable expression as she approached the man.

"I did it!" the man growled, staring at her with hatred.

She nodded, her expression unchanged. "I saw. And you got rid of the evidence like you were told? The weapons? The clothes? Your getaway car?" Her voice was light, pleasant to listen to.

"Yes! Yes, I... I did *everything* like you told me to..." The man seemed to sag, pressing his hands against the sides of his head. "Oh jesus... all those people... I, I killed..." Suddenly, he straightened, glaring at the woman, tears streaming down his face. "Where? Where is she?! I did everything you wanted, now *where's my wife?!*"

The woman tilted her head, seeming to consider, then smiled brightly. "You're right, it's a fair deal. Here." Reaching into her pocket, she took out a set of keys and threw them to him, indicating the silver car. "She's in the trunk."

Catching the keys, the man rushed over to the vehicle, fiddling with them. He managed to jam them into the lock. He twisted the key, yanked open the trunk's hood... and moaned when he saw the female body stuffed inside, bound and gagged, a bullet hole through her temple. "Oh god, no... no, *Lisa*..." The man started to spin around. "*You bit-*"

The bullet, fired from a silenced handgun, entered the back of his skull before he could finish. Collapsing forward, his body fell into the trunk, his legs still dangling outside. Sighing, the young Asian woman holstered her gun, the cheerful expression gone from her face. Things were going well... but there was still more to do. Stepping forwards, she unceremoniously grabbed the man's legs and dropped the rest of him into the trunk, then walked around to the passenger seat to get the can of gasoline.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 31, 2015, 08:29:48 PM**

marita was watching television when the phone rang. She got to her feet, and went over to the phone to answer it. and an unfamilar voice reached her ears. ' whoever you are.. i've got a deal for you, one that is lucrative, enough to set you up for life.. now take down what i';m going to tell you.. oh.. and all this must be kept VERY quiet. if this gets out, you get nothing, indeed, I'll see to it you'll lose whatever you already have.. Noe tarting writing this down.." Marita fished around for a pen and paper, and began to write...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 31, 2015, 08:50:51 PM**

Flora fell back onto her pillow. Due to her unusual appearance she'd been hounded with claims of being an Augment from the very beginning of her musical career, but she'd always felt that gossip was just a normal thing celebrities had to deal with. She'd never thought that gossip would get her murdered. "Fucking hell, they're sending *assassin*s? what are we supposed to tell them? Are they gonna send more?"

"Who knows what these nutjobs are gonna do?" Nigel shrugged. "For a group that releases so many threats and promises, you think they'd be a little more specific with the details. And dates."

"This isn't funny Nigel!" snapped Flora, throwing her cig butt at him. "I released doctor-certified full body scans, I've put myself through some demeaning crap to kill that damn rumor, and now Gear Nazis are gonna assassinate me anyway. I wanted to be the next John Lennon, but not like *that*!"

"Well," Bailey started "you're decently safe while you're in here, so maybe we can finally see eye to eye on your rehabili--"

"--How about police protection?" she interrupted. "Witness protection, or whatever protection you get when you did nothing wrong but crazed maniacs want you dead anyway!"

"No no no no no..." Nigel lowered his voice. "Trust me, I got it covered, and you are *not* doing anything involving the cops. They're tied in with all the wrong people, and they're corrupt as shit, you'd be better moving to Argentina and living with actual Nazis."

Flora folded her arms. "That better not be your brilliant plan."

"There aren't a lotta people we can trust, but I know a gal." Nigel pulled a photo card from his wallet. "She used to be show business, like you. Little raunchier than you though. Basically got paid to do what you were doing every minute you weren't on stage."

Flora betrayed a small smile. "Don't act like you wouldn't if you were me." She took the photo. "Oh god, gross. A dog? I hate dogs, with their drool-covered hanging lips. Kissing them feels like fellating a wet baseball glove."

"Yeah? well pucker up because you're going to be living undercover with her." Nigel held up his hand for silence before she could protest. "And her two girlfriends. She's a flaming dyke."

"*Wow...*" Flora raised an eyebrow. "Way to be politically correct. Also no. I'm not putting my career on hold, not when I've only got a few months before I turn eighteen. From what I've seen, eighteen's about when a celebrity's life starts going downhill."

"Well, lucky you, cause we got some groups that would love to help you miss that milestone!" Nigel threw his hands up. "This isn't a vote Flo! It's not even for that long, just until things cool down. You haven't seen, it's like the fall of Troy out there. Even in this hospital DJ Xyler's become a target, which is why for a little bit you need to not be DJ Xyler."

Flora rolled her eyes. "Right. I'll be some other pink-furred she-folf with a dick."

"We got some advanced technology to fix that, it's called dye and pants!" Nigel snapped. "I'm trying to save your goddamn life here, and there's not a lot of options when you can't even say for sure the government themselves ain't in on it!" He dropped to his knees and started doing pushups like he did only when extremely argumentative. "Throw me a bone here, all right?"

Flora mulled it over. "All right. On one condition. I'm out of this hospital by tomorrow."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 04, 2015, 07:26:57 AM**

Uziel approached the Latino man as Soren backed away. He holstered his pistol seeing as Uziel knew this visitor.

"*Amigo*!" Uziel exclaimed. "How are you?"

The man's face fell. "Oh, bad news, I'm afraid. Hostage situation at the farm. I escaped by hiding in a drone barge."

"*Dios mio*," Uziel muttered. He pointed his prosthetic arm at the TV and it immediately came to life.

On the corner of the TV was a golden **SD** and below that were the words "live drone footage". At the bottom was a headline that read *Siege at Sky Farms Greenhouse*! The ticker scrolling by at the bottom mentioned that hostage negotiators were on the scene and that the terrorists had not issued any demands yet.

Soren immediately felt *very* lucky that his boss had given him three weeks off with pay to investigate the failures of the augments and the death of the workers and prepare a report on this whole debacle.

At the same time, keeping in mind that Axel was probably a target, he excused himself and went to his room, shutting the door behind him.

He looked at his smartphone, still hooked up to the charger. He knew Axel wanted nothing to do with the Purifiers or that whole clusterfuck in Lanthae. At the same time, he was Axel's friend and he'd feel like shit if he didn't see if Axel was okay.

After debating for a bit, he picked up the phone and dialed Axel.

Please pick up, he thought at he stole glances through the window in his room.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 04, 2015, 05:25:51 PM**

Axel stared down at his cell phone as it lay silent and dejected on his bed. He made for it again, then jerked away, swearing under his breath.

"Alright, just gotta... just..." He mumbled almost unintelligibly to himself. His speech jerked to a halt and his eyes darted across the room to his door as footsteps slowly approached, clunking on the bare floorboards. They got louder... a shadow sneaking its way under the door as someone stood on the other side... then passed, their footsteps growing quieter. Axel breathed a small sigh of relief.

The cell phone rang. Axel gasped as the sound send a jolt of shock through him, the ring tone tearing through the apartment's silence. Gathering himself, he peered over at the screen and swallowed when he saw who was calling, his throat clicking. He took a breath, leaned over and snatched it up, hitting the answer button.

"Soren." Axel closed his eyes, grinding a knuckle on his temple. "So I guess you've been keeping up with the news." Bitterness saturated his voice - he knew what this was about.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 04, 2015, 07:26:43 PM**

Marita jotted down a number of notes as the caller went on and on' you'll have to come up with a name to use for her . whatever works for you. it can be a name from old movies, the name of the former pet, I dont give a crap just as long as shes safe. you keep her safe you'll get all the creds you could ever want. you harm her, and you'll be found, bound gagged and bullets in your head, capiche?
-
the twin jaguars Lourve and Bastile looked over the pieces of paper in front of them, then . nervously at the person across the table from them. they had asked around town for work after being dumped so unceremoniously by Bailey. However, to their intense chagrin, Bailey had more or less blackballed them from any agency they knew. so they had been forced to give up any thought of standup and switch to something else. it was Bastile that had suggested acting, and so here they were- at Hongs Theater. Mr Hong, the theater manager looked at their resumes. ' he was a large greying bison, who spoke with a trained dicton. ' well, ladies, it seems you have some stage experience, and we do have some openings. you will start as understudies for plays, and earn the starting salary for beginning actors. which is on the contracts you have in front of you. we dont like tardiness here, we expect you to be here on time. if theres an emergency or you get caught in traffic thats one thing, but skipping work is a fireable offense. understood.

_
yes sir Lourve spoke up quickly. " thank you for letting us have a chance ..' Hong held up a paw. 'dont make me regret it ladies. Understood?' Yes Mr Hong Bastille said. ' your costumes will be hanging up in the dressing room. welcome to the theater' Hong said, as he wrote his name at the bottom of the papers - the girls contracts- and had the girls sign them.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 05, 2015, 09:23:01 PM**

"All right doc," Emilena checked the safety on her SMG one more time. "Are you ready?"

"They're gonna kill me", Dr. Lee mumbled, looking through the barred cellar window of her clinic at the smoky alleyway. "They're all gonna kill me..."

"Yes they are. But it won't be you." Emilena spared a glance at Lily, who was barely recognizeable through a thick layer of makeup, padded suit, and subdued wig. "You sure you'll be able to keep the wig on long enough to get torn to shreds?"

Lily nodded blankly. Dr. Lee shuddered as she gripped her doctor bag.

Emilena glanced at it. "Uh, doc? You're leaving that behind."

"Oh-oh yeah..." Dr. Lee placed it back on the operating table.

"Now, a crash course in role-playing." Emilena pushed on Dr. Lee's nape. "Slouch. You're not a professional anymore. You're an average civilian. Keep your eyes to yourself. What are you going say to someone if they talk to you first?"

Dr. Lee shook her head, unsure. Emilena pushed her. "Hey, bitch." she snarled, "Don't bump me. What the hell are you looking at?"

"Sorry, terribly sorry," Dr. Lee stammered, stepping backwards and tightening her coat.

"Wrong." Emilena handed her a knife. "You don't say anything. If you do, it's got contractions and pauses full of 'uhhhh's and the word 'good' in place of 'well'. You're uneducated, you're unremarkable, and if you're lucky, we can get you that way for reals." She undid the latch on the cellar door and peeked into the alleyway. "See you Lily."

Lily stared blankly back. Dr. Lee looked at her a bit worried. "Uhhhh...is she all right?"

"She's fine," Emilena assured her. "She's a savant. Her specialty is escape artistry." In actuality, they'd stapled the wig to her head, and while the wounds instantly healed, the staples were still causing moderate brain damage. "She'll escape later tonight and meet up with me. Don't worry about it."

At Rose's place, the clock was just striking 1pm. This was the scheduled time the phone contact had stated the actress in question would be arriving at the apartment.

A large-breasted monitor lizard walked up to the door and knocked impatiently.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 05, 2015, 10:19:55 PM**

Rose was one to answer the door ' ah do come in ' she said quietly to the lizard. We've been expecting you' she said with a smile.' just have aseat by the counter' she added , closing the door behind her as the guest entered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 06, 2015, 04:23:00 PM**

"Me?" the monitor lizard asked with a distinctly male voice. "I'm not the actress. Why would you--?"

"It's the boobs, Nigel," Flora pointed out, entering the house behind him. She observed the dingy apartment with a bored expression.

"Don't call them that!" Nigel covered his rack instinctively. "Is it my fault bras are perfect for holding heat packs?"

Flora focused on Marita. "Hey, you must be the washout. Or you," she realized, looking at Rose. "I can never tell dogs apart. Either way, where my room?"

"How could someone think I'm a chick?" Nigel continued indignantly. "Look at the length of my tail! Look at my coloration!"

Emilena led the way into the alleyway. Her SMG was safely tucked into her jacket; its small concealable frame offered both quick deployment and a high immediate output of fire. They'd been unable to find any evidence of surveillance equipment on the cellar door, unlike the transparently bugged front entrance, but that didn't mean Emilena was going to get complacent. From this moment on, she had to assume they were being followed.

Their objective was the docks, where Emilena already had a dingy ready. Steering her jittery companion as casually as she could, Emilena led the way down dark empty streets. There wouldn't be many people out this late at night, but anyone who was needed to be considered a threat.

She bit her lip in frustration when she noticed the shops facing the docks was open and filled with bright lights and people. *Of course there'd be a party or something tonight...* Ignoring it, she motioned for Dr. Lee to follow her in slinking along the boardwalk strafing the beach. There were sailors on the dock. Emilena realized a ship had come in this evening and was moored on the pier. Suddenly realizing what this might mean for her tiny boat, she doubled the pace and waded waist-deep into the surf, following the dock. Her worst fears were confirmed when she saw the splintered remains of her escape plastered against the cargo ship's hold.

"Where's our boat?" whispered Dr. Lee in a panic when Emilena returned empty-handed.

"We've got a bit of a problem," Emilena admitted.

"What? What now then?" Dr. Lee's voice became strained and high-pitched. "You've got a plan B right? Why wouldn't you have a plan B?"

"Keep your voice down!" hissed Emilena.

"Oy!" shouted a deep voice from the pier. "Who's down there?"

"Don't run!" Emilena warned Dr. Lee, fur standing on end. "Let me do the talking!"

Three sailors approached them. Only one of them was small enough that Emilena felt comfortable taking him in a fair fight.

"Goin' for a midnight stroll on the beach, eh?" chuckled the first one, clearly intoxicated. "I don't blame yah! Isn't solid ground just wonderful?"

"Er, yes," Emilena agreed. She made to continue said stroll, but Dr. Lee was rooted fearfully to the spot.

"You two interested in joining us for a drink?" offered the second in a slight Scottish accent. "We're only in town this evening, we'd hate to turn down some fairer company."

"No thanks," Emilena said hastily, tugging Dr. Lee's arm, but her companion resisted.

"You're going back out to sea in the morning?" asked Dr. Lee. "Can you take me with you?"

Emilena felt a cold flash and she quickly tugged harder, but the doctor wrenched her arm free and ran to the sailors. The sailor seemed a bit surprised. "I...uh...might have to get that cleared with the cap'n, but..."

"I'll bunk with any one of you!" Dr. Lee pleaded. "Just get me out of the city!" Emilena took two steps forward, and Dr. Lee positioned herself behind the sailors. "And keep her away from me!" she wailed.

Emilena's mind spun as she debated what to do. Others were approaching due to the noise the doctor was making, and she was rapidly running out of options for ending this situation inconspicuously.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 06, 2015, 05:11:38 PM**

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its the size of your rack ' Marie replied.' sorry, we thought you were the female. our mistake." she turned to Flora " so you're DJ huh. Rose has a big poster of you in her room, from the time you dropped your first album. Given the uh, circumstances we won't make too much of a big deal, because well you're incognito.. we've.. er picked out a cover name .what is it, Marita?
-
its Shirley.' Marita said.' I prefer to think of it as the line from Airplane! but you can say its a nod to Shirley Temple. either way works for me." She turned to Nigel." now from our conversation, I take it you will be paying us a large sum of creds, payable weekly, as long as she remains safe. Given her fame and notoriety, not to mention the Purifiers fanaticism, hiding her will not be easy, although we will of course do our utmost to keep her safe. part of that, of course relies on her, she cant be too conspicuous- so that means.. no parties DJ.. under ANY circumstances. You're too well known, and the whole point of something like this is to try and keep things quiet. Your room will be upstairs, to the left. tell us what sort of stuff you want, as far as clothes- within reason- and music- again within reason, and we'll get it for you. after akl, we are your hosts, and we have to be hospitable..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 06, 2015, 06:16:35 PM**

(Seryet City)

A wave of relief washed over the Human as he heard Axel. "Yeah, I saw and heard everything. I was just checking to see if you were okay."

(Braunii)

Aaron Geasbrecht sat down on an idling drone barge to eat his lunch. The sun shone bright and the air was hot and dry in this desert town. Behind him were the murky green lakes of the algal farms that produced the oil that society depended on.

"So ya saw what happened in Seryet City?" his coworker asked. The lean Scarlet Macaw came bearing a takeout container containing a nut and bean burger with fries. He leaned against one of drums containing raw algal oil and opened his lunch.

Aaron drained his bottle of water and threw it towards the pump shack where it bounced off the wall and landed in the trashcan. "Yeah. And I kind of don't give a shit."

Of course, he cheered on the inside.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 07, 2015, 04:15:39 AM**

"I'm fine. Fingers crossed they don't get bored of just one aug company, huh?" His tone was harsher than he'd intended. He sighed. "Thanks, Soren. Really. But I... I can't deal with it right now, I'm... I'm in the middle of something." Axel paused. "I need to go. But... be careful Soren. Where you work isn't exactly one of their favourite places. And if they remember you..." He shuddered. "Just watch yourself."

He hung up, slipped his phone into his pocket then looked around his apartment listlessly. *Yeah... in the middle of something. Right.* Axel made to turn on the TV, then stopped. He'd been locked up inside for 2 days. Axel could almost feel himself slipping back to how he'd been months ago. A hermit, almost never leaving the apparent safety of his home.

"Can't... not again, not..." he muttered to himself. He needed air, needed to get away from this. Axel could feel that parched feeling returning to his throat, a familiar dryness, and he knew where he'd go. Across town was a dusty, cramped and dark bar where the drinks tasted like crap, but more importantly, were strong and cheap. Not so long ago, Axel had become almost something of a regular at *Ned's Bar*. It had been an easy and effective solution to the almost constant need to forget, and right now that need was back with a vengeance.

Forcing down the sting of fear, of dread he felt at going *out*, where anyone could get close to him, Axel pulled on his grease-stained hooded top and left, ignoring his thundering heartbeat.

40 minutes later, Axel stopped in front of a grimy looking establishment, his hood pulled up to keep the cold at bay. *Ned's Bar* was written on a flimsy looking sign above the scratched wooden door. Ned himself wasn't in charge - at least not anymore. He'd mysteriously vanished a week before the new ownership took over, and hadn't been seen since. The windows were dark, preventing anyone outside from getting a good look inside - although, as Axel took a quick look up and down the practically deserted street, there wasn't much danger of that. The neighbourhood wasn't exactly known for being friendly. The rat still couldn't shake the feeling of being followed though. *Nothing... it's nothing...*

Bunching his jaw, his left hand compulsively clenching into a fist, Axel took a breath and pushed open the door.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 07, 2015, 08:32:05 PM**

Oh great, they're fans... Flora sighed. "That's great, awesome. An Airplane reference. The height of comedy." She glanced at Bailey. "You sorting out the details and I can go to bed, or are you busy griping over mammalian stereotypes?"

Nigel was still grumbling quietly to himself. "She's got her own clothes, she don't need clothes. Make sure she keeps taking baths with this," he tossed Rose a bottle of black dye. "Best case scenario, she never leaves the house and this all blows over real simple like. Here's half now." He counted out a huge stack of bills.

Flora was already heading to her room. The second she was out of earshot of the others, her phone was out and she was calling Daryl, the closest groupie living in Seryet who was into frot and alcohol.

"*Nice try, buttercup,*" Nigel's dry voice greeted her instead of a dial tone. "*I pulled your phone plan. Keep it indoors, airplane mode. Just try not to get the dogs pregnant.*"

Flora's fur bristled. *You son of a bitch. We'll see about that...* Flopping on the bed in her new room, she surfed her settings and installed apps with increasing frustration. She didn't even notice the decor.

=====================

" 'Ey now, what she talking about?" the polite sailor said in a low voice. The others spread out to form a protective wall between Emilena and Dr. Lee.

Emilena instinctively took a step back. "I don't know. Rachel, the hell are you talking about?"

Dr. Lee grasped the sailor's hand, lip quivering. "She's got a gun and she was forcing me to walk with her. I think she was going to drown me in the ocean. I don't know what she wanted!"

"*What?*" Emilena noticed the small crowd had reached earshot. "Look, that's all bullshit. But you want her? Fine, take her!"

"You're not going anywhere!" threatened the drunk sailor. "What were you going to do to her?"

"How about you ask her why she wants to get on your goddamn boat?" Emilena threw her hands up in the air. "I'm out. Deal with her yourself."

"Hey!" interrupted someone from the small crowd. "It's that woman from the news!" He whipped out his smartphone and brought up a website. Emilena was already marching down the beach, figuring that Dr. Lee could solve her own problems, when others spread out to cut off her escape. "Oh my god!" exclaimed another, reading the article from the former's phone. "She helped kill all those Augments?"

"Yeah!" confirmed the first. "And she was part of the same thing in Lanthae too!"

At that moment, Emilena realized they were talking about her. "Wait, what did it say?" She saw the flash of a concealed pistol out of the corner of her eye, but she was quicker on the draw and fired a salvo of warning rounds into the air. Even with the silencer it sent half the crowd dropping to the ground in fright. Something heavy crashed into the side of her head; the drunk sailor had bum-rushed her. Deflecting his swipe with the butt of her SMG, Emilena sliced his stomach open with a fluid backhand draw of her knife.

An unsilenced shot rang out, and with a stagger Emilena realized she'd been shot in the wrist. Her SMG clattered out of her grasp as the muscles in her hand stopped working, and in seconds her mind shifted from fight to flight. Using a retaliatory shove from the sailor for momentum, she went sprinting for the surf and dove face-first into the waves.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 09, 2015, 08:00:01 AM**

"Thanks man. Glad to hear you're okay," Soren said as he cut the connection and stuck the phone back in its charging cradle.

He opened the door and found Uziel standing there, "Hey *amigo*, you better see this."

Soren gulped; he had a vague feeling that he was *not* going to like what he was about to see.

Sure enough, the TV in the living room showed grainy still pictures of himself, Axel, Anne, Marita, Maria, Rose and Emilena. The news reporter announced that these were members of a gang of armed robbers responsible for attacking a robotics factory in Lanthae and killing many workers. In addition, it warned they were armed and extremely dangerous and that there was a 500,000 credit bounty on each of them.

"What the fuck!? I wasn't anywhere near that factory!" Soren protested. It was a lie; he knew that factory was actually a Purifier base.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 09, 2015, 04:27:59 PM**

Axel stepped into *Ned's*, lowering his hood, and almost instantly the smell of cigarette smoke, cheap booze and sweat hit him in the nose with the subtlety of a truck. Patrons were crowded along the bar that stretched the length of the left side of the establishment, most of them leaning over their drinks, lost in their own thoughts or engaging in loud, bawdy discussions with their neighbours. Dotted around the place, rickety tables supported even more customers as they nursed their alcohol. A permanent haze clung to the air within, and Axel felt his eyes start to sting as smoke wafted towards him.

As he looked around, Axel felt almost relieved by the familiar surroundings - he'd lost count of the amount of evenings he'd spent holed up here.

Picking his way across the bar he dropped into a stool at the end, tucked into the corner, and leaned on his elbows over the bar, blinking his greasy hair out of his eyes. The bartender, a small but almost alarmingly muscled pug, saw him and made his way over. "Hey beanpole, it's been a while! How's life been treating you?" The pug paused. "You figure out how *not* to look like you're always eating a shit sandwich?"

Axel shrugged. "Sure, Max. I'm a regular clown now."

Max chortled. "Ah, you miserable son of a bitch. You want a drink, or you just here to grace us with your sunny personality?"

"Get me a whiskey." He swallowed, his throat dry. "Double."

As Max went over to fetch his drink, Axel settled down into a familiar silence, eyes downcast, and when the pug slid the glass over to him he handed the credits over without looking. He took a sip of the whiskey, his mouth burning as it went down, and almost immediately started to feel better. *The return of an old friend.* Axel smiled bitterly to himself and took another drink.

"... Almaya, Axel Whent, Anne..."

At hearing the tinny voice, Axel quickly raised his head, looking up at the cheap, boxy TV suspended above the bar. The grainy image onscreen showed him and the others making their way around a building. A cold sensation rushed through him as he recognised the Purifier's base instantly.

"... Lanthae, and the deaths of many other augmented," the voice over the images continued. "Police have warned that these individuals are *extremely* dangerous. A reward of 500,000 credits..."

Axel's hands began to shake. He felt his teeth chatter. Suddenly, he became *very* aware of everyone around him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 09, 2015, 06:23:34 PM**

Marita was watching the bulletin, her face frozen in a mixture of shock and anger' those Purifer filth!! she snarled. " trying to pin the blame on us for blowing up their base!

-

Marita! Do you have any idea hows many cred..' Marie said then froze as she saw the look on Marita face.." DJ's not the only one whos going to need a new name. We all are' Marita said in a slow sullen voice. ' we.. have 500000 cred bounties on our heads. 500000 EACH, you, me, Rose, all of our friends.. so... forget about going into work tomorrow.. or anytime thereafter. all it takes is one bullet and you're history. same goes for Rose..

-

Rose walked in as she said this and shook her head fervently ' No way! I'm not going to quit my job at the theater! not when i'm so close to taking a big role! i'm riding this out..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 09, 2015, 07:48:33 PM**

Bailey was walking back to his car from Marita's house. "I hope I made myself clear to them..." he muttered. After counting out the credits but before taking his leave he'd none-too-subtly warned that if anything were to happen to Flora, those dogs would be in a lot more than financial trouble.

He walked past a rundown clinic, where a flash of orange caught his eye. Some people were tearing up the inside using homemade weapons and molotovs. Whether it was a looting or a hate crime, he wasn't sure, but he knew better than to get involved.

World sure is going to hell, he thought to himself. *Maybe I should have talked to dear old pop a bit more about how he kept himself safe in the aftermath of the Pelvanida incident...*

The ocean was bitter cold this late at night. Emilena shed her jacket almost immediately as it filled with water and threatened to drag her head under the surf. She had a few tricks un her sleeve for staying afloat, but getting as far away from the shore as possible took priority at the moment.

She spared a single glance back at shore and was temporarily blinded when someone's smartphone cast a piercing light over her. "There!" someone shouted.

Emilena took a deep breath and dove underwater, anticipating gunfire, but nothing happened. *Huh. Maybe they're letting me--*

Suddenly a meaty hand grabbed her by the neck and wrenched her back into the surf. Someone had followed her into the water, a sailor by his stocky build. Emilena swiped at him with his knife but missed. The man smacked her upside the head and screamed, "Over here! I've got her! Help!"

Emilena gritted her teeth and on her next swipe embedded her knife into the fleshy spot under his shoulder. The man cried out and kneed her painfully in the crotch, and Emilena got enough of a grasp to awkwardly grapple him. As both of them dragged each other under the surf, Emilena grunted and swallowed salt water as the man headbutted her desperately. With little other options she dug her fangs into what she hoped was his neck and tore into him savagely.

The snap of a collar bone warned her she'd missed the mark somewhat, but the damage was done. With a second knee to the groin the man kicked her away in a panic, leaving her swirling and gasping for air in a swirl of bubbles. This late at night, she realized she couldn't even tell which direction led back to the surface.

A bullet slamming into her pelvis quickly helped her with that particular problem.

"Don't shoot!" shouted someone from the shore. "You might hit Angus!"

"No, I got her, I'm sure of it!" the other voice shouted back. "Reloading!"

"Help me!" cried the sailor in the water. Emilena meanwhile was kicking off her boots and abandoning her vestful of survival gadgets, electing to keep only her combat knife slid inside her sock. She needed more buoyancy and a flotation device, fast. Removing her pants and knotting the leg openings shut using her teeth and undamaged hand, she held the waistline open and swung them over her head, trapping air inside.

Her ability to paddle awkwardly around the cruise ship informed her that her pelvis wasn't shattered; the bullet must have been sufficiently off-target or dampened by the water to only bruise. Her next course of action was to choose where to swim to. Every paddle felt harder than the next; at these temperatures and losing this much blood she feared she had less than twenty minutes before passing out.

Can't go back to shore...there will be search parties... Struggling to see over her deflating flotation device, she spotted a pair of red lights roughly fifty meters out to see. *Hell with it. Best case scenario, boat I can hijack. Worst case scenario, a buoy...*

Willing her numb legs to keep paddling, Emilena gasped for breath and made her way further out to sea.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 12, 2015, 03:24:59 PM**

Twenty agonizing minutes later, Emilena felt her knees scrape across pebbles, and handful by handful she dragged herself onto a tiny atoll. Little more than a large rock, Emilena suspected her new hideout wouldn't even exist come morning when the tides came in.

Shivering violently, Emilena quickly slid her soaking clothes off and curled into a ball. Proper survival methods dictated removing wet clothes and wrapping up in blankets or some form of insulation, but on this rock she would have to settle for the tepid bay air.

I'm safe from the mob...but what the hell do I do now? In her current position her mangled wrist was pressed against her snout, mixing the smells of her own blood with the ocean salt. *Well, stemming the bleeding is a good first start.* Using her knife, she sliced a long ribbon out of her shirt and tourniqueted her right lower arm. As much as she often hated Lily, this was one of those moments Emilena wished she were around. *She always refuses to heal me, but surely even she wouldn't want me to lose a hand...*

The air was doing a better job than she expected; her muscles were still cramping up from her perching on a slippery rock, but her skin was already feeling dryer and the temperate air was beginning to feel manageable. *I've survived worse than this...* she thought to herself, realizing with a troubling lack of alarm that she was slowly passing out. *I can get through this.......*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2015, 07:45:58 AM**

the Girls were arguing amongst themselves over what to do ' even if your boss allows us to come work with you..' Marita said ' I highly doubt the others will be willing to join in . I cant see Soren quoting Shakespeare or playing Injun Joe. Emilena would taking killing people off in Hamlet quite literally, and in any event we have to protect Flora here. we have 20 million credits. enough to move the 4 of us out of Seryet and go.. wekll anywhere we want..
-
I'll talk to mr Hong tomorrow' rose replied ' i'll see what he says.. hes a good sort.. ' He may be.. but what about your co-workers?" Marie said ' once this report gets around we likely wont be able to keeo our jobs, at least i wont.'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 13, 2015, 05:14:34 PM**

As the news reporter continued talking, Axel's heart felt as if it was about to explode. His wide eyes were fixed on the screen, and it felt impossible to breath.

What the fuck... what...

From somewhere behind a group hunched over one of the tables burst out laughing, and the raucous noise snapped Axel out of his shock. Blinking, trying to force the fog to clear from his head, he tried to discretely glance up the bar to see if anyone was watching.

With a sinking feeling in his gut, he saw here and there, a few *were* looking up at the screen, some with mild or non-existent interest, others staring with their full attention. Max was bent down at the other end of the bar, working on something under the counter.

Axel swallowed. *Alright... nobody's seen me, just need to get out and then...* And then what? He had no idea. All he knew was that he needed to get out of here as soon as he could. Then maybe he could lie low, keep his head down. Try to figure out what the hell was going on...

Rising slowly, trying to make as little noise as possible, he slid off the bar stool and started to slink across the room, keeping his eyes down. After each step, he expected to feel a hand clamp down on his shoulder, someone to yell out in recognition. He felt his mouth grow dry as he approached a cluster of patrons who'd been watching the TV... but, absorbed in their conversations, they didn't seem to recognise him. He skirted around a bar stool that was stuck out - and the door grew even closer. Closer...

"Hey Axel!"

At the sound of his name, Axel jolted, glancing back without thinking. Max was leaning over the counter, cleaning a glass and looking curiously across at him. "You going so soon?"

"I... ah..." Axel's mouth opened and closed as he tried to think. "Yeah, just remembered I've got, ah... something to take care of. I'll see you around Max." He quickly turned back, his long legs carrying him quickly towards the door.

From further back in the bar, two men watched the rat leave. As his thin frame slipped through the door, the burlier of the two turned to the man sat across from him. "You sure that's the guy?"

"Yeah, I'm fuckin' sure."

"Alright... alright, but think about the creds, man... We could-"

"*Fuck* the creds..." The second man's face darkened, his voice low with hatred. Downing the last of his beer, he stood up, one hand reaching under his jacket to feel the cold metal of the revolver tucked into his belt. "Let's go."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 13, 2015, 06:13:15 PM**

As the minutes passed, Flora got more and more upset at her predicament.

I am a platinum artist and a technical maverick... she thought to herself angrily, glancing at the plain off-white walls and rustic decorations of her simple bedroom. *I've redefined popular culture and I am NOT going to remain cooped up in a hovel with three desperate housewives!*

Sliding her phone into her back pocket, she resorted to a distinctly low-tech but effective piece of technology; the knotted sheet rope. Forcing the window as quietly as she could, she scaled the wall of the complex and dropped to the ground.

You can make it all the way to Daryl's... she told herself, with the unfounded confidence that originally drove her into show business. *You used to hang in the slums all day before boarding school...it'll be just like old times...*

Trying to visualize the map from her smartphone app, Flora picked a direction and started running.

A soaking wet splash of seawater abruptly roused Emilena from her slumber with the abruptness of a whiplash.

Blinking with disorientation, she tried to adjust to a sitting position and found all four of her extremities were completely asleep. Another wave hit her dead in the face, sending her spluttering and coughing with alarm.

Where is...? Where am...? As reality slowly reasserted itself she realized with a cold flash of alarm that she was up to her chest in water. The tide was coming in!

Trying once again to get to her knees, she accidentally put all of her weight on her tourniqueted arm and went tumbling stupidly into the water. Skidding on her backside along the sharp pebbles, she grasped the rock desperately but the next wave carried her into the unknown.

Part of her brain realized in a panic that what little supplies she had remaining were nowhere to be seen, but a different part of her brain was preoccupied with the bizarre behavior of her wounded hand. While her other extremities were erupting with tiny tingling stabs, the hand was worryingly painless. In fact, she didn't feel anything from it at all.

Filling her lungs and spreading her arms and legs to maintain buoyancy, Emilena floated to the top of the surf and trusted in the current to carry her to shore. As her panic became controllable, the languid calmness of floating along warm morning surf gave her ample time to slowly get her bearings and remember all the pertinent details of last night's events. Dr. Lee was almost certainly dead or in jail. Lily could either be dead or still waiting for the Purifiers to destroy Lee's lab. If Emilena could get there first, she could warn Lily that their contract was terminated and Lily could save herself the regeneration. Also, they both needed to learn exactly what the news article revealed about the Lanthae incident. It mentioned Emilena by either description or name, any number of the old gang could be incriminated.

Emilena knew she was procrastinating on looking at her hand. She knew it could only be bad. But even she wasn't prepared for the terrible sight when she finally held it up. The colorless skin was bloated with water and peeling off to the wrist, revealing clammy limp muscles clinging to her reinforced Augmented bones. Down to the tourniquet, everything was either pale dead flesh or gleaming silver chrome. Had Emilena any food in her stomach she would have certainly vomited.

Oh my god, can Lily heal this??? Emilena wondered in a panic. *That's my dominant hand! How the hell am I going to fire a gun? Or even use a fork?*

Her brain was still whirling in horror when her back scraped up against sand. The tide had carried her to shore.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 14, 2015, 10:28:14 AM**

Marie decided to go introduce herself to Flora and distract herself from the news that had just landed in their laps. " she knocked on the door to Floras room, only to find it opened on its own " DJ? She called out before coming in " I just wanted" she stopped and her mouth fell open as she saw the open window and the rope hanging out of it " my God!" she screamed and ran down the stairs " Flora ran off!" she said breathlessly. Marita froze in shock, then ran to her computer and began typing ' Bailey gave us her cell phone number so we could keep an eye on her at all times. That man thinks of everything.I'll give her a call, and even if she doesnt answer, it will tell us her location. Get in the car girls ' we're going to go find her..20 million creds wont save us, if we cant get her back..'

- Marie and rose randown the stairs towards the complex's parking garage, and got into their vehicle, which was a 10 year old van. it got good gas mileage and got a good top speed, but it wasnt high end. Marita started the van, and pulled out of the garage, driving with one hand while calling Floras phone with the other. " She heard the phone ring, and ring, and silently hoped Flora would answer.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 14, 2015, 04:08:04 PM**

Flora had never sent an incoming call to voicemail faster than the unlisted number suddenly ringing her. *Three guesses who that is, and the first two don't count,* she thought wistfully.

She turned down another alleyway and found a dead end. *Crap.* By her mental map, there should have been a street connection... Swiping her phone's screen, she checked the map app. Due to her limited functionality, she couldn't update it via satellite, but if she could just triangulate her position...

She realized someone else had entered the alley behind her. She turned to spot a short man in a stained T-shirt. He had a gun.

"Give me your wallet," he said under his breath. "Quietly."

Flora pulled her wallet out as fast as she could and tossed it to him.

"And the phone!" he threatened. Flora threw her phone on the roof of the nearby building. "What the hell did you do that for?" he snapped angrily. Flora dropped to the ground and covered her head in fright. Cursing under his breath, the man took one last look at the smartphone and made off with what he had gotten ahold of.

Flora needed a few seconds to get her bearings. Flashbacks from being shot in the stadium flashed before her eyes. *Get ahold of yourself!* she thought, gritting her teeth and getting to her feet. She glanced at the three-story condo she'd thrown the phone onto. Noticing a fire escape within jumping distance of the dumpster, she scaled the side and began the long climb to the roof.

Unbeknownst to her, Marita had called the phone again, and this time it went to voicemail. Marita's technology could track it now...

Staggering to her feet, Emilena noticed with alarm that despite the lateness there were still some beachgoers sunbathing, jogging, and swimming around her area. A series of 24/7 floodlights kept the beach permanently illuminated. *Hope this beach is clothing optional...* Most of Emilena's wounds were clotted or mostly hidden due to the constant exposure to salt water, but her hand was going to be somewhat conspicuous. With no other option, she buried it in her own hair and pretended she was awkwardly scratching an itch as she stumbled through the sand towards civilization.

She still got some odd looks as she lurched dizzily to more solid ground. Emerging onto the tiled section dedicated to showers and lockers, Emilena ducked into the girls' bathroom, where she wrapped her hand in paper towels. Loitering in the furthest stall, she waited for a muggable target to enter the stalls alone.

Emilena took a deep breath of relief when she left the stalls about an hour later clad in a sunny orange dress with her hand tucked in a purse slung over her shoulder. *Okay...I think we're back in business. Step one, buy takeout. Step two, find a newspaper. Step three, get back to Lily.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 14, 2015, 08:02:12 PM**

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the voicemail from Marita said '; Flora stop at the next street corner you are on. we'll catch you there and take you out to dinner. Bailey is paying us a lot of money to look after you.. and.. he doesnt like it when people don't meet his expectations. Rose told us about her previous meetings with him. Not a guy you want to piss off. at any event running off wasnt a smart move on your part. Seryet isnt a very safe town to be out on the streets at night in.. people get mugged, robbed, stabbed, and shot all the time around here. we've had run-ins with the Purifiers before Flora, they are deranged fanatics who will gladly rip out your eyeballs and show them to you while you are still breathing before chopping you into bits. they are not the sort you want to get involved in."

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marita locked onto floras position' ok shes on the complex, two blocks to our left
she said, turning down the street and making a beeline for it..' she silently thanked who ever had invented satellite telephones.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 14, 2015, 09:02:16 PM**

Soren headed to *Dai Wong* near Egeson Street. The eatery was a cheap sit-down restaurant that served filling -- and rather greasy and salty Cantonese fair. The drizzling rain had stopped and was replaced by watery sunlight peeking through the smoggy haze that veiled Seryet City's gleaming monoliths of concrete and steel.

That said, Soren still kept his windbreaker with the hood raised as he entered the building. Loud Cantonese voices emanated from the kitchen as waiters hustled back and forth with dishes of all sorts.

He took a seat at a large table next to two burly men who looked like oil farmers, they were soon joined by a middle-aged Shetland Pony mare with a metallic horn sticking out of her forehead.

The Human picked up a rather greasy menu sandwiched between a bottle of hot sauce and soy sauce and cracked it open. Stained glass tumbler full of steaming hot tea was passed to everyone at the table.

Soren sighed as he read over the dishes. He needed something quick and simple to eat. He looked at the mare sitting next to him...she looked *very* familiar...

The waiter approached and soon took their orders. Soren opted for white-cut catfish with scallion-ginger sauce and rice. It was Cantonese workingman's dish -- simple, filling and unpretentious.

He took a sip of the steaming hot tea as he looked around the eatery. In the front were two Augments cooks cutting up some catfish with literally mechanical precision.

In the back corner, two giggling Crab Eating Mongoose were sharing a large platter of deep fried crabs with a Chinese woman and a white woman. Judging from their excessive makeup and skimpy clothing, they appeared to be prostitutes. Prostitution, while technically against Seryet City's public nuisance ordinances was tolerated (as long as a sizable bribe was made to the police).

Soren sighed and kept an eye on the door.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 15, 2015, 03:00:50 PM**

Axel kept walking down the sidewalk as fast as his legs could take him, his feet squelching through puddles in the cracked and worn concrete. Though the rain had stopped, a clammy moistness clung to the air, making Axel feel sodden. A few weak patches of sunlight showed here and there through the clouds, but did little to dispel the dismal, oppressive dark of the overcast sky.

At least there wasn't anybody around, a fact that Axel was more than glad of. *What the hell am I going to do?!* he thought desperately. *It's not like I can go to the cops to try and explain... Oh jesus...* He felt as if his chest was collapsing in, helplessness starting to overwhelm him. *Come on... come on, think...*

Grinding his teeth, deep in his thoughts, Axel didn't hear the soft footsteps coming up behind him. Then there was a heavy *crack* on the back of his head, and everything went white with agony.

When the fog cleared, he was lying face down on the concrete, his cheek pressed into the cold, damp ground. The back of his head felt on fire, and something wet was trickling down the back of his neck. Groaning, Axel started to slowly push himself onto his hands and knees, his stunned brain trying to process what was happening. A pair of strong hands grabbed him around the shoulders, and he felt himself being pulled up, his own arms held back.

As Axel started struggling, trying to wrench from the grip of the person behind him, another person stepped in front of him before him into his line of sight. Beneath his short dark hair, the man's eyes were like cold stone. He leaned in close, his face inches from Axel's own. "You thought you could just get away with it?" he hissed.

Axel blinked. "I di-"

The man stepped back, swinging his arm, and Axel just had time to register the small revolver clenched in his hand before the handle smashed into his right temple. Gasping, Axel was thrown to the side, the man holding him almost losing his grip.

Holding the rat tighter, the burly man swore under his breath. "We can't do this here, Jim. Someone could call the cops."

The dark haired man with the revolver shook his head angrily, looking around the deserted street. "Nobody's gonna call the cops. Especially not for a piece of shit like this." He paused. Maybe it *was* better to make sure. "Alright, fine. Bring him there." He pointed to a dark alley across the road and started to walk over.

Shrugging, the burly man started to drag the dazed rat across. Inside, he couldn't help feeling a pang of regret. Sure, this was personal for Jim, but... 500, 000 credits was a *lot* of money...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2015, 05:15:04 PM**

Flora gritted her teeth as she climbed rung after rung. *This shouldn't be tiring...* She hoisted herself over the wall and onto the roof, far more out of breath than she expected. *It's because I'm missing weekly yoga. I'm already getting out of shape!*

Locating her phone, she grabbed it and her heart skipped a beat. The screen was *cracked*, and this infuriated her. She hated when people treated her like a stereotypical teenage girl, and having such an associated symptom of that clique was unacceptable. *I'll sue those three women, it's their fault!*

As if on cue, she saw a car pull up that she recognized from their parking lot. "Go away!" she shouted loudly. "I'm not coming down! You can't make me!"

She cast her eyes around the roof. The entrance to the stairwell was visibly locked, and there were no other roofs in jumping distance. Her mind raced as she looked for another escape.

Emilena bit her lip when she saw Dr. Lee's lab was trashed almost beyond recognition. Ducking under the collapsed doorframe, she scanned the charred, wrecked remains of the clinic. "Lily?" Emilena had no idea when the hit happened, technically she wasn't even sure if it was safe to enter yet.

Emilena finally located her confidante crushed halfway underneath an operating table. A number of bloodied instruments indicated that Lily had been subject to some mutilations before the Purifiers had finished.

Grunting with exertion, she pushed the table off Lily and used it to block the only clear window to the outside. Lily's chest was moving, meaning she was more than halfway done with regeneration. Emilena kept herself occupied locating painkillers for her hand and experimented with some skin synthesizers in forlorn hope of regenerating it. But she quickly realized any hope of natural recovery was impossible, even with modern medicine. Her right hand was completely dead.

Thirty minutes later, Lily made the deep gasp that always meant she was clearing her lungs for the first time. Coughing badly, the lacerated human rolled over and clutched her abdomen. Emilena waited patiently for Lily to get to her feet on her own. Lily didn't like being touched.

"Emilena?" Lily croaked hoarsely. "Why are you...?"

"We had some technical difficulties with the plan," the vixen admitted. "Long story short, it went to hell and Dr. Lee signed her own death warrant. How soon until you can walk?"

"Soon..." Lily wheezed. She looked in wonder at the clinic around her. "Jesus, they trashed this place."

"You didn't notice? You were there." Emilena offered her a morphine shot. Lily refused it.

"They kinda went for me first..." Lily sat up. "Were you followed?"

"Don't worry, I spent a lovely evening in the Seryet Canal. Speaking of which..." Emilena held out her decayed hand. Lily gasped and recoiled instinctively. "Yeah. Look, I know you don't do heals, but come on. Just once?"

Lily hesitated, then shook her head. "I'm sorry, Emi..." She scooted backwards.

"*What?*" Emilena balled her still-intact fist. "This is my dominant hand! I can't even shoot! Come on, you'll heal in minutes and go about your way!" She advanced in a rage. "I could have just grabbed you while you were regenerating and gotten it for free, you know!"

"I...can't," Lily glared at the hand through tear-streaked eyes. "I won't. I'm sorry."

Emilena squeezed her fist so hard the morphine shot shattered. "Goddammit, I want to strangle you sometimes!"

"Not on our watch, please," a cocky voice leered behind them. A Purifier death squad pushed the doorframe aside and took up positions around the room.

Lily's eyes went wide. "Oh god, it's them. They came back."

The leader grinned wickedly. "We always double-check our hits for survivors. Could've sworn we finished you off, Ms. North, but it's our lucky day we didn't." He licked his dagger. "They want you and Echo alive. Orders from the very top. You can come quietly or make this difficult."

Emilena slashed Lily's neck open with a swipe of her claws. "She would have rather died than come with you, trust me," she explained to her stunned assailants as Lily's body dropped to the floor with a gurgle. "You've got me, though. Hope your higher-ups are okay with one out of two." She raised her arms and offered no resistance as one stabbed her in the stomach with a cattle prod.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 15, 2015, 06:50:56 PM**

Marita pulled up alongside the building and got out. she heard floras shout and replied" Flora! this was not a good move on your part! I dont care how many people have sucked up to you, or literally sucked you off, that doesnt give you the right to run off like this. this isnt a music video production, you do something stupid here ,its for good. We dont have the creds to get you all augmented up if you mess yourself up, and in any event , Bailey will quite literally kill us if anything happens to you, even if it is your own fault. We're being held responsible for you, and we take that seriously. Just come on down, get in the van and we'll have a nice talk as we get drive through. you're not 18 yet, once you are 18, you can smoke, drink have all the freaky sex you like with guys or girls who are your age, but right now, you're not 18, and someone legally has to look out for you, and well. that someone- someONES- are me , Marie and Rose. we're getting paid to do it, and it would not look good if Bailey came around and found you bolting off into the blue. hed chew you out, and do worse to us. Do you really want that? Now.." Marita was cut off as shots erupted, and began pinging off the   stairwell t hat Flora had just finished climbing. the loud ping ping ping of bullets, interspersed with shouts - Marita caught one _ Die! Augmened Bitch! Die!'- were loud and clear. Marita braced herself against the van as the bullets were fired ' after a couple minutes the bullets stopped and the loud squeal a tires was heard as a car pealed out from around the corner.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2015, 07:01:36 PM**

Flora's eyes grew wide and she ducked under the lip of the roof as the bullets peppered the side, damaging the ladder. "Are you crazy?!?" she shouted in a blind panic. "I'm not fucking going down there!"

Seconds later the squeal of tires left only the sound of blood thumping in her ear. Clutching her stomach, Flora rolled over. Her heart hammered in her chest and all she could focus on was the old newspaper her face was pressed against. "Why the hell would I go down there and get shot?" she screamed at Marita, not brave enough to actually look over the edge of the building at the Great Dane.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 15, 2015, 07:07:34 PM**

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they've gone! Marita shouted back. Now get the heck down here before they decide to come back! Eithe you come down willing or I'm coming up there and DRAGGING your pampered posterior down here! you just got a taste of what i was telling you.. theres shooting and muggings every night around here. Almost as bad as Lanthae , really. now whats its going to be? Come Down willingly or have the pissed off Great Dane drag your furry butt? You have 5 seconds to answer.' Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2015, 07:10:38 PM**

Flora gritted her teeth and squinted her eyes shut. The afterimage of the words on the newspaper were burnt into her retinas. Suddenly she blinked in surprise. Exactly four seconds pause, then... "I'm coming down!"

Climbing daintily over the side, she grasped the ladder and slid down without using the rungs. Hitting the ground hard, she rebounded quickly and sprinted into the car, unable to keep a hint of a smile from her face.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 15, 2015, 07:43:05 PM**

Alright' Matita said as she got back into the van. Marie buckled Flora Tightly into the seat, strapping her in. ' when was the last time you were truly punished Flora, and I mean in the ' go to your room, no phone, no tv, no NOTHING' sort? I'm guessing its been a long time.. ' well, she swiped Floras phone from her and noticed the large crack running down the middle of the screen., ' consider this the revoking of your phone privileges until Marita can fashion a new screen for it.' shes pretty good at fixing phones, apart from her various computer gigs. anyway... dinner." she segwayeds as marita drove off again.' We;re going to Nixons, they have good food there.. " Marita said.

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I want some checkers Nuggets- a large order' Rose said.' Get me a big Robert Frosty' Marie said. Are they doing the Impeachment special again?

_
should be they do it every August.' Marita replied ' i'll get that. What do you want Flora, theres the kick Nixon around combo , the, 100000 votes and 2 states short combo, and the breakin burger.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 15, 2015, 08:09:32 PM**

Two men, their faces veiled by the hoods of their windbreakers entered the eatery. They sat down and cracked open their menus. One of the men kept stealing glances at Soren.

The Human ignored them and continued sipping his hot tea.

"That the guy?" one of the bounty hunters asked between sips of ice water.

The other brought up a smartphone with a mirrored coating that prevented shoulder-surfing. He adjusted the image and discreetly snapped a picture of Soren. A few seconds later, the words "95.8% match" scrolled across the screen.

"That's him. Let's go." The two got up as if to go to the bathroom. As they did so, they headed straight for Soren.

Soren noticed the men approaching. Alarm bells went off in his head. Judging from the hardened expressions on their faces, hands in their pockets and menacing posture, they were *not* here to talk.

"Soren Almaya. You're coming with us," the first bounty hunter said, pointing a metallic finger at the Human.

"Okay, who are you? And who the hell sent you?" Soren demanded, narrowing his eyes and clutching his tumbler of tea.

"Not your concern. All you need to know is that you'll make us quite rich."

Soren gulped. The word about the 500,000 cred bounty must have spread. He swallowed the bile rising in his throat and glared at the man. "I am not interested in helping you with whatever fucked up scheme you're pulling."

The bounty hunter chuckled. "I'm afraid you don't have a choice. Now come with us or we shall use...creative methods to ensure your compliance."

In a fluid motion, the Human threw his glass tumbler at the bounty hunter, forcing him to dodge the glass projectile as it shattered against a bronze altar dedicated to the Kitchen God. That split second allowed him to leap from his chair and sprint through the swinging doors into the kitchen.

"After him!" The two bounty hunters charged through the swinging doors, evoking angry shouts from the staff.

The patrons seemed, at best, mildly amused. It was testament to how rough *Dai Wong* could get.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 17, 2015, 12:50:15 AM**

<This post has been deleted in accordance with following our role-plays' (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341&view=findpost&p=22055575) tradition (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=13105.660&#entry22071632)>

(Don't worry, this time there was no actual content someone might want to read)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 18, 2015, 02:23:28 PM**

The burly man's fist hammered into the side of Axel's face, and his head was rocked to the side, his cheek knocking into the wall he was being held up against. The dark haired man with the gun stood on the other side, watching, his face contorted in hatred. After they'd dragged him into the dank, narrow alleyway squeezed between two rough looking buildings, they'd thrown him against the wall next to a stack of trash and gotten to work on him. Sagging, his body a mesh work of pain, the only thing keeping Axel up were the fist that continued to land blows on him.

As the two men paused for breath, Axel took the opportunity to try to talk again. Blood and saliva hanging from the corner of his mouth, he looked up achingly at the dark haired man. "Wasn't... me..." he managed through a numb jaw.

At a glance from the dark haired man, his friend lowered his clenched fist. "What the fuck did you say?"

"Not me," Axel tried again, wheezing, his ribs aching. "I had nothing to... do with Lanthae, or... or what just happened."

"No?" The dark haired man sneered. "Then what the hell did we just see? You were on the TV!"

"I don't... know what that was. None of it... is true. It's a lie."

The dark haired man said nothing for a moment, his jaw clenching. Then he took a step closer. "You fucking *coward*," he hissed. "You aren't going to own up to what you did?! My sisters died in Lanthae. Because of *you*!" He drove his knee hard into Axel's stomach, and the air was forced out of his lungs. The rat collapsed to the floor on his hands and knees, gasping for breath.

The dark haired man spat on him. "Fuck this. I'm ending this piece of shit now." He cocked the revolver, the gun making a soft *click*.

His burly friend swallowed, then raised a hand slowly. "Look, Jim. This guy deserves to die. I *know* that, believe me. But Sarah and Beth... they wouldn't want this." He paused. "And the money-"

"I don't care about the money!"

Still on the floor between them, Axel felt something sharp dig into the side of his leg. Weakly, feeling as though he was looking through someone else's eyes, his head turned to see what it was. One of the trash bags had been torn open, rubbish leaking out, exposing a plastic knife. The end had been broken, leaving a razor sharp point. Slowly, his fingers closed around it, making no sudden movements.

"... they're dead, Sam," Jim was saying, his voice cracking. "Because of him."

"What about *my* family?!" Sam shook his head desperately. "Even if we split it, at least it'd mean that my kids won't have to live in *shit* anymore! Please..."

"You should think about your kids," Axel croaked, stiffly getting to his knees.

"Shut up!" Jim snarled, pointing the gun barrel at Axel's forehead.

Axel ignored him, looking into the burly man's eyes. "500,000's a lot. You..." He coughed. "You probably... aren't going to see that kind of money again in your life."

"*Shut up!*"

"Jim, wait!"

Jim lowered the gun and looked at Sam. "If we-"

Axel sprang. Leaping up between the two men, he bundled into the dark haired man, punching forwards, the plastic spike tearing into his throat as Sam stumbled back in shock. Gurgling, the plastic in his neck twitching as blood rushed out, Jim collapsed backwards on the floor with Axel landing on top of him. The revolver clattered on the concrete and skidded away. The rat frantically scrabbled for it, snatching the gun up and rolling onto his back to aim the barrel at Sam as the man backed away slowly, horror etched on his face.

"Please don't... I've got kids, man..." he begged.

Axel's eyes narrowed. His shaking finger hovered above the trigger...

From the other end of the alley, 4 loud gunshots tore through the air, and Sam dropped to the floor, giving a final gasp. Flinching, Axel swung the gun towards where the shots had come from, gritting his teeth when he saw three figures filling the alley, one of whom was tucking away his pistol. "Close one, that could have been really nasty." he said. The man tilted his head slightly. "Look... I'm gonna need you to come with us..."

"Back off!" Axel snarled, pushing himself backwards, still aiming the gun. "Back the fuck off!"

"Yeah, I didn't think you'd want to." The man nodded, and the figure to his left stepped forward, raising a small yellow device. Axel was just able to recognise it as a taser before the probes hit him. As his body jerked, the gun slipping from his fingers, he was only dimly aware of footsteps near him, a sharp prick as a needle was pushed into his neck. The last thing he heard as he slipped into unconsciousness was the dark haired man's dying coughs beside him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 18, 2015, 04:32:18 PM**

"I got a different idea." Flora fished the newspaper out of her pants pocket. "Look what I just read...you three are *wanted criminals*." She smiled maliciously. "What do you think Bailey would do if he were to hear that?"

She glanced at the Great Dane who had her phone; she'd already forgotten their names. "If you don't give me my phone back right now, I'll find a way to call Bailey and tell him you're holding me hostage and all on the run from the police. He won't want me with criminals, no matter what favors you owe him. And once I've got my phone, after you return my phone, I want you to drive me anywhere I say, starting with Daryl's house at 45 Teakwood Lane."

She spread her arms and added "And another thing! It's *Shirley!* The stupid name *you* came up with! Maybe don't shout across the entire city that I'm in hiding and worth millions of dollars!?"

* * *

Emilena's body was still twitching when she regained consciousness an unspecified amount of time later. Her locale didn't particularly surprise her.

"Purifier prison, huh? Brings back memories." With a grimace she got to her knees and crawled to the wrought-iron door filling the north wall. The cell was extremely small, containing only a bolted bedframe and a small toilet. She was dressed only in a pair of tight handcuffs. *Last time I used my jumpsuit as a garrote, I guess they didn't feel like providing me with another...*

There was a slit in the door and she peered through it, but could only see a stainless linoleum floor. The hallway could lead to literally anywhere, but without a better understanding her surroundings she couldn't risk drawing attention to herself by trying to talk to any nearby cells.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 20, 2015, 09:37:34 PM**

Ok . SHIRLEY" Marita voice was tense ' first off we are NOT criminals.. that report is about as full of facts as the market tabloids that say Martians are breeding secretly with humans in a lab in Kentucky. so no, I'm not giving you your phone back. we are NOT driving to your groupies house, and we ARE going back to the house.. since we're trying to lay low in order to keep you safe. we are after all getting paid a LOT of creds to keep you safe. besides you shouldnt believe everything you hear and read, and you should know that from personal experience After all how many times have you read something in the papers claiming that you've had work done, or had implants? Quite a few as i recall. as you've sued quite a few people for making up stuff about you.. or at least Bailey Has..' marita said ' She pulled up to the drivethrough " ok I'll have the 420-3 special. the expletive deleted combo, with the Rosemary Woods toy, 2 100000 votes and 2 states short combos, and the pardon combo.. and thats all to go.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 22, 2015, 03:30:57 PM**

Axel was dragged from unconsciousness by the sound of his own harsh, hacking coughs. When they'd passed and he was able breath again, he slowly opened his eyes, his lids like slabs of iron. Harsh light blinded him. Wincing against the glare he forced himself into a sitting position on aching limbs, and waited for his vision to adjust.

Eventually, the rat was able to make out that he was in a tiny room... no, a cell. A solid looking metal door sealed the front, and an uncomfortably small toilet was bolted in the corner of the room. Axel looked down, and saw he was sitting on a hard, bare mattress on a frame fixed into the floor. With dawning horror, he also saw his clothes had been removed, revealing an ugly network of bruises and cuts across the bony frame of his naked body. Handcuffs secured his wrists together, the metal digging in painfully.

A small sound escaped Axel's throat as his situation sunk in. *What the hell is this... who's...* His breath began to hitch as the rat struggled for breath, teetering on the verge of hysteria. *I need to get out... gotta get out now!*

No! Keep it together! Axel struggled to think clearly and remain calm. *If you lose it now, you'll die for sure!* Closing his eyes, Axel tried to will his heartbeat to slow.

In Emilena's cell, a small speaker fitted into the ceiling crackled. After a moment, a bored sounding voice came through. "Miss Echo, good afternoon. Hope you had a good sleep?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 22, 2015, 04:17:39 PM**

It doesn't matter if it's real or not...it'll get me away from you and that's all I care about... Flora glared angrily at the front seat. "I could tell him you raped me," she said in a low voice, "You're all dykes so I bet he'd believe that."

She balled her fists angrily. "Or I could tell him that on the very first day an SUV fired a round of bullets at us because you shouted my real name in public, and I wouldn't even be lying!"

* * *

As the voice sounded, Emilena's heart leapt into her throat and she quickly closed the slit. The cell was so low-tech she'd never suspected it could be bugged. "Er...yeah. Great," she answered uneasily. She had never gotten the hang of not talking back to her captors. "You guys still have those jets that shoot healing gunk? I could use some of that."

She surreptitiously scanned the room again. The camera was too small to see; she debated whether there are any decent way to manipulate the voice into revealing its location.

* * *

For fifteen minutes, nothing happened in Axel's cell. Then the sound of a door slam echoed, and Axel could hear light panicked footsteps racing down the hallway. A dark-skinned feminine finger held the door slit open.

"Tony!" Lily's shaky voice asked urgently. "Axel, Emilena! Is anyone in there?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 22, 2015, 05:04:21 PM**

Nice try' Rose said ' but I've known Bailey for awhile, for years, in fact. He knows I'm reliable. If he hadn't thought I was reliable, he wouldn't have put you in our care. And as for you being shot at it, you wouldn't have gotten shot at if you had stayed in your room, and listened to music or fiddled with your phone, or done ANYTHING other than trying to sneak off.. as for raping you, no we wont do that. We never bang girls who dont want to bang.. and in any case I've had my fair share of guys, as has Marie back there and Marita here as well. So you could say we're bisexual, with a preference for girls. Bisexuality is a spectrum after all, in case you didnt know. Course, you're bisexual as well, judging from all the stories with your groupies, even if not all of them are true. so - SHIRLEY- we are getting something to eat, and heading back home.. You're stuck with us, until Bailey says the coast is clear- which given how the Purifiers operate- will be quite awhile in coming. They dont stop hunting their targets, you know, until they get killed or their target is killed..
If anything, this forces you to trust us even more, as we've fought those guys before. and we've survived. which.. puts us high on their enemies list.' she paused as marita stopped at the drivethrough and rose grabbed the food orders. Rose got the Nuggets and Marie the Frosty and the combos we spread around. Rose tossed the expletive deleted combo back to Shirley, and Marie reached forward and grabbed the pardon combo. Marita munched on a fry in the 100k vote combo, and Rose had the 420-3 combo. Marita drove off and Rose rolled up the window. " now lets have dinner , girls..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **Serris** on **September 22, 2015, 05:32:02 PM**

Heart racing, Soren burst into the grimy alleyway that stank of rancid grease and food. Angry shouts from *Dai Wong*'s kitchen staff echoed behind him as the two bounty hunters followed him. He felt his holstered pistol pressing against his side but he decided against using it as the odds of him winning a fight with two professional bounty hunters were not good.

That and if he shot at them, they might just decide to forsake the live capture bonus and just kill him.

He looked around and spotted a fire escape that zigzagged its way up onto a roof of a nearby building.

The Human scrambled onto of a greasy dumpster and just managed to grab the first rung of the ladder.

The rusty and ill-maintained catch on the ladders failed, knocking him onto the ground and allowing the ladder to fall free.

An electrified stun dart pinged off he concrete wall next to his head. Swearing profusely, he scrambled up the ladder and ran up the external staircase.

His lungs burning, Soren finally managed to get onto the roof. He ducked behind a large air conditioning unit. Seeing as they weren't going to let up, he decided that they were going to have to pay for their bounty.

The Human drew his pistol and clicked off the safety as he listened for footsteps.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 24, 2015, 03:56:15 PM**

Axel's breath hitched. He stared at the finger holding the metallic slit back, and when he heard Lily's voice he jolted as if he'd received an electric shock. "Li... Lily?" he said hesitantly. *This doesn't make sense, why is she here, she... we stopped...*

Confusion began to twist itself into a dark knot of anger, as memories of the way they'd left things began creeping back. But almost without him realising it, he found himself stumbling to the cell door, gritting his teeth at the pain shooting up his joints. A tiny voice nagged at him deep down, telling him something was wrong, but he pushed it down, locked it away.

Axel reached the door. "Yeah, I'm here! It's me! What are you-" He yanked at the door. It stuck fast. "*Shit!* I... I can't get this open..."

"No. No, those got taken away from us," the voice on the speaker said ruefully. "Oh, wow. Your hand actually *is* pretty messed up, you weren't kidding."

A pause. "Anyway. At least you know who we are and *where* you are, so I don't need to go into that. Purifiers, we caught you, so on and so on. We'll let you know why you're here in... a little while, I guess. But first we've gotta clear a few things up. So..."

The voice cleared its throat. "Your friends - Soren Almaya, Anne Phoe and Marita Jones." A rustle of paper. "Something tells me they weren't exactly your friends, but that's that's written here. Anyway, we know they came here, to Seryet after what happened in Lanthae. We want to find them so we can all have a chat together. So we'd be *really* grateful if you could tell us where they are."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 25, 2015, 11:02:59 AM**

A sharp intake of breath. "...Axel?" Lily gasped, voice cracking. There was a sliding click as Lily swiped a keycard and stumbled into the cell. She looked just as Axel remembered her; an unhealthily thin young woman with taut dark skin and frightened sunken eyes. She was dressed in a bloodstained surgical gown and red welts from needle pricks dotted her thighs, arms, and fingertips.

"Oh god..." she breathed, rushing forward and throwing her arms around him. "What have they done to you?" Pressing her face into his collarbone, she cried uncontrollably, her knees shaking from the effort of remaining standing.

"I'm sorry," she sobbed, her hot tears running down his shoulder, "I'm sorry for everything! For leaving you, and I'm sorry for what I said and for how its all turned out!" She sniffed. "I never thought they'd find you too..."

* * *

Emilena's heart sank into her stomach. She knew what came after failing to answer a question... "I don't know," she admitted. "I haven't kept in touch with any of them. They hated me, I wasn't exactly invited to any reunions."

She glanced trepidatiously at the door, half expecting a burly interrogator with a car battery to march through any second. "You've got to understand I have no motivation to protect them from you. I'd throw any of them under the bus just for the opportunity to watch you kill them."

* * *

Flora balled her fists. "I'm not hungry..." she muttered through gritted teeth. It was clear arguing with these women would get her nowhere.

With one last death glare at the one holding her cell phone hostage, she fell into a strained silence. Before they pulled out of the drive-thru she tested the car door to find it was child-locked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 27, 2015, 05:29:42 PM**

Axel's body stiffened slightly as Lily pressed herself against him, the welt and cuts dotting his torso protesting at the sudden pressure. He raised his arms, intending to hold her away - but found himself hugging her back instead, the gesture instinctual and familiar... yet now, somehow distant.

"I wasn't exactly hard to find," he muttered grimly. He looked down at her, blinking. "Jesus, what did they do to you? You look..." Axel trailed off, shaking his head. *... just like the last time you were taken.*

Stepping back, he took one of her hands and squeezed it lightly. "I don't know what the hell's going on, but we can figure that out later, alright? We need to get out of here *now*, before... before someone knows you're gone." Gritting his teeth against the pain, Axel started limping towards the open cell door. "Come on!"

"Wow. You really are hard case. Life and soul of the party, huh?" More rustling from the speaker. "Well, apparently the guys upstairs really want to make sure you aren't forgetting anything or overlooking something. Happens to the best of us. I'll be back in... a little bit. Should give me time to try and finish this *goddamn* crossword."

There was a click overhead as the voice cut off. For several long moments, there was nothing. Suddenly, a continuous noise came tearing from the speaker. At 45,000 Hz, it was impossible for humans to hear - but for a canine, it was like pushing shards of glass into the ears.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 27, 2015, 07:37:05 PM**

(Seryet City)

Soren kneeled and fired off a shot as the first bounty hunter climbed up the ladder. The impact of the bullet caused him to stagger back.

Soon, bullets ripped through the air conditioning unit. Soren swore profusely as one of the bullets grazed his arm, opening a long gash.

He waited for a lull in the shooting before he scrambled behind a ventilation shaft. But before he could fire any shots, the distinct hum of a flying frame could be heard behind him.

He turned around and saw three frame-flyers just hovering in midair above the streets. One of the flyers pointed a finger at him.

"Soren Almaya," the frame-flyer said. "We need you to come with us."

Soren scowled and raised his pistol. "Give me one reason why I shouldn't perforate your flying frame and leave you to splatter on the streets below!"

The flyer never got a chance to say anything before bullets tore through the air, kicking up plumes of concrete dust. Soren tried to make a run for it but a carbon fiber net launched out of seemingly nowhere entangled him and left him lying on the ground, unable to do more than breathe.

"Keep Soren away from those two!" the flyer said. It was now clear that this one was apparently the leader. He drew a submachine gun from a chest rig on his flying frame and let loose a volley of bullets at the bounty hunters.

"*Well, Soren, you just got yourself in some deep shit this time*," Soren thought as bullets whizzed overhead and gun battle raged.

(???)

Anne groaned as she slowly pushed herself to her feet. She rubbed her eyes and found herself in a sparsely decorated prison cell. Nothing more than a stainless steel toilet/sink combination, a grimy mattress and concrete floors and walls.

The mare reached up to her forehead and gasped. Her captors had unscrewed her horn, leaving just the port that was flush with her skull.

Her ears splayed in disappointment as she snorted in displeasure.

She checked her horseshoes and sighed. Her standard nailed-on steel horseshoes had been replaced with plastic horseshoes that were glued onto her hoof.

Anne spat in the sink and splashed some water on her face. The last thing she remembered was buying a joint from a dealer in Egeson Street and lighting up.

She pinned her ears and slammed a fist into the concrete wall as she realized that she had been drugged.

The Shetland Pony looked through the barred door. The hallway was completely deserted -- not even guards were seen.

"Hello, is anyone there?" she called out, her voice harsh and thin thanks to the lingering effects of the drug she was dosed with.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2015, 11:42:54 AM**

Emilena pricked her ears in surprise when the voice conceded the point and backed off. Sure, he promised more torture, but that was pretty standard when dealing with hate crime prisoners. Something was telling her that she was valuable to them for some reason. She debated attempting to reestablish a dialogue; at worst she could possibly glean more about her role in their plans, at best she could try to get a Lima Syndrome thing going--

Abruptly a high-pitched wail sounded, a trill eardrum-shattering siren. Emilena screamed and curled into a ball, covering her ears desperately with her elbows since the handcuffs were preventing her hands from reaching sufficient range of motion.

"Why can't you assholes ever ask me something I goddamn KNOW!" she screamed, burying her head futilely into the cot and convulsing in uncontrollable spasms.

* * *

Tears ran down Lily's face as Axel spoke to her. "Not yet!" she interjected as he headed for the door. "The changing of the guard is in ten minutes! We can only slip out then!"

She traced the bruises on his chest. "I wish I could heal you..." she sniffed. "They took my powers when they captured me...I've been worried they don't have any use for me now that their tests are done..."

Once again she threw her arms around Axel. "Where can we go?" she bemoaned. "Can we live with Soren? Is he safe? Is anyone from before safe?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2015, 01:43:45 PM**

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come on Shirley. you need to relax' Marie said " look, we're supposed to look out for you, and will be your friends if you let us. say want some of my fries?' she said, offering flora a handful ' come on.. I know its not the buffet they lay out on tour.. but well you're off touring for awhile.. and we're going to treat you the best we can, but you will have to trust us."
-
marita drove down the street back towards the apartment when her phone buzzed with a text " Heard Flora was seen running through town. Yes shes a rebelling brat, especially when she doesnt get nookie, but I'm paying the 3 of you a kings ransom to look after her. put bars on doors and windows, lock your apartment door, whatever the hell you want, but keep that girl safe and under watch at all times. Dont let me catch wind of her running off again. Capiche? - Bailey"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 02, 2015, 10:06:51 AM**

"I... I don't know if the others are safe," Axel shook his head. He shot another look at the cell door, but Lily's arms around him prevented him from getting any closer. "Soren was fine the last time I spoke to him but I don't know if we can trust the people he lives with at the Farms, and I have no idea how Marita and the others are doing..."

Axel trailed off, staring down at Lily. He still couldn't shake the feeling that something was off... something about her. His crooked ear twitched as he struggled to come up with a plan. "Look, we need to get out of here first, we can worry about that later. How... do you know how many guards there are? Where they're posted? Anything about the layout of the place?" He paused and looked down at the keycard. "How did you get that?"

The noise from the speaker in Emilena's cell abruptly stopped, and a second later was replaced by the same voice as before. "I'm still stuck on this crossword!" it complained. "Hey, maybe you could help... The clue is 'Making it worse', and its 12 letters. Any idea?"

A pause. "Oh, exasperating! Staring me right in the face. Anyway, let me just put this away... So, remembered anything yet? You weren't looking too comfortable."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 02, 2015, 10:35:41 AM**

"Get your goddamn fries out of my face," Flora snarled. "You can't stop me from calling the cops. Every phone has 911 and I have more than enough evidence against you freaks to bypass Bailey and solve this problem myself. Whatcha gonna do? Bind and gag me in your basement?"

____

A quiet noise sounded from outside the room. The color drained from Lily's face and she clung to him desperately. "Let's talk more about Soren," she said urgently. "Do you know where *exactly*--?"

"Too late," a gruff voice said, and the door slid open, revealing two muscled Purifiers. One was holding a car battery, the other a knife.

Lily's eyes went wide. "No wait, please, just a bit longer--!" She cried out as one roughly grabbed her and dragged her to block the entrance.

"You had your chance," the larger one said dismissively. Rubbing the cables together until they sparked, he stabbed Lily in the chest, sending her into a crying convulsion. "Boss thinks he needs more motivation."

The other pinned Lily to the floor and pressed his knife against her throat. "Soren Almaya's location," he said to Axel matter-of-factly. "Exact address. Every fact lets your girl live a bit longer."

Lily screamed as another electric charge sent her jolting erratically. Her eyes locked helplessly with Axel's.

____

"Yeah! I know exactly where they all are!" Emilena shouted back, blinking tears from her eyes. "They live together in a moss farm two hours out from Seryet! Make sure to bring a lot of ammo, their hosts are a couple of Augmented ex-mercenaries and I'd hate for them to get out alive! Get me some paper and I'll draw you a goddamn map!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 02, 2015, 03:18:29 PM**

the cops in this town are as corrupt as those in Lanthae, If not worse. Calling the cops without having lots of creds to grease their palms with will result in broken bones, concussions, and worse" Marita said matter of factly.' Why do you think so many robberies and muggings go unreported? because the cops are as bad, if not worse than the crooks. Protect and serve, my furry butt. Bailey just sent me a text making it VERY clear that we are not to have a repeat of you running off, because he put us in charge, and since you aren't 18 yet, we are legally responsible for you. that means, keeping an eye on you and keeping you safe. running off like you did, was NOT a smart move, but you're a teenager, teenagers arent known for being wise and reasonable. they are blend of elbows legs, acne and hormones going nuts. look, you'll find after a few days we let a lot of stuff go, Catholic nuns, we aint."

-

Dj, you need to calm down and stop being so difficult' Rose said. Look we're almost home, once we get home, we'll watch tv, and I'll cook some of the things you like. Do. you like steak?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 02, 2015, 09:44:00 PM**

Soren swore as he was thrown roughly against the floor of the truck. Each jolt slammed him painfully against the hard metal. Judging from the strong oily smell, the truck apparently used to belong to an algal oil company. And the harsh bumps indicated that the drivers were heading out of Seryet City.

He recalled what had happened previously...

While two of the frame-flyers were busy keeping the bounty hunters occupied, the remaining frame-flyer grabbed Soren and flew off into the smoggy Seryet sky.

An explosion and screaming behind him indicated that grenades had been thrown and the bounty hunters gravely wounded if not killed.

Soon, they arrived at the outskirts of Seryet. A beat-up truck -- its high-torque electric motors humming -- was idling near an abandoned laboratory. Faded signs indicated that the now defunct biotech company Drosha Genetics once owned this property.

Soren was then roughly thrown into the back of the truck.

Soren slammed against the front of the truck's cab wen it lurched to a halt. He blinked as harsh white LED light bathed the dark interior of the truck. Two burly men -- one a Bison and the other, a Gaboon Viper -- grabbed him and dragged him along the smooth concrete floor. He gasped as he recognized the cracked gear emblem on the wall.

He was inside a Purifier base.

The Human had little time to ponder this when he was thrown into a cell, the net removed and the door locked behind him.

Before the Purifier sent another electrical charge through Lily, one of his associates tapped him on the shoulder.

"Excuse me, but we have just captured Soren Almaya. He is currently in cell 041."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 03, 2015, 12:23:51 PM**

The other guard looked at the one that spoke up. "Really, man? In front of the prisoner? *I know,* I've got a mic too. We're doing psychological torture here, remember?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 04, 2015, 04:39:44 PM**

Axel gaped at Lily as the two guards conversed. "Psychological... what?! Lily... what the *fuck's* going on?!" His face crumpling, he backed away, his chained hands held up in a pathetic effort at defense.

"All of them? They're *all* living at the same place? With armed guards? Interesting..." There was a rustle of paper over the speaker in Emilena's cell. "Thanks for cooperating, we really appreciate it. Would you mind holding on for a minute?"

The speaker went silent for a moment. After a while, footsteps echoed in the corridor, and the slot in Emilena's cell door screeched open. A tiny chunk of red crayon was pushed through the gap, and the slot was slammed shut again.

"Apparently we aren't allowed to give you paper. In case you manage to fold it up into something sharp," the voice commented. "Draw the map on the wall though, we can see it through the camera. And make it as *detailed* as you can. We'd be really grateful if we knew the easiest way to find the rest of them. Be as quick as you can, okay? I'll be back in... well, soon." The voice cut off, and the same noise started blaring through the speaker, this time slightly louder than before.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 04, 2015, 07:32:06 PM**

Lily sighed. "I swear to god..." Getting to her feet, she grabbed the car battery out of the first guard's hand and stabbed him with it. She rolled her eyes. "If we're committing to looking like amateurs let's go all the way."

The second guard nodded in agreement, but his look quickly turned aghast when she approached him next. "Hey wait I--*Aaaaughh!!!*"

Emotionlessly Lily waited for several seconds, then dropped the battery heavily on the ground next to his collapsed figure. "Feel free to keep interrogating, clearly it's why we hired you," she said over her shoulder as she left the cell. "I'm visiting Dr. Almaya..."

Emilena grasped the crayon and quickly grabbed a big lumpy circle; thanks to the handcuffs and her physical health she wasn't exactly in the artistic mood. "You listening? This thing is Lanthae." Another cirle further away. "Seryet. Corona is that way," she drew an arrow with a C pointing north. Then she drew a star on the unlabeled wastelands south of Lanthae. "The Scorched Desert. I'm not going to be able to get you GPS coordinates or something but it's roughly two hours' walk out of the Lanthae Forest. Stupid little algae farm but the owners have rediculous amounts of Scorched War weaponry stockpiled."

She highly doubted they'd actually follow any of this, but it was worth a shot. If the stars aligned for once in her life she could live long enough to see her parents killed.

Flora rolled her eyes and crossed her arms. It was clear arguing with these people wasn't going to work; in hindsight she's not sure why she kept it up for as long as she did. She couldn't say for sure, but part of her was secretly suspecting that they were hitting on her...

That can't be right though...they're old women and I'm way out of their league... She glanced suspiciously at the Golden retriever sitting beside her. *Still, I'd better look out for myself...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 04, 2015, 11:05:57 PM**

Shirley you neeed to relax. " Marie said Here let me let me open your mind- and yiour mOyuth ' marie set her burger down then leaned forward and kissed Flora smack on the lips. Marie felt the young folf tense, from the surprise move. she intended to keep the kiss brief, and did so. the kiss lasted only 5 seconds, but 3 of those second marie pushed her tongue into Floras mouth.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 05, 2015, 03:04:32 PM**

(Purifier Base)

Soren paced around the cell, fuming. He looked around the cell. There was nothing in there he could use as a weapon. The toilet/sink and bed were all bolted to the floor with massive bolts that looked like the ones used to secure elevated walkways to their support pilings.

They had taken the net too, so he could throw it at his attackers. All he had were the clothes on his back.

Wait, *the clothes on his back*?

Soren immediately took off his windbreaker and set it on the bed as a makeshift sheet. Now all he had to do was throw it over the guard's head and start swinging. Pretending to be asleep, he lay down on the bed.

(Seryet City)

Uziel looked at the clock on the wall. It had been four hours since Soren had seen the. Doctor Schatten had already left for work at Hewlett-Case Industrial Electronics Recycling.

The man sighed and turned on a *telenova*. He sat on the couch and opened a bag of plantain chips and a bottle of cola.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 07, 2015, 01:53:56 AM**

Flora turned beet red and her eyes bulged. For five seconds her muscles completely locked up as her brain struggled to comprehend how badly her personal space had just been violated. Then her motor control reasserted itself and she pushed the older woman off angrily. "*WHAT THE....WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING???*" she shrieked at the top of her lungs, her voice cracking and growing painfully shrill. "Are you all completely fucking insane???? Get the hell away from me!"

In desperation she slammed her fist as hard as she could into the window, succeeding only in bruising her knuckle. Desperately she repeatedly slammed the door handle and started screaming. "*Somebody help!*" she screamed futilely at the empty cityscape. "*Please!* Just get me out of here!"

The door to Soren's cell opened and Lily walked in. "Soren?" she asked softly. Gone was the commanding attitude she'd adapted briefly before leaving Axel's cell; once again she was meek and bashful like the woman they'd known in Lanthae.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 07, 2015, 08:53:27 AM**

Marie grabbed Flora by the shoulders and turned her around " For gawds sake Shirley, it was a freaking kiss! Its not like I groped your breasts or undid your pants and sucked on your dick! You've done much more with your groupies, and we have the internet videos to prove it. theres plenty of videos of you having lesbian sex with other girls, of all 3 varieties- vag, oral and anal, and theres plenty more videos of you sucking male dick- type in " I got blown by DJ' on the computer, and the number of videos top 2000 and the views top 20 million.I do hope you've tested yourself to make sure you didnt catch an STD from any of that> " shes clean, Bailey makes her undergo monthly STD tests, the last one they did this month was clean " Rose said. Btw , the purifiers will almost certainly go after your groupies Shirley, if they havent started already. so in truth, you're stuck with us for the foreseeable future, theres no one else you can run to that the Purifiers wont soon find out about and hunt down and kill. you might as well just come out as lesbian Shirley, because that the only kind of sex you'll be getting for the foreseeable future, and theres only 3 women you can safely get that from - us. and for the record, we're NOT that much older than you. we're all in our early 20s.'
- shes in 'pouting superstar ' mode ' Marita said as she turned down the road that led to their apartment " oh, and about that friend of yours Daryl ' she showed flora her phone which showcased a still image of a dead body lying in a pool of blood, he had been shot in the head execution style ' The Purifiers already got to him."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 07, 2015, 03:31:34 PM**

Axel's face was frozen in horror. "What the hell... What do you mean you hired them?! Lily!" As she walked out of the cell without sparing him a glance, his shackled hands tightened into fists. "*Lily!*"

Nothing. As the door creaked shut behind her, Axel backed away until his bare back hit the cold concrete of the cell's rear wall, the weight of confusion and despair weighing heavily on his shoulders. As the guards looked at him, Axel glared back, his face twisting into a grimace. Naked, battered and chained up, he bunched his trembling fists and gritted his teeth. "Come on then," he snarled. "Come on you *fucks*..."

"That's really useful Miss Echo. You're being so helpful," the voice said, interrupting the buzzing. "They're all the way out there, huh? That really is something. Oh, but you know what would *really* help us out though - if you drew what these weapons you mentioned look like. We'd need to know what we're walking into, wouldn't we? And make it as detailed as you can."

The buzzing returned, twice as loud.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 07, 2015, 04:09:22 PM**

Soren was still feigning sleep. The voice sounded exactly like Lily but he wouldn't put it past them to use trickery.

He carefully cracked one eye open. Internally, he gasped. It *was* Lily! Or at least it appeared to be.

Thankfully, if it was doppelganger of her, the fake didn't appear to be armed so he could easily take her in a fight.

Chancing a discovery, he sat up and looked at the woman.

"Lily, wha--. Where's Axel?" he asked. "And how did you get into my cell?"

He looked at the cell door; it had been retracted into the floor and there appeared to be no one else around except Lily and himself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 07, 2015, 05:30:40 PM**

Flora was about to protest the girls assumption that all those online videos were her, not to mention the assumption that you can have your way with somebody just because there's evidence of sexual activity in their past, but her words caught in her throat when she saw a familiar face on the corpse displayed on Marita's phone.

Her head spun as the gravity of her situation finally reached her. She wasn't going to shed any tears for Daryl; he was a self-centered conversationalist and he wouldn't kiss after receiving a blowjob, but if his association with her was tenuous enough to be worthy of murder, then she really was as big a target as Bailey had been claiming. She felt a cold tightness grip her entire body as she stared at the aftereffect of a hate crime that could just as easily included her if she'd reached Daryl's house.

"Soren, I..." Lily's lip trembled, and she cowed her shoulders in a clear sign of submission. "I'm sorry...I think they found you because of me." She looked at him with wide tear-streaked eyes. "I was told to get you to tell where Marita is..." She hiccuped nervously, sparing a single terrified glance back at the door. "They're gonna kill me Soren...please don't let them kill me..."

"Oh for fuck's sake, you're just entertaining yourself now!" Emilena threw her red crayon at the vague area on the ceiling where the voice kept coming from. "Like bloody hell you need the damn arsenal!" she shouted, burying her ears in her elbows as the piercing shrill returned abruptly. "Just bomb it from a goddamn airplane! I've never even *been there* so how the hell am I supposed to know what outdated ordnance a couple of Scorched War veterans have stockpiled?"

Her shouting and cursing degenerated into unintelligible cries of anguish as the ringing in her ears grew to deafening levels; she doubted she'd even be able to hear the voice when next it spoke. Dropping to her knees, she buried her face into the stone floor, eyes squeezed shut and teeth gritted.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 07, 2015, 05:59:23 PM**

Soren hugged the grief-stricken woman. "No. Some fuckers with a sick sense of humor put a bounty on all of us. I just got caught by a bunch of bounty hunters. You're completely innocent in my capture."

He then stared at the open cell door and gently lifted up Lily's chin with his right hand. "Now, are you going to sit around moping or are you going to escape and make these fuckers pay?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 10, 2015, 03:34:43 PM**

Lily's knees shook, and she hugged the human desperately. "You...you don't know what they've done to me," she stammered, voice cracking. "I..."

"--All right, that's enough." Two guards made their presences known at the doorway. "Time's up. Get him moving."

Lily's eyes flashed. "God damn! Will none of you give me a chance to actually *work*?" she protested in exasperation.

"Boss is saying bully to the others, we've got the ones we really want." The purifer pointed a rifle at Soren. "If you'll come with me, doctor. Rose, get out of here."

The dark-skinned female balled her fists and narrowed her eyes but acquiescently made to go.

"*Marita!*" a figure shoutedfrom the parking lot when she saw the SUV pulling up to the apartment complex. Lily appeared outside their window, gasping in relief. "Thank god you still live here!"

She paused outside the shotgun window to catch her breath. "They've got Emilena, and I think they've got some of the others too!" she exclaimed as soon as she could get the words out. "The purifiers!"

The guards looked at Axel. "Uhhhhhh...so we got new orders now," the first said to the second.

"I *still have a mic Adrian*!" the other shot back. "*I know!*"

"They want you in one of the interrogation rooms," the first switched the object of his focus to Axel. "You can, uh, put this on." He went and grabbed a prison jumpsuit from the hallway and threw it to the rat. "But be snappy, boss thinks we've wasted enough time already. Or we'll, like, torture you or something."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 10, 2015, 05:08:14 PM**

Marita sighed as Flora reaction made it clear that was indeed Daryl. Look once we get home.. she stopped as lily appeared at her window. "LILY? alright.. lets head inside. Rose get the food, and bring it in."

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Marita parked the van,got out and pointed lily to the front door . " Go inside. once we're all in you can tell us everything, including what you've been up since Lanthae." She went to the door unlocked it and let Lily in first, then held the door open for the others.
marie helped steady lily as she helped the folf inside the building, followed by Rose carried the bags from Nixons, the food was still reasonably warm, a few seconds in the microwave would make everything hot. Once Rose entered, Marita followed and relocked the door.

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Rose pulled out the food and set them on the kitchen table " Lily this is Shirley, we're taking care of her for awhile- her folks are in deep with the mob and they needed a safe haven for her, while they work out a debt repayment plan.' Marita said ' Shirley this is Lily shes an old friend from Lanthae. Ok Lily start at the beginning. First off, what have you been up to these past few months? and Second, how many of the old group do they have? Help yourself to the food, we got stuff from Nixons. I'm sure you're hungry. we can talk while we eat. Rose, go around the house and close and lock all the windows and close the curtains.
marie guided Flora to the loveseat in the tv room and let her get on the couch " I'm sorry about your friend ' Marie said. ' but now do you see what we mean? the Purifiers dont mess around."

bastille and Louvre sat at the dressing room mirrors working at getting changed into their costumes ' not much in the script for us ' Louvre said as she glued on a wing. ' we're attendants sister we're in the background, holding oberons scepter or Titanias crown for them. still its a role that pays and is not an understudy role' bastille said to her twin. ' just be grateful we're getting paid for this.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 10, 2015, 06:27:03 PM**

The buzzing noise in Emilena's cell abruptly stopped. "Alright, alright. You got me," the voice conceded. "Just having a bit of fun, nothing wrong with that." There was a sudden clack as the lock in the cell door was released, and the heavy metal structure suddenly swung open. A solid-looking, grim faced man stood on the other side, holding a crumpled grey jumpsuit. Without a word, he tossed the bundle in then stepped back into the hallway, keeping his staring eyes fixed on her.

"Alright, get dressed," the voice continued. "There's someone who wants to have a talk with you. Just follow your... escort down the corridor to your left. And don't worry, this isn't a trick. I promise. By the way, Miss Echo," the voice added. "I'm impressed with your artwork. The strokes are a bit amateur, but I could feel the emotion behind it."

Out in the corridor, the man made an impatient *hurry up* gesture with his hand.

Axel jerked back when the guard threw the clothing in his direction. When he saw they weren't moving in closer themselves, he slowly crouched and picked up the jumpsuit, gingerly holding it out to check it for anything... unusual. After a second, he slowly slipped it on, his aching joints making him clumsy.

When it was on, he stared at the guards, unsure. *Not like staying here's doing me any good...* Cautiously, he made for the door, edging past the guards and stepping out into the corridor beyond. He looked up and down - the long straight corridor seemed empty initially, until he noticed a man standing outside a cell much further down on his right, apparently waiting for someone to come out. "What the hell..." he muttered, starting to follow the two men.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 10, 2015, 06:42:04 PM**

Emilena glared back. "Clearly you geniuses thought of everything...except how am I supposed to put on a jumpsuit wearing handcuffs?"

When the man was not prompt to assist or give her privacy she succeeded in awkwardly getting her legs into the proper holes and holding the rest up with her hands. Staggering out of the cell, she noticed a scrawny rat in a similar state to her own. "Axel?" *Crap, good thing Lily's not here...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 12, 2015, 04:33:17 PM**

Soren leapt back as if from an electric shock. His head spun...Lily was now going by the name of "Rose" and apparently in league with the Purifiers!

All he could think of was that they had drugged and brainwashed her. He defiantly crossed his arms and stared at the two armed guards. "First tell me what you cocksuckers did to Lily and then I *might* consider cooperating."

Anne's body was wracked by noticable muscle twitches as she began to enter withdrawal. The two guards watching through the heavy bulletproof corundum window seemed completely uninterested in the mare. A dark stain at the front of her pants indicated that the withdrawal had caused her to lose control of her bladder.

"I need the drugs!" she shouted, pounding her fist against the window.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 13, 2015, 04:42:35 PM**

Axel started to take a step in the direction the guards were pointing him, but when he heard his name being called out by a familiar voice, he stopped and turned awkwardly. He blinked when he recognised the fox who was being led towards him. "Em... Emilena?" He thought he'd seen the last of her after their escape from Lanthae. He groaned internally. *Me, Emilena, Soren... They're rounding us all up. But if they were gonna kill us, why haven't they done it already?* He noticed the state of her hand, and opened his mouth to speak. "Your hand-" He was cut off by a hard shove from one of the guards. Wincing, he started limping down the corridor, turning a bruised face to look at her over his shoulder as he walked.

"Feels like we're back to fucking square one, huh?" he spat bitterly. "Just like old times." *What the hell have they done to Lily... maybe she's just... acting...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 16, 2015, 06:49:14 PM**

"Excuse me?" exclaimed Flora. "GET RID OF HER! Who the hell is she? What were you *just saying* about trusting nobody?"

Lily looked at Shirley. "I'm an old friend of theirs."

"Good for you, now get the hell out of the house!" Flora stabbed her finger at the door. She looked accusatorily at Marita. "If you meant *any* of the stuff you said about safety you'll kick her out NOW."

The guard chuckled at Soren's line. "Her? We didn't do nothing to her; she joined us."

He beckoned. "Boss wanted you a minute ago. It's gonna get more unpleasant for both of us the longer you take. And don't worry, it's all good stuff for you. You'll like it." He grinned deceptively sincerely. "You may find today's actually your lucky day."

Emilena started when a familiar face greeted her in the hall, in a similar state to her own. "Axel! I..." Her reply died in her throat. The rat looked awful. It wasn't just his fresh bruises; his lankiness had morphed from that of an awkward teenager to the taut rigidity of a recovering trauma victim. Were it not for the familiar inflections of his speech she might not have recognized him.

Despite the fact that he was now the closest thing she had to an ally, she couldn't look him in the eye. For the past X months her memories of him had been tainted with Lily's endless gripes and twisted retellings slandering Axel's character and actions. Of course her words were to be taken with more than a grain of salt, but even as Emilena met the rat's eye she couldn't help but notice a calculated hardness, a sign that he wasn't the naive youth she'd worked with in Lanthae. She realized that he was expecting an answer.

"I'm sorry they got you too..." she finally replied darkly. Of all the old crew he had done the best job of keeping his name and face under wraps. If anyone had had a real shot of slipping under the Purifier's radar, it was him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 16, 2015, 08:08:21 PM**

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we never said 'trust No one', Flora, we said you have to trust us. We've known Lily for awhile, she was one of our friends back in Lanthae before.. well before things all went to pot there . we 're simply catching up..at least in part. the Purifiers have some of our friends, yes the same lot that killed Daryl. Look, just eat some food, i'm not sure when you ate last, but best get something in you. now i dont think any of our friends know where we currently live, with the exception of lily here, so the purifiers arent going to be bursting through that door at least not right away' however with technology being what it is, it will only be a matter of time before they find us..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 19, 2015, 04:33:27 PM**

"What do you mean its only a matter of time until they find you?" Flora's eyes bugged. "I thought *nobody* knew you lived here! Does Bailey know you've got a history of fighting the Purifiers? You better not be thinking of--"

"-Look, kid," Lily cut in. "Could you go wait somewhere else? The grown-ups are talking." She rubbed her temples in frustration.

"Excuse me?" Flora looked at her aghast. "Look, I'll take lip from *them* because my...dad's forcing me to, but I don't care how far back you go with them, I'm not letting you tell me what to do."

Lily's eyes narrowed. She stood up and approached the fuchsia youth, who started looking uncomfortable and backing up to the nearest wall. "Listen to me, you pink little twit," she snarled in the folf's face. "I'm asking nicely. We're dealing with people who *don't* ask nicely. We're dealing with people who do *this*." Suddenly her hand shot out and crushed Flora's windpipe. The teenager's eyes went wide and she struggled for breath as her neck was pressed into the wallpaper. Gasping for breath desperately, Flora struggled to regain her footing but the dark-skinned woman proved to be far stronger than she looked. Somehow it felt as if the energy to fight was being drained from Flora's body.

Lily let the girl suffocate for a few moments before continuing with a tone of simmering anger. "But lucky for you, *this doesn't concern you anyway*," Lily growled, her nose a centimeter from Flora's panicked eyes. With her free hand, she opened the door right next to them. "Now go play with your Barbies and if you're a quiet little girl, maybe you'll get a bedtime story." Hurling the folf into the bedroom, Lily slammed the door shut behind her, leaving Flora in a collapsed heap heaving ragged breaths and clutching her throat.

"Sorry about that." Lily turned her attention back to her former comrades. "I'm not interested in talking about where I've been. Last night the Purifiers ambushed me in a doctor's office and I had to...fake my death to escape." she realized she wasn't comfortable admitting to the girls that she'd retained some psionic powers. The fewer people who knew about that, the better. "All I need from you is a bit of hacking." She looked at Marita. "Find me the new Purifier hideout, then you can go back to your normal existence. I can pay you."

The purifier attack had instilled something in Lily. A realization that she had been wasting her time eking out a living catching 'small fish', as Emilena put it. If the Purifiers want to dredge up old history, she's going to bring it to them. And this time, she's going to be *immortal*.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **Nick22** on **October 19, 2015, 05:19:58 PM**

I'll go check on Shirley ' Rose said giving Lily a disapproving glance " you've changed a lot from when we last met Lily, you never would have done that back In Lanthae. but well you had to do what you felt you had to do.. She finished as she went over to the bedroom where Lily was crumpled inm a heap. opened the door went in and closed the door behind her.

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Normal is a relative term. we've been scraping by, you see. biproxytol detox isnt cheap- Rose was addicted to the stuff for years.' Marita said as she took a seat at her computer. ' hacking into their base will probably not be easy, if it was anybody could locate them, and the army could wipe them out.. at any event its not as simple as getting you a location and sending you on your way. they've grabbed everyone else of the old gang, except us. we need to get them out as well. we'll need to locate where they are being held, and try and create a route of escape. i'll need to encrypt my hack, so that they cant just track it back here and find out where it came from. even if you can fake being dead after getting shot strangled or whatever it is you do, lily, that will only work for you, it wont work for anybody else . we dont have healing powers after all. just out of curiosity, how much are you willing to pay?"

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you're going to hack into the purifier base? when the government doesnt even know where they are?' Marie started. ' the government is deeply compromised and corrupt Marie. if they had a modicum of competence, they would have found the base by now. Hold on, i'll start the search ' Marita said, pulling out a file and inserting it into the drive of her computer and began typing away furiously.

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I'm sorry about Lily." rose said as she helped Flora to her feet. " she.. didnt use to be like that, back when we knew her in Lanthae.. shes had it pretty hard since then, evidently.. Here let me help up g lie down>"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 21, 2015, 04:14:49 PM**

"Not as sorry as me..." Axel said darkly. "I was done with this *shit*." He grunted as one of the guards yanked him to the side, leading the group down a passage that wound to the left. For a while he didn't say anything, his eyes fixed on his dirty feet as he was forced onwards.

He spat to the side. "I'm guessing they didn't tell you why we're here?" Killing them was the obvious guess, but why go through all this trouble? They could have killed him with no effort back in that alley, and if they wanted to torture him... Axel shook his head. He was sick of trying to second guess everything that happened.

The beefy guard in front of him halted in front of an open cell door. Axel glanced up from the floor and snorted when he saw Soren, two men surrounding him. *Fucking perfect...*

"Hurry up, he wants to see them *now*," Axel's guard was saying to the other two. "Get that one out here and let's go. He's getting impatient."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 25, 2015, 07:43:23 PM**

Soren sighed as he followed the other guards. There was no way he could overpower two armed guards.

"Don't worry, we're not going harm you. The boss just wants to have a few words," the one to his right said.

The Human looked at the blank stainless steel and concrete walls. Bland signs occasionally broke up the monotonous walls but the guards hustled him down the hallways too quickly for him to read them.

The two guards were watching Anne futilely pound on the corundum window as she begged for her drugs and her horn implant.

Just then, their supervisor came in. "You two! Get that mare presentable and out of there! The boss wants to see her!"

One of the guards shoved a bottle containing some capsules with a golden gel inside through a narrow port in the door along with a plastic bag.

Anne picked up the bottle and with shuddering fingers, pried open the cap and gulped down two of the capsules. Immediately, her muscle twitches stopped and her clouded mind instantly cleared.

She knew that the effects of 2,3 zotphenylamine -- namely, faster reflexes; accelerated thinking and increased attention span -- ould take some time to manifest.

Her lips curled in the Flehmen response as she smelled the musky odor of her accident. Opening the bag, she found a dark green jumpsuit similar to those worn by Seryet City Public Works Department employees, a pack of wet wipes...and an adult diaper configured for Equines.

She held the white plastic garment at arm's length as if it were an explosive device. "You fuckers think this is funny!?" she snapped.

In response, the port slid open and a guard shouted. "Shut the fuck up and get dressed you pissy pony!" The port then slid shut.

Anne pinned her ears and bared her teeth as she threw the adult diaper on the bed, stripped naked and began wiping herself down with the wet wipes. Judging from how the guards were leering at her through the window, they were apparently enjoying the show.

Soon, she was clad in her dark green jumpsuit and the two armed guards filed in through the open door. A third one stood outside the cell.

"All right, the boss wants to see you."

Anne snorted in frustration as she followed the two guards.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 26, 2015, 06:22:09 PM**

Emilena's eyebrows raised when she saw Soren and Anne both brought to their location. "Well, it appears the gang's all here," she remarked dryly. "The quack, the addict...only one missing is the lesbian."

They reached the interrogation room and their escorts wasted no time herding them through the reinforced double doors. It was a clinically-stainless chamber, almost corporate in appearance with its steel chairs and sallow concrete walls. Betraying the room's darker function were shackles built into the leg and armrests of every chair except the one occupied by a short, slightly stocky man with dark blonde hair.

"Even if you can fake being dead after getting shot strangled or whatever it is you do, Lily, that will only work for you, it wont work for anybody else. We don't have healing powers after all. Just out of curiosity, how much are you willing to pay?" She heard Marita ask.

Lily stopped dead. "Wait...how do you know I can do that?" She felt panic grip her heart, and her hand surreptitiously slipped into her dress pocket and closed around a scalpel. "How did you learn about my regenerative powers?" Horrible thoughts were swimming through her mind...projected simulations checking to see whether she'd be able to kill all of them without any escapees. She could *not* let word get out!

Heart thumping wildly, Lily shivered with barely-controlled urges. *These are my friends!* she told herself urgently. *Let them talk! Don't kill them!*

But really, a tinier portion of her thoughts insisted, *what was the matter with killing them?* Everybody dies eventually. Everyone but her.

"Just...leave me alone for a few goddamn seconds! Please!" Flora crawled to her bed and buried her face in her arms. "You just have no idea!" she cried. "No *clue* of how fucked up everything is! And it's all your goddamn fault!"

She shot Rose a glare. "I had *everything*!" she shouted, tears stinging her bloodshot eyes. "I was rich, I was famous, and I was writing music! Yesterday I had a whole life of writing music ahead of me, and now today I'm getting the shit beat out of me by your psychopathic friends! Why can't you at least give me some fucking privacy after all the shit you've put me through?!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 26, 2015, 07:11:34 PM**

because i remember that you were able to do such things before' Marita said' unless you've undergone an operation to remove them, it stands to reason you should still have them. such abilities would be useful in just about any occupation you might be in. would save you loads on paying for medical bills right? Marita said.' even one trip to the doctor can leave you broke, especially if money is tight at your job otherwise.. it is for us i can assure you of that.. we have to stretch every cred.. now.. lets se ' ok.. tracing emissions looking for any elevated readings in areas where they shouldnt be.. dfiscunting for natural phenomena like Volcanoes..' Marita typed away rapidly at the computer her screen showed an image of the country, the light area showed where power was being admitted, the darker arreas were mostly national parks.

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Shirleys room..

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what WE put you through? Rose started ' what WE put you through? Girl, you have no idea how lucky you have had it! You have sold MILLIONS of records, you'd have to go to the darkest part of Africa to find someone who hadnt heard of you! you made more creds in the last year alone than I will make in the entire rest of my life, working 40 hours a week, every week, for 60 years! Heck if you combine the earnings, of myself Marie and Marita together over that span, we'd STILL not have as much as you did in 1 year! and you know what. Lets say you manage to get through this safely? do you know what that will do to your career? It will ELEVATE it! because promoters love nothing more than to play up the ' reclusive superstar' angle! I mean look what it did for Prince! 15 years of being that weird symbol and masked character guy, and after he went back to his old name, his sales went through the roof! he was already a huge star before, but his return made him a LEGEND! Now you're too young to get the ' legend' moniker. but 'superstar' will absolutely be appropriate when people talk about you and your music, once you come back!' rose sat down next to her and gave Flora a smile

' Now I'm sorry about what Lily did to you, shes not the same Lily we knew before, but well the events back there changed all of us. we had to change, in order to survive. but as for the people who really put you through all this, that would be the Purifiers, that group of lunatics who killed your groupie friend, just because they saw him in some of your videos. the same group that have grabbed our Lanthae friends and is holding them for reasons known only to

God. blame anyone, blame them. now come on, Shirley. Is thee anything I can do for you, that will make you feel better? anything atall, just name it ?' Rose smiled at her.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 27, 2015, 03:14:54 PM**

The guard behind Axel gave him a shove, and he stumbled through the door after the others, his legs almost catching in the jumpsuit he was holding up. He swore under his breath, then turned to look into the room when he felt eyes on him. Directly in front of the group the steel chairs fitted with shackles were arranged in a line, facing a single, identical chair.

The short man in the chair facing the group was watching them, amusement lighting up his green eyes as his attention passed from one to the other. He was slouching slightly, one finger tapping haphazardly on the armrest. A cigarette was hanging loosely in the other hand, smoke from the lit end drifting up to disappear into nothingness. His denim jacket and jeans were ruffled, unkempt.

If the man sitting down oozed relaxation and ease, the figure standing behind him was the exact opposite. Looming behind the man, the tall doberman stood still as a statue, the set of his shoulders as stiff and straight as the concrete walls surrounding them, his dark eyes staring at them unblinking over the turned up collar of his jacket. His hands were clasped behind his back, but Axel had the feeling he'd be ready to spring instantly if needed.

In each corner of the room, an armed guard was clutching a machine gun, looking anxious. When the door closed behind Axel, the short man sitting down took a long drag from the cigarette, held it a moment then breathed out the smoke slowly. The amusement in his eyes spread to the rest of his face, and he smiled.

"Finally. For a minute, I thought nobody was coming to the party. These seats aren't as comfortable to wait in as they look, you know." He gestured to the seats lined up facing him. "Come on, sit down. I thought we could wait until we found the other ones, but... well, life's too short."

The guards who had led the group into the room now pushed them forward. Axel was forced into the rightmost chair, and the guard made to fasten one of the shackles over his wrists.

"Hey, hey, hey, hey, the fuck're you doing?" the man said quickly, holding up his free hand. "We don't need those. They're old friends. Old friends who were a *huge* fucking pain in the ass but hey, nobody's perfect. We're just gonna have a little chat." Rhaegson grinned widely at the group. "So we *aren't* gonna need to chain you up. Are we?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 27, 2015, 03:51:17 PM**

Lily could barely speak. The last time Marita met her, she was a horrifying murderous monstrosity who was more reptile than human. "Well, you're wrong. I don't have any powers. I'm a new woman, remember? That...thing...it wasn't me," she affirmed, not able to meet the Great Dane's eyes.

"I'll pay you everything I have," she promised. "Roughly fifteen thousand credits." Luckily in this day and age, the virtuality of currency negated any need to launder the funds Lily had siphoned from her victims. "Just find the base, and we'll decide what to do then. I don't think you should come with me, but if you insist, we'll need to find a way to ditch the runt. Is she your daughter or something?"

"I want you to *leave me alone*!" Flora shouted. "HOW is this not clear to you!?"

Her words grew unintelligible as she sobbed into her blanket for almost fifteen minutes, Rose's arms wrapped around her the entire time. Eventually, Flora's shoulders slumped and she raised her head again. Her eyes were bloodshot and her face was stained with tears and gripped with exhaustion.

"What do you want from me?" she asked desperately. "What can I do to make you leave me alone?" Uncrossing her arms and lying down in Rose's full view, she unbuttoned her jeans, defeated. "Do you want to fuck me? Your girlfriend raped me in the back of your car, you wanna invite her too? Will *that* be enough?" She began lifting her shirt over her head. "Have your fucking way with me. Queef all over my face if you like."

Emilena kept an eye on the guards. Her instinct was telling her the man in charge didn't want them killed, but these were psychotic terrorists; there's no telling how much the average soldier really felt obligated to follow orders, especially when massive bounties had been placed on their guests.

Her eyes met with the Doberman's, and with a flash of recognition she realized she'd seen him before. He was one of the two interrogators who'd tortured her with a car battery last time she'd made the Purifier's acquaintance. Specifically, he'd been the quiet one, right up until he'd promised to kill her next time they met. Narrowing her eyes, she sat down in the proffered chair and made a mental note to keep an eye on him.

"If we're so chummy, perhaps one of your cronies could remove my handcuffs so I can stop flashing everyone?" she asked pointedly.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 27, 2015, 04:59:29 PM**

Rose started as flora took off her top ' whoa, whoa whoa. Keep your top on,and your pants on. lets get a few things straight. ' Marie did not rape you in the car. rape is unwanted contact of a sexual nature. a kiss, by definition, is not sexual. otherwise you'd have lots of lawsuits from women against guys after the guy planted one on her by surprise. she didnt do anything more to you than kiss you. look i'm sure you are just having a real bad day when one thing after another is going wrong, believe me i've had those. we've all had them.' rose got up off of the bed and started walking away towards the door ' i;'m not going to force myself on you Flora. you want to talk i'll be next door. just one thing- lose the attitude. I dont care how many times girls have sucked your tits or guys blown you because you demanded it. here you show respect, you get respect..
-
Marita looked at Lily ' Daughter ?No, shes not my daughter. i've been put in charge of her welfare though so where I go, she does too. package deal Lily, i'm not dumping Shirley overboard. now i've narrowed down the Purifiers possible location to three different areas- one in the mountains of Utah. one in south-central Mexico, and one -in northern Alaska.
-

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 27, 2015, 05:14:08 PM**

(???)

Soren and Anne were next to arrive.

The Human took one look at the chairs and flinched backwards. "Oh *fuck* no! You expect me to--"

"Stow it and have a seat." A large Clydesdale mare said. She gently tapped Soren's leg with the muzzle of her shotgun. The manner in which she spoke was a demand, not a request.

Soren huffed and took a seat in the uncomfortably cold chair.

Anne looked around as her ears twitched. Her tail swished back and forth as she wrung her hands. "Look, I'm not sure what's going on but--"

The Clydesdale mare waved her free hand dismissively. "Take a seat and our boss will bring you up to speed."

(Braunii)

Braunii was quite far from Seryet City and the fact that it was an isolated oil farming town that looked like a throwback to something from the mid 1980s -- save the modern vehicles and frame-flyers that flitted through the cool night desert air.

Aaron had just gotten off his shift at the algae farm and was eating dinner at Golden Pond -- a seafood diner that catered mostly to the working-class with simple, hearty and greasy food.

The atmosphere inside the diner was loud and raucous with patrons sharing jokes, stories and discussing the latest sports game. The staticky sizzle from the catfish burgers searing on the grill mingled with scratchy 1960s rock.

Aaron munched on some beer-battered silversides -- a specialty of the diner -- as he waited for his order to be cooked. He took a sip of his beer as he read the news on his smartphone.

Almost immediately, the smartphone buzzed with the receipt of a text message:

Geasbrecht. Head to Seryet City now. Meet me by Genetics Boulevard.

Aaron sighed and summoned over a waitress to package his order to go. Luckily, Seryet City was a mere three three hour maglev ride away.

(OOC - Silversides are small finger-sized fish, frying them with batter produces something like a fishy french fry.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 28, 2015, 12:26:39 PM**

Rhaegson shook his head. "Chummy we may be, but I ain't dumb. I've seen the kung fu shit you can do." He paused. "Hey Marcus, she's the one who got off on being electrocuted isn't she?"

Axel saw the tall doberman standing behind Rhaegson nod. "That's her." His voice was low, rough as gravel.

Rhaegson chortled. "Christ, I thought *I* knew some fucked up people. And now you're worried about covering up your... tits? If that's what you call those things?" he snorted, eyeing Emilena's small chest. "You know, you... actually fuck that, *all* of you, are strangely hard to kill. It's actually kind of weird when I think about it. I mean, I could count the amount of times you should have all died on both hands-" he spread his fingers exaggeratedly, "- And you know, I just don't feel like being in the same room as you if one of those times happens again. In case you haven't noticed, I'm not exactly a heavyweight boxer." He winked at Emilena. "So no, sugar tits. Your cuffs stay on... for now."

"Just get to the point," Axel spat, glaring at Rhaegson.

Rhaegson smirked. "Patience, my ugly friend. Let's see... Goofy looking rat, you must be Axel." He glanced at Soren. "Mr Miyagi... You're Soren. So that only leaves the coked up betty in the corner, Rose."

"Anne," Marcus said lowly, correcting him. "Rose is the other addict."

"*Two* addicts on their team, and none of you were able to kill these assholes?" Rhaegson rolled his eyes at the guards in the room. "Really guys? Ah well... just as well, I guess. Right now, killing you is the last thing I want." He took another drag on his cigarette. "Someone out there is being a real pain in our balls. And you guys, you lucky sons of bitches, are gonna help us out." Through the smoke, Axel could see Rhaegson's eyes glinting as he watched the group.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2015, 03:49:19 PM**

Emilena's face flushed angrily. Having passed through puberty in less than 24 hours within an Accelerated Growth Pod, her underdeveloped sexual characteristics were completely normal, but Rhaegson did a scarily good job of making her feel self-conscious about something she'd never spared a thought to before. She balled her fists but then quickly winced when her ruined hand responded only with an eruption of painful tingles.

She focused on the Doberman instead. Asshole remembers her too apparently. As Rhaegson continued talking, Emilena instead kept her eyes trained on that guard. If she failed whatever test/offer they were about to give, she suspected he'd be the one to kill her, and this could be her only chance to size him up. You could learn a lot about someone by simply refusing to break eye contact.

"Then don't come," shrugged Lily. "I couldn't care less if you and Shirley and the rest stayed behind. I'm expecting it to be a suicide mission anyway." Matter of fact, she was designing it to be one. "No point in me paying you if you're going to run off and die before you can spend it."

She looked around the apartment. "You've got a nice place. You've got people who love you, and apparently you hold some sort of responsibility to your ward. Forgive me for being rude, but it doesn't sound like you can afford to be in the revenge business any more. You should grow old with your loved ones and leave the past to me."

Flora continued crying even when Rose finally left her alone. She'd hoped to feel at least a sense of relief at finally being given a modicum of personal space, but instead the pregnant stillness of her room only served to remind her that these four walls were her prison for the foreseeable future.

All they do is tell me I'm wrong and they're right... she fixed her clothes, feeling ashamed of what she'd just offered Rose. *They're like a hivemind, all chirping the same tune at me until I shut up and do what they want...and I'm stuck with them forever...* It took a desperate act of prostitution to secure even a moment's privacy, and Flora dreaded how they would choose to interpret her submission in the future once they get the opportunity.

Curling into a ball in the corner of her bed, Flora tried in vain to calm herself down. She tried to mull over this problem the way she'd always done in the past; with confidence and reliance on past experience to find a solution. She thought of all the challenges she'd faced and overcome; the prejudices in school, the gossip in show business, the medical scares whenever she'd developed unexpected symptoms that could be STDs...and all of these paled to the amount of helpless and powerlessness she felt right now.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 29, 2015, 03:25:36 PM**

this place, nice? no, this is what we can get on our income.." Marita said continuing to type away' hmm ' no, this doesn't look right... backtracking now.. hmm.. wow that was a false front there.. almost fell for it... gos back closer, running subterranean scan....wow.. what do you know..right under our noses.'' she turned lily ' its in seryet city, in the northern part of town.. As for leaving you to go on your suicide mission, forget it. i'm not letting you throw your life away when theres an alternative.'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 29, 2015, 07:56:32 PM**

(Seryet City)

"Well what's in it for us?" Anne asked as her ears pivoted in response to the noises of the guards patrolling the outside hallways.

Soren got up from his chair. Scowling, he pointed a finger at Rhaegson. "Give me one reason why I should help you fuckers! You destroyed my home, my career, *my life*!" he shouted.

His two guards blocked the Human's path.

"Mr. Almaya, sit down and be quiet." The first guard raised his rifle.

"Fuck you!" Soren spat.

"Soren," Anne said. "I know you hate these guys but right now, they've got all the power. We're lucky they didn't just overside us."

Soren huffed and sat back down. The two guards glared at him underneath their armored visors.

"Now will you sit down and shut the fuck up or do we need to use the shackles?" the other guard said.

The Human scowled but said nothing.

"Much better." He turned to Rhaegson. "Continue, sir."

(Braunii)

Aaron took a seat inside the train station's waiting room. The desert air was cool and brisk as it blew through the station's open windows. The faint scent of brine and algal oil wafted through the air.

The German Shepherd looked around. The train station was pretty much empty save for a few smartly dressed men and women along with some stranded tourists.

Algae oil execs probably, he thought as he took a draft from his can of soda and glanced at a Samoyed in a nice business suit.

The train station was a throwback to the 1960s with reproduction posters and other memorabilia decorating the walls. Unlike the train stations in the big cities, there was no graffiti, suspicious street vendors, bums, addicts, beggars or trash.

He looked at the digital clock on the wall: 8:56 PM. His train would be arriving soon.

Aaron finished off his soda and went to the bathroom. He headed out onto the platform to await his train.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 31, 2015, 05:15:27 AM**

Rhaegson gave a lazy thumbs up to the guard, then turned his attention to Soren. "Looks like the pot head is the brains here. Who'd have thought," he said lightly, winking at Anne. "But you *did* ask a good question. Why should you help us? Well, I guess numero uno on your list is that if you say no, our chat ends here... and by that I mean we put a bullet in the back of your heads. I'm not gonna give the big *we'll torture you until you agree* spiel. You'll just die."

He shrugged. "But I'm hoping you ain't gonna go down that road. Things'd be so much easier for all of us if you agreed. Getting rid of blood stains and all the other bits is a real pain in the ass." Rhaegson glanced at one of the guards. "Remember... what was his name... the guy who wouldn't stop crying. Charlie. We kept finding little chunks of his brain stuck on the floor." He chuckled, letting himself reminisce for a moment before bringing his attention back to the situation. "Oh, and now that we've given you all a starring role in what happened last year, there's a good chance you'll be on *their* radar now."

Axel glared at him. "Who's radar? What the hell are you talking about?"

Rhaegson tapped ash from the end of his cigarette. "Them, twinkle toes. The ones who started all this. The guys we want you to find." When nobody said anything, he clapped his hands together. "Alright. I'll give you the short and sweet story. A few months ago, a couple of our guys went missing. *Well, maybe they've taken an impromptu holiday*, I thought. *Maybe they've taken some time to find who they truly are.* What can I say, I'm an optimist. Those theories went out the fuckin' window when their heads showed up."

He put out his cigarette and pulled another from his pocket. "These things are gonna kill me someday. Where was I? Yeah, so we found their heads. Sure, in our line of... work, some of don't have the longest life expectancy. So we chalked it up to it being an unlucky day for those poor bastards. Except more of us kept going missing. And more pieces of them kept turning up. And not always heads either. We had a guy who'd had this big tattoo of a... mermaid or something inked all over his chest. It looked like shit, but fuck me, was he proud of it. A few weeks ago, a little girl found just his torso tied to a tree in the park."

"But the real kicker was what happened a few days ago, where all the augs dropped dead. It was very sad." One of the guards in the corner snorted. "That had nothing to do with us."

"Bullshit." Axel shook his head. "We saw what happened on TV."

Rhaegson wagged his finger mockingly. "The reporter that got blown away? Don't believe everything you see on TV kid." He paused. "Well, the reporter did actually get blown away. He's as dead as dead gets. So you can believe that. But the asshole who shot him? I've got no fuckin' clue who he is, but he ain't one of us. And the way that guy spoke..." Rhaegson lowered his voice to a growl, raising his arms menacingly. "*Fear the Purifiers!*" He winced and leaned back in his chair. "Jesus, it was so hammy... I'd like to think we have a little more self respect than that. And forced - someone really wants to put it in people's heads that *we* were behind this. Not that I'm complaining, the free publicity was appreciated."

He smiled amiably at the group. "Our people being targeted and now this? It's linked. Has to be. And it's got me wondering... who's suddenly become our number one fan? And that's where you all come in. I want you to find out who they are, and I want them dead." Rhaegson glanced at Anne. "What do you get out of it? You get to live. And after the job's done, you have my word we'll let you go, and you can get on with... whatever you do. Scout's honor."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 31, 2015, 03:49:35 PM**

"Wow, that sounds like a great deal," Emilena rolled her eyes. "I'm sure you're just gonna let us go after we solve your problems. After all, clearly you guys are real good at putting the past behind you and learning to forget."

She folded her arms, wincing as this sent another eruption of tingles through her destroyed hand. "Since you're gonna kill us either way, how about you skip the game of Clue and just get it over with. The chance to return to my old life's not exactly as tempting as you may think it is."

Lily pursed her lips. "So you're insisting on coming along, and you're insisting we bring your ward with you?" She shrugged. "Okay." They'd all have died in the next 80-100 years anyway. Hardly a difference, and not her problem. "So you've got the coordinates? Hand them over. I'll need 24 hours to prepare my welcoming gifts, and then we'll pay them a visit. A short one."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 03, 2015, 01:30:55 PM**

we're going there to get them out, Marita replied, as she kept typing and message popped up in her inbox. ' the message simply said ' A Deal"' Marita opened it ' hello Marita, if you are reading this then you have managed to find our base. Well done. Now, normally, we'd send someone to hunt you down or blow up your house, as payback, but currently we have much bigger fish to fry than a skilled hacker who likes banging chicks in her free time. If you haven't figured it out already, we have everyone else of your old group in our possession. Normally, we'd just put bullets in their heads, and be done with it, but someone else is trying to frame us for stuff we didnt do, like those augments that croaked. Not our doing.
We want you and your group, to find those bastards, and put them out of commission permanently. Do it, and you get to keep breathing and hacking into extremely sensitive files and intel for a paycheck, and the rest of your group will get to keep doing whatever the hell they are doing for a living. By my estimate, there are 5 of you in that house of yours, and every single one of them has crossed our paths before . attached is a form of agreement, you will notice there are 5 copies, one for each of you. sign them and reply to this message within 15 minutes of receiving it so that we know you've agreed. Oh, and tell your pop star friend that killing her groupie was not our doing, but the doing of the group we're sending you after. we don;t give a crap about pop stars, we deal with politics, mayors, presidents, police commissioners, and so on. if you, agree, we won't bother her going forward, she'll be free to resume her lip synching and non-dance moves she calls a ' career'. Clocks ticking Jones, better do the right thing."

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LIly, you had better come and read this.' Marita said clicking on the link, and printing off the attached copies. " The Purifiers are offering us a deal. they are being targeted by another group, and they are making us deal with them. we agree, and we all get to live, that includes, you, me, Marie, Shirley, and everyone else of the old group." Marita said tensely.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 03, 2015, 03:01:58 PM**

Rhaegson gasped, left hand clutching dramatically at his heart as if he'd been stabbed. "Emilena, that hurts. Alright, let's be honest here. Had I thought about killing each of you? Slowly? And painfully? In increasingly elaborate ways? *Yes.* Fuck yeah I did. But..." He took a drag. "I'm a reasonable man. Pretty reasonable, at least. And I think a little *quid pro quo* would be beneficial to everyone."

He eyed Emilena's mangled hand. "That's pretty goddamn gross. And I don't think a band-aid's gonna fix it. You'll lose that hand if you don't get someone to fix it, you know that right?" Rhaegson told her cheerfully. "Luckily for you, I can be that someone. I can get you fitted with an aug hand before you head out. State of the art. Shiny. Helps to kick ass. You'd like it."

Axel snorted.

"Something wrong, Geek Patrol?" Rhaegson turned to the rat.

"*Purifiers* fitting someone with an augment? You think we'll believe that?" Axel sneered at him. "Fuck you." The rat noticed the doberman, Marcus, clench his jaw when Rhaegson mentioned the augment.

"You think we wouldn't know how to do that?" He grinned. "You'd be surprised. And besides, know your enemy, right?" Gesturing to Emilena, he continued. "I want to make sure she's capable. If she's capable, my odds of getting what I want are better. *She* still gets to eat with a knife and fork. Win win."

"Short Round," he announced, looking at Soren. "I haven't forgotten about you. I know your workshop got blown up in Lanthae. Well, *I* blew it up, but the past is the past. You wanna start up your little business again? You help me, and I can help you with that. Actually, I already have. There's a place up in North Seryet, 45 Benworth Avenue. It's a little smaller than your last place, but... fuck it, I'm not Santa Claus. When you get outta here, go check it out. It's yours. And I give my word, my guys won't touch the place. I should know, I bought the fuckin' thing."

Rhaegson glanced at Anne. "For you, your royal Highness - you say yes, and you might as well be in one fuckin' massive drug candy shop. You want cocaine? Weed? Meth? You got it. And I don't mean any of that cut shit.You're gonna feel like Hercules. You're gonna feel like Wonder Woman. You're gonna feel like the fuckin' Terminator."

"Now you, my ugly companion. I've seen that shit pit you call an apartment. I gotta ask you... how the hell are you in debt over that piece of crap?" He sat back, apparently enjoying the baleful look Axel was giving him. "Hey, I'm not here to judge. Spend it all on booze if you want. But if you join up, I'll give you enough to pay it all back. And then some. Hell, you'd even be able to move into a new place where you don't have to wonder if your neighbour's gonna sneak in and cut your throat for a carton of milk. And you'd even have enough to find your way back to the bottom of your whiskey bottles."

He was interrupted by a banging on the door, the metallic thumping resonating through the room. "Just in time!" Rhaegson waved a finger at the door. "Marcus, why don't you see who that is?" As the doberman stalked across the room, Rhaegson smirked at the group. "Before you say anything, I wanted to give you a show of... let's call it good faith. A happy reunion!"

Axel stared at the floor as he heard the door creak open, then a muffled grunt of pain. Shuffling foosteps. A moment later, Marucs reappeared in his field of vision, pushing a handcuffed person before him, the figure's wrists secured behind his back. He wore a sweat stained, blood streaked white T-shirt and grey sweatpants. His head was covered by a large paper bag with a smiley face drawn on it, preventing Axel from seeing who it was, but he could see it was some kind of wolf. Marcus pushed him to the left of Rhaegson, his hand digging in to the person's shoulder. *Wait a second...*

"Well, come on! Take the bag off!" Rhaegson urged. Marcus ripped it off, and before them stood Kojuuro. His face, beaten and cut, was swollen from the beatings he'd sustained. A gag was tied tightly in his mouth, reducing any attempts at speech to desperate mumbles. His bloodshot eyes looked at them in a daze.

"I'm sure you remember this guy. He was your buddy, one of you... up until he put bugs on each of you to get as much dirt as he could, then fucked off." Rhaegson shook his head. "That wasn't very nice Kojuuro. But you know what *really* wasn't nice? The moment - and I really mean the moment - that video of you got released, this guy was tearing ass around the city trying to sell everything he knew about you all to the highest bidder. Not nice... and not smart. So." He gestured, and with a brutal kick to the back of Kojuuro's leg Marcus forced the wolf onto his knees. At the same time, he reached under his jacket and withdrew a large revolver, thumbing back the hammer and pressing the barrel to the back of Kojuuro's head.

"As a gift to you all, *viola*. You get to decide what happens to him. I can kill him right here, or you can take him with you. Turn him into Coco the fuckin' clown if you want." Rhaegson grinned. "So... death. Yay or nay?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 03, 2015, 05:25:34 PM**

Aaron watched the speedometer on the train hit 550 km/h. Thanks to the superconducting magnets on the train and track, the ride was more like that aboard a plane.

He took some bites of his catfish fillet sandwich as he read the news on his smartphone. Most of the news was occupied by the rash of sudden deaths involving Augments who had gotten prosthesis from Brennan Synthetics.

Anne licked her lips. The prospect of high-quality drugs and powerful nootropics was tantalizing. "Why not?" she said.

Soren fumed but something told him that Rhaegson was being honest with the offer of a new place. Before he could make up his mind, a beaten Kojuuro was shoved in front of them.

He then turned to Rhaegson. "Before you kill him. I'd like to hear his side of the story."

"Smart choice," Anne muttered. She then turned to Soren. "I agree. And pardon me for being a bit skeptical, but I'd like to confirm what you said about him."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 03, 2015, 06:23:29 PM**

Lily raised an eyebrow when she reread her copy of the email. The wording seemed a bit too familiar, and it caused her to suspect that this was either a lie or a trap on the Purifier's part. But she was immortal, so who cares what they're planning? She mentally bumped her suicide bombing plan forwards to a point in the future. "Let's do it. So they need all five of us to sign, huh? You want to forge Shirley's signature, or should we go in there and force her to sign?"

Emilena's eyes narrowed. She opened her mouth, fully prepared to retort that she'd rather die than become an unnatural freak of nature, but her rant died in her throat when she looked at her ruined right hand. The lack of blood flow had prevented the bullet wound from healing, leaving a purple throbbing mess of decayed flesh rippling outward into her pale fingers, long since stiffened from rigor mortis.

Rhaegson was right. In her current state, she was almost completely useless. There was no denying that a cybernetic hand would not only restore her dexterity, it would elevate her manual senses beyond anything she'd experienced before. And Rhaegson was offering it completely free.

Her quandary suddenly took the backburner when she saw Kojurro, the loathsomely annoying pervert who'd stumbled into and destroyed multiple schemes of hers during the Lanthae events, being dragged into the room. "Yes, let him talk!" she agreed, voice dripping with malice. "I want to hear his screams when we slit his throat!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 04, 2015, 01:22:28 PM**

Axel's initial surprise at seeing the wolf brought before them turned to disgust as he remembered what Kojuuro had done. His eyes narrowed, the rat shook his head. *No way we* *can bring him with us. And we can't just... let him go. The safest thing would be to kill him.* But when the others asked for his gag to be taken off, he sighed. "Let's see what he says."

Rhaegson shrugged. "You actually want him to speak? I had to leave the room after two minutes of his bullshit. Well, alright then." He signaled, and Marcus reached down with his free hand, tearing the gag from Kojuuro's head roughly.

"Talk," the doberman growled.

"Like your life depends on it," Rhaegson added.

Axel stared darkly at the wolf, waiting to see what he had to say.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 04, 2015, 03:31:12 PM**

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kojuuro spat out scraps of the gag, they were flecked with blood. ' P-please..' he gasped " don't kill me! I- i was wrong.. he stopped as he saw who he was kneeling in front of, and his eyes flicked with fear' " Gods...I'm sorry that I bugged you.. guys. it was a cowards move, a move to score up some easy cash. Information is very valuable you see.. anyway.. I've paid for my transgressions.. in blood.. and beatings.. courtesy of these gentlemen here. Spare me, and you have my solemn oath that I will be loyal to you all, for the rest of my days...and that I will never backstab you again.' he made a fist as best he could with his right paw and blood trickled on to the ground' see.. I am swearing, in blood.. my blood.' Kojuuro coughed." A.. blood.. oath is sacred. ' he grimaced after a couple of minutes and looked down the group one by one.

" Axel, Emilena, i know both of you would rather filet me and serve my innards for dinner, with a dash of pepper and a strong drink to chase it all down.. Cant say I blame you, but all I'm asking for here is a chance to make amends, to all of you, and obviously, I can't do that with a hole in my head.. now I have.. quite a lot of creds to my name. i can get well pretty much anything you guys could want. you want the best stuff creds can buy, I can get it for you.. direct. Emilena you want the latest hand implant from Singapore? done. you want to be a cop again? well theres a nearby city - Nusarat City- that will gladly take someone of your experience. They wont give a damn about what happened in Lanthae.. or anything you've done since. what will matter to them is whether you can beat the crap out of toughs and thugs.. and theres plenty of them there. now i know that I cost you your job in Lanthae. think of this as atoning for that fiasco and giving you a fresh start' pay is better than Lanthaes was- i checked. pension too.

He looked a the rat next. ' Axel theres a place that sells all sorts of exotic drinks, none of the watered-down crap they call booze that you pick up at the supermarket- no this stuff is grade A. you want a drink mixed with ghost peppers- or a martini straight out of Bond? you can get it there. drinks that will make you lose entire weeks of time..drinks that are so pure they're probably deadly in amounts more than a shot'. anything you want. this guy ' Lui Fi Ung- he has it. see'.
he moved down to Anne. Anne, do you want a better horn implant? theres implants now that are thousands of times stronger than the one you have. they are made of stuff thats stronger than natural ivory, that rivals diamond on the hardness scale. you can pick up a baseball broadcast clear as day from thousands of miles away, as clear as if the game is being played right next door. I can get it for you.

Soren you want a penthouse apartment, big enough to run a business from? I can get it for you. the whole shebang. its yours. Now, you are probably wondering- how in the hell does that sonabitch have all those creds? Simple- the same bugs that i used to er- gain intel-on you guys, are currently being used in about 50 different geopolitical hot spots around the globe, each side using it to try and gain an advantage. its brought me from a homeless bum to a billionaire in just a few short months due to the massive quantities of these buggers being made and bought. sure its close to war profiteering if you want to get technical, but at any event i have the creds for just about anything you can ever want.

Now as for the claim I went scurrying around town after that broadcast blabbing to all and sundry about what i knew about you lot in order to save my skin. thats a load of horse apples. i was grabbed off the street, bundled into a van, and brought here. i was beaten by Rhaegson over there for about 6-7 hours on arrival with brass knuckles and electrodes, the guy is really good at breaking bones, i have 3 or 4 fractured ribs. then they bound and gagged me and threw me into a cell. and they've been working me over at least the past week- or longer, i've kinda lost track of time. since they latched on to you guys as well i figure theres some bigger deal going on. but anyway.. i've babbled on long enough. take me with you, let me make all of you whole, and atone for every misdeed, every dirty trick, every backstab. i have the money now to do that, where i didnt before.' he turned to Marcus " could I please have some water? talking like this on a dry throat is making my throat bleed."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 04, 2015, 04:11:10 PM**

Marcus glowered down at Kojuuro, but didn't bother to answer him, the gun still pressing into the back of his skull. Rhaegson was reclining back in his chair, his eyes closed. At the silence that fell in the room, he creaked them open and looked around wearily. "Oh, he's finished?"

Axel glared at Kojuuro, his eyes radiating disgust. "You did... *something* to Lily, you abandoned us when we needed you, you *bugged* us, you sold our information for money... and you're trying to buy us off with alcohol? Credits?! We could all be dead because of you. Me, Soren, Emilena, Anne... " His twisted ear twitched. "Fuck your promise. And fuck you. I'm not the same person you took advantage of last year."

He turned to Emilena, Soren and Anne. "He's a liar. We can't trust him. We sure as hell can't take him with us. And even on the off chance these assholes let him go, I don't want someone who can sell my information to anyone who wants it out on the streets." The rat's hands were tightened into fists. "We can't let him live."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 04, 2015, 04:21:26 PM**

The 2,3 zotphenylamine Anne had taken started to take effect. A key characteristic was her pupils rapidly dilating and then returning to normal. Kojuuro's torrent of words slowed from a barely understandable stream to a much more manageable trickle to her ears.

One of her ears pivoted backwards and the other pivoted forwards as she digested the vast amount of information she had at her disposal. She nodded. "Considering that you were threatened with death and that you were just spared by Soren's curiosity, I have reason to believe that you are just pulling words out of your ass to save yourself. And I know you're going to say 'what makes the Purifiers more trustworthy?' Well, here's my response: they don't have anything to gain by promising us stuff and then going back on their promise. Not to mention, they have no motivation to lie to save themselves since they're in a position of power right now."

Soren looked over Rhaegson once more. The man stood still, no hint of emotion on his weatherbeaten face.

"I may not have Anne's smarts but you bugging all of us during the Lanthae Incident -- especially when we were supposed to be allies -- tells me you were up to some shady shit," the Human said as he looked over Kojuuro once more.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 04, 2015, 04:58:03 PM**

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i'm trying to make amends for all that guys ' kojuuro replied to them. " i know i have a metric f ton of stuff to atone for, and I cant do that when I'm dead. you familiar with a Christmas Carol? Rich miser scrooge, treats everyone around him like dirt and hoards a huge fortune. hes forced by fate to see the error of his ways, and turns over a new leaf.well, i'm like scrooge, being forced to turn over a new leaf.

now you dont particularly have to like me, or trust me, and given my past conduct thats only fair. but at this point, lying wont save me, only the unvarnished truth can. that , and you showing me mercy. i have nothing to gain from lying to you guys, goodness knows i've done enough of that already so that most of you guys hate me. but i do have the resources i mentioned, and the ability to get anything you guys could want. i will absolutely follow through with what i have promised you. i'm making good on past deeds, righting wrongs if you will. and Lily.. well she'll likely kick my ass when she sees me. only fair, given what went on between us, she deserves the chance to kick me in the sack. spare me, if for no other reason that you are better people than me. i wronged all of you, and i'
m asking you to give me a chance to make amends.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 04, 2015, 06:10:21 PM**

"You spineless coward!" Emilena burst out, so enraged she leaped to her feet. "Listen to you!" she spat, circling the prisoner like a predatory cat. "Groveling pitifully for your life. Is that how you want to go out? Without a shred of dignity?" Priming the claws on her intact hand, she slapped him across the face. "Adrian would be ashamed to see you like this," she growled, flicking strips of flesh out of her nails. "And as for Lily, I'll pass the word on, don't worry. She barely remembers you, you're not worth wasting her time."

She looked ready to slap him again, but restrained herself. "Your time's up, weasel," she snarled. "Realize it. This is the last choice you *ever* get to make. How are you going to face your death?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 05, 2015, 07:46:54 PM**

Soren showed no sign of reacting when Emilena slapped Kojurro. Inwardly, he chuckled. The once proud warrior was now reduced to begging for his life. "Personally, I'd just pitch him off the nearest elevated walkway. I'm not too fond of killing someone who's begging like this but considering that he's shown himself to be untrustworthy as well as greedy. I'll make an exception."

"We don't have to kill him," Anne said.

"Anne, Axel's right. We can't let him live. We'll be looking over our shoulders for the rest of our lives," Soren replied. He looked over the groveling Wolf.

Anne's ears pinned back. "Nope. We OD him on drugs until he can't do anything but piss himself...for the rest of his life.

Soren smiled. A cold and cruel smile. "Always looking to drugs for the answer, huh?"

"Better living through pharmacology."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2015, 08:29:55 PM**

" drugs? Kohuuro gasped his face bleeding from where Emilena had slapped " You're not giving me biproxytol, are you?> that stuff will rot your brain and.. and.. wait.. he suddenly looked around at the 5 gathered before him ' theres a few of you missing.. mary.. miri.. marita! the great Dane babe.. she';ll vouch for me.. Kojuuro said to them.

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suddenly he was grabbed by the scruff of the neck by a bison guard ' Alright enough blubbering..' he turned to Marcus and Rhaegson ' sorry to interrupt, gentlemen, but i have some very bad news to report. 20 Purifiers have gone missing, and given the recent murders, we are assuming they are likely dead. Whoever is going after us, they are getting more bold and brazen."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 06, 2015, 02:06:35 PM**

Rhaegson cocked an eye at the bison. "Why thank you, my good sir. Well, it looks like the people have spoken. Sorry lollipop, but I guess it's a one way ticket to the farm for you!" Giving a friendly ruffle to Kojuuro's head, he leaned back and nodded at Marcus.

His eyes like dark marbles, Marcus pushed the barrel forward and pulled the trigger.

Axel flinched at the explosive gunshot that roared suddenly through the room. As if in slow motion, he saw the front of Kojuuro's face crumple outwards, eyes, nose, mouth disappearing in a red wave of gore as his face broke apart. The rat felt small impacts as fine droplets of blood hit his face and chest, like warm rain.

Then Kojuuro's body collapsed forwards, hitting the floor with a heavy, meaty thud, and Axel was left with a ringing in his ears. The wolf's blood started to pool across the floor. Axel shifted to avoid it but his bagggy jumpsuit restricted him, and the substance flowed around his bare feet. Gritting his teeth, he looked up.

Grinning, Rhaegson lifted his feet and brought them down on Kojuuro's still-twitching corpse, like a gruesome footstool. "Sorry to rush things along, but... as you've just heard, time is a fickle bitch, and she's not on my side. I did like that drug idea though. Really outside the box. We've gotta remember that one."

Marcus grunted, holstering his revolver again.

"So, now that the pleasantries are outta the way with.. I'm gonna need your answers." Rhaegson tilted his head. "Are you in, or out?"

Axel took a deep breath. *I don't want to die. Not here.* "I'm in," he said quietly.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 06, 2015, 03:22:17 PM**

Soren's ears rang from the gunshot so Rhaegson's words came out as barely audible white noise. He spat out some droplets of blood that had flown into his mouth. As much as he hated the Purifiers, saying "no" was equivalent to suicide...and suicide was *not* on his "to-do-list". He silently nodded in response.

"I'll do it," Anne said. She then pointed to the socket on her forehead. "Now if you don't mind, I want my horn back."

Lost amongst the noise was a door opening and a German Shepherd dressed in an oil farmer's uniform. He looked at the gore-spattered wall and headless corpse of Kojuuro. "Shit. What'd I miss?" Remembering the text message he was sent, he spoke. "Aaron Geasbrecht reporting. Sorry for being late but I was out of town for the past few months."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 06, 2015, 04:11:53 PM**

Emilena looked darkly at the corpse. Kojurro had caused her a lot of grief and his very presence brought up a lot of negative memories, but he'd been Adrian's friend and a former ally. She never thought she'd witness his death, and Rhaegson providing the opportunity did not go unheeded.

"I'm in," she told Rhaegson, eyes flashing. "But that cyber hand better look *exactly* like a normal one," she warned. "And as scanproof as possible; I do *not* want people and their metal detectors going around thinking I'm a godless filthy Gleamer. You of all people should understand."

She perked her eyebrows when Aaron entered. "Oh hey, it's car battery guy. An interrogator who *actually knows what he's doing*." She gave a pointed aside glance at Marcus. "I could almost feel the competency levels in the room go up just now."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 11, 2015, 07:22:00 AM**

"Great! Isn't it nice being friends," Rhaegson exclaimed, popping a thumbs up. "And don't worry, your new hand's going to be as discreet as your tits. Until you're ripping someone's head off."

Looking at Anne, he nodded. "Sure, you can get your horn back. Actually-" he signaled to Marcus and Aaron. "Take them back to their cells. All of your crap'll be there. Someone'll come by and get you soon, Echo." He pointed at Soren. "You stay there. We're gonna shoot the breeze for just a little longer." As Marcus and Aaron escorted them out of the room, he clicked his fingers. "Oh, almost forgot. These two are gonna be joining you on your little road trip. I'll be waiting to get regular confirmation from each of them that you're all being good little boys and girls. If I don't, daddy'll be angry." Rhaegson grinned. "It'll be fun. Like a buddy movie!"

He abruptly turned his attention back to Soren, waiting for the others to clear the room.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2015, 12:30:09 PM**

Emilena bit her tongue and stifled a growl when Rhaegson mentioned Purifier thugs would be joining their group. Honestly she should have seen that stipulation coming. The last few days had been taking a toll on her short-term deductive reasoning.

"You know what? That's actually great. Welcome aboard, Purifiers." She shot a glare at Soren as she allowed herself to be escorted out the door. "Now we've got some real men on the team."

During the long walk down the hallway back to her holding chamber, she kept an eye on every cell one of her future teammates was returned to. unfortunately hey were all spread out too far to engage in any sort of meaningful strategizing.

She and Axel were the last returned to their cells, and Emilena's eyes lit up when she saw they shared a hallway. Axel was the one she needed to talk to anyway...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 11, 2015, 12:39:50 PM**

Anne shot Rhaegson a look of disgust before Aaron hustled her back to her cell. Just as promised, her horn was sitting on the bed. Along with two pill bottles full of 2,3 zotphenylamine capsules.

Sighing with relief, she grabbed the implant and screwed it back into its socket. Her shoes were still the same glued-on plastic horseshoes but she could swap them out later. After picking up some rather boring chatter (probably from a Purifier watching some sports show), which verified her implant was still perfectly functional, she sat down on the bed and began thinking.

Soren watched as Aaron and Marcus hustled everyone out of the room. Soon, it was just him, Rhaegson and one of his guards. The burly Clydesdale mare didn't seem to say anything or even notice his existence.

Swallowing, Soren turned to Rhaegson. "I suppose you want to establish another stipulation for our help?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 12, 2015, 06:43:29 PM**

MArie entered Shirleys room carrying a piece of paper ' Shirley/ We need you to sign this please. " Its an agreement form. the purifiers have agreed to leave you alone, in exchange for our assistance in dealing with an enemy of theirs. We've talked to Bailey, and hes told us to make sure that you stay safe no matter what. He Recommends you sign it.' marie said putting the piece iof paper and a pen on the table. " We wont fight you on it, its solely up tp you.' Just come on down when you've mae up your mind.' She said as she turned to leave.

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marita was re-reading the terms of the agreement. She, Marie and Rose had all signed their copies they were just waiting for Shirley to decide on her choice.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 15, 2015, 01:21:26 PM**

"Stipulation? Nah, more like a..." Rhaegson motioned with his hand as he searched for the right word. "... a bonus. An extra incentive." He took another puff of his cigarette, his grin shining through the smoke. He studied Soren for a moment more then spoke again. "You and the mouthy fox. You aren't exactly best pals are you? I heard about the way she *introduced* herself to you back in Lanthae."

When he stepped through his cell, Axel saw his clothes, rumpled and dirty from the attack in the alley, had been dumped on top of the bed. Crossing, the rat pulled them on slowly, movement much easier now that his handcuffs had been removed on the way back from the meeting with Rhaegson. He pushed his feet into his trainers and stood up, staring at the wall blankly.

Suddenly his face twisted in anger, his foot kicking out and slamming against the side of the bed, and again. "*Fuck!*" he hissed as the impacts sent a bolt of pain up his leg. *Not again... How am I in this situation AGAIN?!* He stood still for a moment, feeling the seething waves of anger and frustration roll over him. When it started to subside, he swallowed. *Stop losing your head, you asshole! You're in it now, so just DEAL with it!* Axel took a breath. *Deal with it... alright... Need to come up with a plan. Emilena's been in these situations more than me...*

Axel walked back to the entrance of his cell, looking at the guard who stood outside, the tall doberman called Marcus. "I need to talk to Emilena."

The expression the doberman fixed him with was dripping with contempt. "Fine. But I'll be watching." He signaled to two other guards who were standing nearby, and together they walked with Axel the short length down to Emilena's cell.

He ducked in, feeling their eyes on him as he made a small noise to announce his presence to the ex-cop. "I... didn't see that coming," he started.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 15, 2015, 02:30:06 PM**

Flora cracked one eye open, she'd been fitfully sleeping and didn't feel a need to signal her waking up. Once she was alone she looked at the paper Marie had given her. It was the dumbest thing she'd ever read, but her name wasn't really Shirley so whatever. She signed it with her fake name and made to slide it back under the door.

Then she took a deep breath and opened the door instead. She looked at each of the four women in tandem. "I'm not afraid of you," she said, struggling to keep her voice level. "I may be a teenager but I have rights to privacy and respect."

She made eye contact with Lily in particular as she said her next bit. "I don't know where we're going but it beats being cooped up in here. While out, I don't want to be touched without permission, ordered around, or--"

"This isn't a girl scout expedition." Lily rolled her eyes. "If you're about to get shot in the head, am I not supposed to push you out of the way?"

"Yes!" Flora countered. "I can take care of myself." She handed the paper back to Marie. "Capiche?"

* * *

Emilena quickly hid the chink of Kojurro's faceplate she was using to attempt to pick her handcuffs. "Oh, uh hi..." she said, recovering way too slowly to mask what she'd been up to.

She observed Axel. It was really remarkable how unrecognizable he'd become in a mere few months. She decided to keep her mouth shut beyond pleasentries; he might just reveal more information regarding his and Lily's breakup without her prompting.

"Didn't know Purifier prison came with visitation times," she said matter-of-factly, aiming for a conversational rather than hostile tone. "Did you tell them we were married or something?"

She also weighed her responsibilities right now. The chances were extremely high that Lily would be crossing paths with this team, and it was in Axel's best interest to be warned of this early. But was it in Emilena's best interest to tell him?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 15, 2015, 09:03:36 PM**

Soren gave a humorless and cold laugh. He causally blew some of the smoke away from his face. "I'd call that an understatement. The Lanthae PD is about as good as tits on a catfish. If they ain't doing fuck-all to respond because someone robbed my shop, they're trying to nail me on some shit charge."

He spat on the ground as he recalled how Emilena had assaulted him when he reported a fire on his property. The Human then looked Rhaegson in the eye and smiled. "So...about that extra 'incentive', what exactly is it? You'll kill her after this whole thing?"

Inwardly, he felt unclean for accepting favors from the same people who destroyed his life...but getting revenge on the Lanthae PD and Emilena was a tempting choice. He nodded and smiled. "All right, go on..."

Uziel looked at the clock. It was approaching midnight and Soren was still not home. The man turned off his *telenova*. Doctor Schatten had already left for work.

"Odd," he muttered. "Soren's rarely out this late and he never mentioned where he was going."

He looked at Soren's room. Going through his stuff might provide some clues as to where he went. But if Soren came home...well, Uziel would have a hell of a lot of explaining to do.

Deciding to see if he came home in the morning Uziel headed to the bathroom to wash up and prepare for bed. He paid no heed to the cracked living room window. It was bullet-resistant corundum -- expensive but in a neighborhood like this, invaluable.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 16, 2015, 08:32:36 AM**

understood ' marie said as she took the paper and handed it to Marita.' alright we're all signed up. the agreement means we wont have to storm their base. they've made a deal with the others, if the email i got is any indication.' she said to Lily. ' in the meantime help yourself to any supplies you might need for the trip.' marita ent to her computer , brought up the email and replied - she wrote simply ' we;re in. where do we need to go to pick up the others?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 16, 2015, 02:55:57 PM**

Rhaegson returned the smile. "Well now, that's entirely up to you. It just so happens that in this pocket right here, I have the answer to our little problem." With a flourish, he reached into his jacket pocket and withdrew a small computer chip, slightly larger than a thumbnail. He looked at it lovingly. "You know, I remember the days when if we wanted someone dead, someone had to get their hands dirty. Bullet through the skull, knife through the throat... I mean, don't get me wrong. There's nothing like looking someone in the eye, and seeing the exact moment when they realise they're about to die." Rhaegson smirked. "Not that I need to tell you that though, right?"

He held out the chip for Soren to inspect. "But sometimes, you've gotta make *sure* the job gets done. And that's what this baby does." He paused then shrugged. "I don't have a fuckin' clue how it works. I'm not a scientist. But if you fit this in her aug when you're installing it, then when I feel like the time is right all I gotta do is press a button and it's *ciao* Miss Echo."

Rhaegson stared at Soren, and for a moment the usual amusement in his eyes flickered. "This cunt has the potential to be a major pain in the ass for me when this is done, and you have no idea if she'll keep fucking things up for you as well. This chip could be the answer to both our problems." Rhaegson blinked, and just like that his eyes were alive again. "I like you, Almaya. Sure, you stand for something I can't stand... but you're smart. You know the right decisions to make." He dangled the chip. "So I know you'll make the right decision now."

He closed his fist around the chip and leaned forward. "So what do you say?"

"Show me someone who'd believe we're married, and I'll grow wings out my ass and fly us out of here." Axel shrugged, indicating over his shoulder at the Purifiers standing guard. "Looks like it's okay as long as our new *friends* are tagging along." He spat the word as if it tasted sour in his mouth.

After a moment he sighed and rubbed at his eyes. "Look, I figure it isn't a bad idea to start thinking what to do when we get out here. What our first moves should be. So is there... anyone you know who could help us out? You used to be a cop, right? Any contacts we could use?" He crossed his arms. "Anyone useful?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 16, 2015, 06:37:32 PM**

Lily folded her arms. "I need no supplies. Let's move now and stop wasting time."

"Its the middle of the night!" protested Flora. "And we're not all robots like you!"

Lily pursed her lips. "Nobody's making you come, girl."

"Man, you really don't know, do you?" Flora rummaged through the hallway closets and located a white backpack. "Hmmm. Could use a bit of color, but we'll fix that." Crossing to the kitchens, she emerged later with it dyed a murky purple. "Grape juice did not work as I intended. We got any bleach?"

"Be careful!" Lily stepped back, scandalized. "You got it all over youself!"

Flora regarded her bright fucsia arms revealed from pulling her sleeves back. "Uhh. Yeah. That's totally what happened. Um, I'm gonna take a quick shower before we go." She disappeared into the bathroom.

Lily glanced at Marita, eyebrow raised. "Be honest with me this time. What's her story? I'm not bringing question marks on this mission."

Emilena coincidentally pursed her lips at the same time. "Let me think. Nobody super reliable or current. I burnt literally every bridge during the Lanthae incident, the only people who seem to remember me are the ones who want me dead."

She decided to test Axel to see how much of his old self was left. "Hey. I'm super embarrassed to ask this, but..." She fiddled her fingers and broke eye contact. "You've been augmented. More than once. I was just wondering...does it hurt?" She pinched her fingers tensely, sensitive at having to ask something so weak.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 16, 2015, 11:30:06 PM**

I've been hired to protect her ' Marita said ' and keep her safe. I'm getting paid a lot of money to do so, Lily. millions of creds to be precise . Enough that if i get this job done , i'll be living the high life for pretty much the rest of my life. I'm also under strict orders to keep her real name secret. because if you knew who she really was- and you'd probably know who she is right away if I told you her name- you'd understand why I'm being hush hush about this. she's part of the deal.' once she gets out of the bathroom, we'll head out. in the meantime, i'll go grab some things"Marita replied.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 17, 2015, 07:04:10 PM**

Soren thought a moment. Sure, he'd be accepting a favor from his most hated enemy but at the same time, he could dispose of one of the biggest pains in his ass...aside from the Purifiers but for now, they were allies. *Very* reluctant allies but allies nonetheless.

He nodded. "All right, I'll take it."

Aaron watched as Anne lay down in the bed and began to think. He looked around the cell. Not much changed since he last worked with the Purifiers.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 18, 2015, 02:54:36 PM**

Rhaegson's answering grin wouldn't have looked out of place if it was being flashed by a shark. "Great! I knew you were one smart fuckin' fortune cookie." He tapped the ash from the end of his cigarette, then lazily signaled to the Clydesdale mare, handing over the chip. "Let's get this shit started then. Take Inspector Gadget here over to the med room and send someone to pick up Echo."

He flashed a last smile to Soren as he was escorted from the room. "Have fun."

Axel exhaled in frustration. "Dammit... It's not like I know anyone who could... who'd *want* to help us out. I guess we're alone in this..."

He trailed off as Emilena asked if being augmented hurt. The rat stared at her then snorted. "Oh no, it's awesome! Feels great!" Shaking his head, he held out one of his hands, flexing the fingers. "They're gonna be cutting off your hand and sticking a machine on it. They're gonna stick wires in you. Will it hurt? What the fuck do you think? It'll hurt like hell. For a while. But the more you use it, the faster it'll feel... almost normal." Axel shrugged. "You'll get used to it. Not like you have much of a choice."

Leaning against the wall, Axel eyed her injured limb. "Did you-"

"Echo, we're ready for you." The voice interrupted Axel, and he turned to see two guards outside the cell. One of them gestured. "Come on, move it."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 18, 2015, 04:16:36 PM**

Lily furrowed her brow as Marita told her the details. "You're being paid millions to keep her safe? No offense, but we're going on a highly dangerous mission. There are few things you could be doing with Shirley that are more life-threatening than what we're about to do. Are you sure you want to come with? I can handle the Purifiers myself." Given the chance, she would gladly revert to the original plan of simply kamikaze bombing their HQ as soon as she arrived.

Flora came out of the shower, her fur now fully dyed midnight black. "I'm ready to go. You old maids packed? Who's got my phone, I want it back."

Emilena's face grew paler and paler shades of white as Axel explained the augmentation process. "How can you talk about doing that so casually?" she exclaimed. She queasily shut her eyes and looked away. "I genuinely think I'm going to be sick..."

Then the guard interrupted them and she quickly assumed a more dignified pose. "Feel free to stick around while I'm gone Axel..." She dropped the makeshift lockpick as surreptitiously as she could. "My cell is your cell."

The guard led her somewhere in silence. "Ready to become even more of a freak?" He leered at her as they neared the lab.

Emilena ignored him, but when she noticed Soren was present she couldn't hold her tongue. "What the hell is he doing here? I thought they said they had 'top specialists' or something like that!" she snapped, flushing lividly. "I guess I'm getting what I paid for!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 18, 2015, 06:06:00 PM**

we're not fighting the purifiers, but another group that Purifiers want dead. the old saw about the enemy of my enemy is my friend. and yes we're coming along. Shirley wants to get out of the house, and well, we're going to be chaperoning her.' she turned to Shirley. " Just need to bring my computer, and we'll all set.' she said as Rose and Marie came in carrying backpacks. Rose had another backpack in her left hand, this was Marita's. a beep from Maritas computer revealed she had gotten a reply " go to to Mattinger Park outside Seryet. we'll be dropping off your friends there.' the message said."
Mattinger Park was a large open space on the western edge of the city

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 18, 2015, 09:16:28 PM**

Soren was unpreturbed at Emilena's outburst. "The Purifiers gave me the choice to help you or not. The boss said you could get augmented by me...or one of the guards. Since I *actually* have cybernetics credentials. Granted, I ain't a Cy.D. but being a certified repair technician for external cybernetics repairs is better than nothing."

He crossed his arms and frowned. "Now Emilena, are you going to continue being a total shithead or will you actually let me *try* to give you your hand back?"

The Clydesdale mare looked at Emilena. Her ears pinned back. "Be quick," she replied. As fitting her size and bulk, she had a rough, harsh voice that sounded rather masculine.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 18, 2015, 09:34:57 PM**

"Yes. Quick enough for you?" Emilena shot back.

Marching into the room, Emilena climbed into the surgery chair. "It's my lucky day, you've finally got to remove the handcuffs," she leered at the Clydesdale. "Don't worry, I won't take the opportunity to try and kill you. Assuming Soren does his job correctly."

Shirley coughed. "Excuse me? My phone? Selfies ain't gonna take themselves."

Lily raised her eyebrows. "What on earth's gotten into you?"

Flora grinned. If she couldn't beat them through logic and shouting, she'd do it through unnatural positivity. Plus she was genuinely excited at the prospect of escaping this house.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 22, 2015, 09:40:15 PM**

The mare said nothing. Given her massive bulk, iron shod hooves and nearly a lifetime spent learning the art of combat in rough frontier algae oil towns, she felt quite confident that she could easily take Emilena in a fight.

Rather disconcertingly, the chair had cushioned plastic and foam straps on the arm and leg rests as well as on the chair itself. The mare quickly fastened the straps around Emilena's legs and chest and made sure they were tight.

"Have a seat. The 'doctor' will be with you shortly," the mare said as she fastened the restraints.

The sound of clanking metal and the hum of a cool plasma arc was heard as Soren loaded the tools into the sterilizer. The sound of Soren humming something mingled with the sound of running water as he washed his hands and got ready for the surgery.

It was then he forgot something. He needed someone with access to the internet or some other resource. He excused himself.

Soren made his way back to the prison cells where he found Axel. "Hey Axel, I got pressed into doing some augmenting for Emilena and...well, I need some help. You know, passing me tools, cleaning up blood, testing circuits, holding up a textbook so I at least have *some* idea of what the fuck I'm doing."

He looked over at the Augment. "So whatcha say, bud?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 25, 2015, 02:56:19 PM**

When Soren found him, Axel was still in Emilena's cell, sat on her bunk with his head buried in his hands. At the sound of Soren's voice, Axel looked slowly up, his face morose. When the human finished speaking, Axel's ear twitched. "I can't imagine how thrilled she was to hear *you'd* be doing it." He shrugged standing up. "Alright, let's go." If anything, at least it would get him away from the attentions of the doberman who continued to stare darkly at him as he lurked in the corridor.

When they reached the medical room, Axel threw a sardonic expression at Emilena as he followed Soren through the doorway. "Guess I'm here to play nurse." As he spoke, the rat noticed the straps holding her down. Frowning, he stepped close to Soren as the man sorted through his tools, lowering his voice. "You're not gonna put her under? You better make it quick, man..." He turned to look at Emilena over his shoulder, feeling distinctly glad it wasn't him on the chair.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 25, 2015, 05:08:07 PM**

"There wouldn't be any need for anaesthetic. I'm not going to flinch." Like hell Emilena was going to be unconscious while Soren of all people was poking around her insides. But she did meet Adel's eye and, noticing the mare assistant was looking elsewhere, surreptiously swiped her finger across her throat. *Maybe one of them will get the hint, overpower the broad, and the three of us can bust our way out of here...*

The door to Rhaegson's office creaked open now that everyone was gone.

"Commander?" The woman who looked like Lily entered the room. She tried to give a self-confident air but her eyes gave away her nervousness. "I interrogated both prisoners like you asked, but others got in the way of my methods." She stood at attention and forced herself to maintain eye contact. "I would have been able to secure Ms. Jones' location had I been allowed to work alone."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 25, 2015, 09:59:31 PM**

Soren looked at the anaesthetic machine. He frowned; not having any medical training whatsoever, he decided against using it. "Accidentally" killing Emilena was too good a risk and if they found out he killed one of their "operatives", he was in deep shit.

"I don't have shit in terms of medical training. I'm just as likely to kill her as I am to put her under," Soren whispered to Axel.

Then again...

"Emilena," Soren said as he waited for the sterilizer to finish its cycle. "The procedure will be painful and if you are unconscious, that will allow me to accomplish the procedure with greater care and precision. Now I do want to warn you that I'm not medically trained but Axel can look up information for me."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 25, 2015, 11:02:27 PM**

"Mr. Almaya," Emilena met his eyes with an unblinking glower. "I once had a pound of frostbitten muscle and skin tissue amputated from my leg without anesthesia while trapped in a mountain aqueduct during a snowstorm. I'm not going to flinch."

(OOC: This event actually happens in one of my stories set during Emilena's years as a police officer. Anybody interested in reading it or my other stories can send me a PM and I'll provide the link)

(OOC: You can have Emilena wince and cry out and flinch and whatever you like in your posts. She's not as tough as she tries to let on.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 26, 2015, 04:22:57 PM**

Axel saw Emilena's gesture. He met her eyes briefly... but gave no sign that he'd understood, or was even communicating with her. He hadn't seen any obvious cameras in the room, but that didn't mean there weren't any... and he had no idea who could be watching.

He glanced towards the guard. Her broad back was to them, her attention fixed on something on one of the shelves. *No way I could take her in a fight... even if me and Soren tried together. Not discreetly at least...* He blinked, looking around surreptitiously for something that could help - and that was when he saw the small camera nestled in the top far left corner of the room, easily overlooked. He swore inwardly. Even if they took the guard out, there was no way he could be sure a dozen more wouldn't come tearing through the door. *Unless we leave Emilena behind... she might be able to keep them busy for a while...*

The operating tools, sharp and lethal looking looking, were temptingly close. The rat blinked at them... but as he did so, the guard finished whatever she'd been doing and turned her attention, along with her considerable bulk, back to them. *Shit.* "Alright, I'll, ah, I'll do what I can. Let's get this over with."

"Well. If it isn't Dolly the sheep." Rhaegson leaned back in his chair and put his feet up on his clunky wooden desk. The only other piece of furniture in his office was another chair on the other side of the desk - which he didn't offer her. "I heard. You started off well." Rhaegson reached into his jacket pocket, pulled out his pack of cigarettes... then swore under his breath as he saw it was empty.

Dropping the empty pack on the surface of his desk, he looked up at Rose. His forefinger started scratching almost compulsively at the underside of his thumb, causing a light scraping noise. The corner of his mouth twitched in what could have been a smile. "I also heard how you injured two of my men."

He stopped speaking, his eyes staring into Rose's as he waited for a response. For a while, the only noise in the room was the light scraping sound of his thumb.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 26, 2015, 08:28:27 PM**

Finally Lily couldn't bear it and broke eye contact. "I...got mad..." She felt her cheeks grow warm. "They were idiots...they screwed up the narrative." She balled her fists. "That was the scene where I got Axel to bond with me...but then they destroyed the atmosphere with their stupidity."

She wanted to ask that he not call her Dolly, but she was on thin ice as it was. She knew that he and the other Purifiers mainly saw her as an experiment more than a person.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 28, 2015, 05:25:29 PM**

Soren matched Emilena's icy glare. "If you insist. However, if you start moving around too much, I *will* use drugs to give me some help."

A ding was heard as the sterilizer finished its cycle. He turned to Axel as he headed to the sink and began to wash his hands. "All right, let's get this shit done!"

When the hand washing was complete, he donned a pair of gloves. He fought to keep his stomach from upending itself as he saw the remains of Emilena's hand. It was slimy, discolored and it stank worse than anything imaginable. It was just the penetrating odor of disinfectant in the air kept him from noticing it until he got close to her hand.

"Axel, could you bring up a medical textbook on your phone for me?" Soren asked as he got a metal pan and a scalpel ready.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 28, 2015, 06:08:29 PM**

"Sure." Axel looked nonchalantly at the guard again, but she was still staring at them... and she really was *big*. The rat's shoulders slumped slightly. *Shit... definitely wouldn't stand a chance.* Giving up, he turned to Soren and pulled out his phone, tapping on the screen. "Alright... Essential Surgery, 15th Edition. Sound alright?"

He glanced down at Emilena. This was the closest he'd been to her with most of his attention focused on her wound... and it was only now he could pick up on the *smell* radiating from it, a sickly mix of rotting meat and pus. He felt his stomach roil, and bit down hard on the inside of his cheek to stop himself from gagging. *Fucking hell...* "Come on Soren, I got it all here. Let's get this over with."

Rhaegson nodded. "They fucked up. I can't argue with you there." He snorted. "You know, I was going to have a talk with them about that, but... well, you already took care of that didn't you."

There was a pause as he took Rose in, looking her over as if she were a hunk of meat at the grocery store. "You know, I've been happy with how you've been so far. You've been... efficient. You know how to get stuff done." Rhaegson's eyes roamed downward. "And you ain't bad to look at either. Makes a nice change from the fuckin' sausage fest this place is, at least." Something flickered across his face, though the amiable grin remained. "But you attacked two of my men. Fuckin' morons they may be, but we're all on the same team. Right?"

Rhaegson leaned forward slightly. "You know who you are, don't you Rose? You know *what* you are?" His head tilted. "I didn't *make* you to get mad. I didn't make you so you could stick cattle prods up your teammate's asses. I made you so you'd follow orders." He stared at her, the soft *schk-schk* of his index finger scratching his thumb filling the room. "Did I order you to shove a cattle prod up their ass?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2015, 08:10:45 PM**

Emilena took a deep breath to calm herself. No matter who the doctor was, it wasn't easy knowing that someone was about to inject her with robotics and she'd just denied painkillers because of stubborn bravado.

Rose's cheeks were bright red. Rhaegson was decently polite to her normally, but whenever she screwed up his disapproval always turned quickly condescending, like she was a misbehaving puppy. "I'll follow orders. I'm *trying* to follow orders. I've got another plan for infiltrating Axel's team," she said, struggling to keep her voice level. "And this time I'll be working completely alone."

Drawing a manila folder out from a hidden pocket under her dress, she handed him a short and simple file. She couldn't keep her hand from shaking.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 30, 2015, 02:43:46 PM**

As Rose drew the folder out, Rhaegson held out his hand lazily, not looking at it as she handed it over. "Have you been doing extra homework? I'm so proud." Peeling open the folder, he drew the file out and scanned through it, his eyes flicking over the page.

"Not bad," he said eventually. Rhaegson lowered the file and grinned at her, his teeth glinting. "You *have* been doing your homework... I'm actually proud. And there I was, about to suggest you use what's between your legs again." The chair creaked slightly as he reclined back in it. "Looks like you've gots to get busy, girlfriend."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 30, 2015, 09:36:35 PM**

"That'll do just fine." Soren spoke a command to bring up the table of contents and then to the hand surgery chapter. Luckily, the electronic textbook had a video embedded that explained all the structures of the hand and wrist.

Using the protruding bones of Emilena's arm as landmarks, he began cutting away the dead flesh.

"Motherfucker!" Soren shouted as he made the first cut with the scalpel. The smell got worse as he did so. He held his breath as the odor of the wound threatened to make him vomit.

Her hand was so damaged it didn't even bleed as he cut away at her wrist. Indeed, there was no resistance at all; it was like cutting a piece of foam.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 01, 2015, 12:30:55 AM**

Emilena prepared herself for the moment Soren's scalpel struck home, and while she wouldn't give him the satisfaction of closing her eyes, she did choose anything else in the room to focus on. Seconds passed, and with mild bewilderment she wondered what Soren had found to procrastinate on this time. Only when she looked back over did she realize that Soren had already begun cutting the dead flesh away. She hadn't felt a thing.

For the first time she felt grateful the Purifiers hadn't fed her. Biting her tongue to stifle a gag reflex, Emilena couldn't hide the color draining from her face. Somehow a complete lack of sensation was a thousand times worse than if it had simply hurt. She tried to come up with something to say but her mind went completely blank; she could only watch Soren work with an unblinking gaze.

Rose tucked her hands behind her back. "Tthank you, sir," she snapped off a quick salute. "It'll be my pleasure."

Not risking saying anything else, she turned and made to leave the room before his good mood went away.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 01, 2015, 07:46:57 PM**

Soren continued removing rotten flesh until he saw the pinkish color of healthy tissue. The protruding bones were in terrible shape but that could be repaired later.

"Axel," he said through the surgical mask he had donned at the start of the operation. "Could you use the saline irrigation to wash out the wounds while I continue scraping?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 03, 2015, 02:09:23 PM**

"Yeah. On it." Axel's voice sounded strangely thick. His stomach was churning at the sight of Emilena's rotten flesh more or less falling from her bone as Soren's scalpel slid against it. The smell wasn't helping. If he had anything to be thankful for, it was that he hadn't eaten anything lately.

Trying to breath through his mouth, he leaned closer to the open wound, using the saline solution to wash away the blood and pus and maneuvering so he wouldn't get in the way of Soren's hands. "Fuck this..." he muttered through gritted teeth. *Another happy memory to add to the bank...* Axel winced. *At least I have another good reason to drink...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 03, 2015, 03:41:35 PM**

There was a sharp intake of breath as Soren finally scraped against living muscle. Emilena bit her lip and closed her eyes and forced her heatbeat to return to normal. She'd come dangerously close to flinching, and not even because the pain was overwhelming; it was just unexpected after so much numbness. *Not letting that happen again...* she thought grimly to herself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 04, 2015, 06:52:46 PM**

Soren tried not to look at the vile mixture inside the metal pan. He continued using the scalpel to scrape the dead tissue away from the bone while Axel washed it away.

After several minutes of tedious scraping and washing, all the dead tissue had been removed, leaving behind healthy pink muscle. Unfortunately, the ends of the bone revealed a different story; while the saline washing and careful scraping had removed most of the dead marrow, the bone was still badly splintered.

Soren let out an exhale, fixing the splintered ends was going to be difficult. He then spoke a command to Axel's smartphone and the chapter on orthopedic surgery on the hand was brought up.

"Axel, could you pass me bone-metal graft?" he asked

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 05, 2015, 02:47:08 PM**

Axel grimaced as the rotten flesh fell away to reveal more and more healthy tissue. When Soren asked for the graft, he nodded. "Yeah. Here." As he handed it over he had to admit to himself, Emilena was dealing with the situation better than he ever could.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 05, 2015, 05:33:54 PM**

The bone-metal graft was a piece of spongy titanium that shaped almost exactly like the bones of the arm. Soren carefully slid the tips into the hollowed out cavities of Emilena's bones.

He held the joint in position with both hands. "Axel, I need you to use the gun to inject the setting cement into where I put the graft into the bone and around the graft-bone junction."

Setting cement was a mixture of calcium carbonate, calcium phosphate, biocompatible silica, agar-based aerogel and osteoblast growth factors. It was designed to secure orthopedic implants and induce bone to grow around and into the implant to permanently secure it in place.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 06, 2015, 07:58:19 PM**

Emilena bit her lip so hard she drew blood. Her heartrate accelerated and she forced herself to concentrate on something else. A jingle, a passage from a book...anything the required effort to recite would keep her sufficiently distracted from Soren's work that she could maintain her promise of not getting in the way. Besides, she didn't need the sight of her skinned phalanges forever burned into her memory banks.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 07, 2015, 09:21:40 AM**

His face grim, Axel carefully pressed down on a button on the side of the gun as he tried to hold the device steady. The cement eased out of the tip and as it started to settle into and around the joints, Axel worked his way across, trying to make sure he applied it evenly. *Shit... is that too much?* He had no idea - but under the circumstances it was probably the best Emilena was going to get.

"Alright, I think it's done," he said finally, setting the gun back down on the tray.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 07, 2015, 01:12:21 PM**

As Axel applied the cement, Soren used a probe to gently scrape away the excess the excess cement and ensure it set the implant into place. Luckily, the cement also contained antimicrobial peptides to combat infection.

"And now we wait," Soren said. He then turned to Emilena. "Emilena, the cement will take about ten minutes to set. In the meantime, I'm going to start preparing your new hand."

He got out what looked like a helmet with a bunch of wires attached to it from another table. Several electrode pads were visible as well. "Axel, I'm going to map the nerves. Could you get her hooked up while I hook the hand up to the neurotester?"

Soren then threw his gloves away and got out the neurotester, a boxy plastic object with several plugs for the electrode leads. He got the hand in question, and making no one saw him, discreetly soldered the chip Rhaegson had given him to the main neural-circuit interface. He then placed the circuit board back into the hand and examined the hand further. He saw the distinct coiled springs of electroactive metal muscles. Far stronger than biological muscle, had same reaction time but its movements were somewhat stiff; Emilena would be able to do nearly everything but crocheting, sewing, calligraphy and other fine manipulation would be a challenge.

He then hooked the sleek grey composite hand to the neurotester and placed it on a stand in front of Emilena.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 07, 2015, 01:26:52 PM**

"How...how long's the recovery time we're talking here?" Emilena muttered through gritted teeth. With the cleaning out of the way, she hoped the worst was behind her, but unfortunately the coming part was where she lost her ability to extrapolate from previous experience. "I'm not interested in...three to five weeks before a followup appointment."

She looked at her new hand. It looked almost exactly like a healthy organic hand, not like the rejected prop from *Metropolis* she was envisioning in her head. "So what, is my fur gonna grow over that or something, or will I have to wear gloves for the rest of my life?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 08, 2015, 03:56:32 PM**

Soren sighed. He had dealt with some remarkably stupid questions when working with some of his low-class clients but this one was at the top of the heap for idiocy. "You just seriously asked me if your fur will grow over an artificial limb?"

The prosthesis immediately gave the middle finger to Emilena when Soren tinkered with a few commands on the neurotester's keyboard.

"The answer is no," Soren replied. "As for recovery time. I'd say maybe a week. Give or take a few days."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 08, 2015, 05:20:08 PM**

"Well, excuse me for not knowing if skin grafts were involved, asshole! *Ow*!" Emilena tasted blood when she bit her lip after instinctively trying to ball her ruined fist. "You gonna cover it in hair or something? I was damn clear that it needed to be *indistinguishable* from flesh and blood!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 09, 2015, 03:42:08 PM**

Soren scowled. "If you want your hand to look dick-shrivelingly horrifying, then yes, I *could* do a skin graft. But for now, you'll need to wear a glove."

He then fiddled with the neurotester's controls some more. "Axel," he said. "You ready?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 10, 2015, 01:31:29 PM**

Axel nodded. "Yeah, give me a second." He shrugged at Emilena as he started shaking loose wires free from the helmet. "You *can* get fake fur to put on it, but... I guess they forgot to mention they didn't have the resources for that. Shit happens, right? Watch your ears." Axel carefully placed the helmet over her head and started fixing the pads over her skin.

"Maybe we can find a way to get it later. Alright, we're good to go, Soren," he said, glancing at the human and stepping back.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 10, 2015, 03:06:01 PM**

Soren nodded as the display showed a digital representation of Emilena's brain. "All right we're ready to map," he said. "Think about flexing your fingers one at a time. Start with the thumb."

He looked at the hand on the display and watched for it to move.

"Oh, Emilena," he added. "There's one thing I forgot to mention, this hand doesn't have a backup power source. Once the battery's dead, you'll need to recharge it or get a disposable one." All but the cheapest prostheses contained backup power sources. Most of them consisted of supercapacitors but some used implantable glucose fuel cells.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 10, 2015, 07:44:54 PM**

"Awesome." Emilena grumbled. "Another thing I'll be fixing as soon as I can get to a *real* cyberneticist." Obligingly she attempted to twitch each finger, grimacing as she did so; the skin and muscles were still incredibly tender.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 12, 2015, 06:42:34 AM**

Axel grunted as Emilena flexed her fingers. "Okay... looks like the connections are all fine." The movement looked stiff and painful, but given the circumstances of the procedure, he wasn't surprised. "Looks like we're almost done here, right?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 14, 2015, 11:47:43 AM**

"One last thing," Soren said as he finished mapping the neural links. He turned to Axel. "Axel, could you get the hand ready for attachment while I get the cold plasma wand?"

Soren picked up a slender metallic wand and pressed the ignition button. With a gentle hissing and crackling noise, a fan-shaped plume of pink-blue ionized gas streamed from the head. He gently waved the wand over Emilena's healthy tissue. The wand's cold plasma stream killed most of the bacteria on Emilena's wound.

"Okay, the last thing I'm going to do once Axel attaches the arm is to bandage the attachment site for a bit. Eventually, it should integrate into part of your body like a real hand. I'll leave you hooked up to the neurotester for a bit so the final programming can be done." Soren didn't look up from his meticulous work with the cold plasma wand.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 14, 2015, 12:25:09 PM**

Emilena hissed as the cold wand decontaminated her hand. She hoped the hiss of the wand itself masked it. She couldn't ask what she wanted to, which was whether the painful part was over, so she settled for lying as still as she could. Her mind couldn't help thinking about the new neural pathways, which was causing her hand to attempt to execute the new commands. For the time being it felt more like her hand was remote-controlled than a part of her. Like a five-year old, she was going to have to relearn how to use her right hand. *I wonder if it'd be easier to just become left-handed...*

Behind all of them, the burly mare was squeezing the air bubbles out of a surreptitious syringe, making sure everyone's attention was on Emilena...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 14, 2015, 04:53:56 PM**

Once Soren drew the wand back from Emilena's skin, Axel leaned in with the prepped augmented limb. As it hovered in front of her stump, he gave her a grim look. "Heads up, this is gonna sting like shit." Steadily but firmly, he pushed the robotic limb into the exposed end of her arm, the small filaments which would later fuse with her body digging into the flesh.

That done, he glanced across at Soren, still holding the augment. "Alright, it's connected. Looks clean. Bandage it before she moves it and fucks it up."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 14, 2015, 05:30:11 PM**

Soren moved quickly, donning new gloves and cleaning the attachment site with the cold plasma. As he bandaged the wound, he looked over at the neurotester's display.

One by one, several red boxes on the screen turned green, indicating that the filaments had connected to the remaining nerves and tendons. "Okay, just a few more minutes...and done!"

Soren carefully disconnected the wires from the augment and packaged them in the carrying case. He then got to work removing the electrode pads from Emilena's arm and carefully took off her helmet. "Okay, everything is done. You might have some trouble with the new arm but the AI inside should help you get acclimated.

He placed the metal pan containing the remains of Emilena's organic hand into an automated washer/sterilizer. Disposing of the gloves in a nearby trash can, he washed his hands in a nearby sink.

"Great job, Axel," he said. "With any luck, maybe we can see if we can get into med school for our Cy.D.s"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 14, 2015, 06:53:34 PM**

Lightning fast the burly mare came up behind Emilena and stabbed her in the neck with the syringe. "Good job doc," she said with an unmistakable air of contempt as the patient's eyes rolled back and she fell asleep with a gurgle. "You installed *everything*, right?" The emphasis was unmistakeable.

She began wheeling Emilena to the door. "I hope so, because we'll be checking her over, and giving her a little nap in an Accelerated Growth Pod. Don't have time for natural recovery." Of course, Emilena would lose roughly a day of her natural lifespan for every hour she was in the pod, but the Purifiers didn't expect her to die of old age anyway.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 14, 2015, 09:48:24 PM**

Soren scowled. "Are you questioning my work?" he replied. The tone was calm but there was a distinct note of anger in it. "Your boss trusted me to do the operation correctly. I followed his orders to the letter. You got issues with what I did, take it up with him."

The Human sat on a chair and wiped his forehead with a towel. He was quite surprised how sweaty the whole operation made him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 15, 2015, 05:49:06 AM**

"Cool it Soren," Axel warned. No matter what they'd said, he didn't trust these guys not to put a bullet through his head if they were pushed too much. And he could only hope Emilena's new limb was fitted right - not for *her* sake, but he had no intention of dying here. He looked at the mare as she wheeled Emilena towards the door. "So what do *we* do?"

The mare had no time to answer - just as she approached the door it swung open, a dark haired man holding it open for her bulk as she pushed Emilena's limp body through. Axel recognised him as the man who'd tasered him in the alley, but if the man recognised him, he gave no indication of it. "Let's hustle it, boys. Back to *chez* your cells until sleeping beauty here wakes up." He threw a wry expression their way. "Then its adventure time. Fun right?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 17, 2015, 02:19:38 PM**

Soren said nothing.

He got back into his cell and sat down on the thin mattress. Compared to the antiseptically clean operating theater, the whole cell block smelled vaguely of mold and deteriorating insulation. The Human looked around. The lone guard at the end of the cell block seemed to be oblivious to him but he was almost positive that guard knew everything that was going on in the cell block.

"Hey Soren!"

The Human immediately looked around for the source of the voice. Across from his cell was Anne. "So where were you for the past hour?"

"Augmenting," he replied.

Anne's eyes dilated momentarily as her ears immediately pricked up. "Awesome! So can you show me your new augment?"

Soren smiled slightly. "I was doing the augmenting...on Emilena."

The Shetland Pony's ears drooped slightly. "Oh...you didn't fuck up did you? So anyways, when are we getting out?"

"Soon." Soren hoped the guard was being honest with them.

Aaron tossed his bag of seaweed chips into the trash and wiped his hands on the grimy cloth that covered the table on which a stained coffee urn rested. He exited the breakroom, leaving the TV running and made his way to the "warden's office" where he knew Marcus to be located.

He knocked on the door. "Marcus," he said. "Where should we start looking?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2015, 07:57:53 PM**

Loud thuds echoed in her mind. There were flashes of light in her eyes, but she suspected those were just concussive phosphenes. Her body felt like it was floating.

Emilena kept her eyes closed and breathed through a tube in her mouth that her unconscious mind had already learned was an air supply. Not interested in anything other than getting her bearings, Emilena chose to give no outward signs she was awake.

She could tell she was naked, floating in some sort of gel. She could see only the blood within her eyelids; there was a light source in her face. She was held in place by loose straps around her waist and the air tube, both of which she was capable of removing if she wanted. Her wounds were completely healed.

She knew where she was; she'd been in one before. This was a growth acceleration pod. *Great. Even more of my life lost to these damn things. At this rate I'm going to be buried in one.* Well, no point in losing any more glory years. Prying the straps off, Emilena felt around the pod for the latch; there was always one. When she found it and flicked it, there was a click and the gel drained from the pod, but the door wouldn't open more than a sliver.

"Echo's awake," she heard someone with a gruff voice report from outside the pod. Emilena pressed her eye against the crack and made out the laboratory. Her pod was surrounded by no less than eight guards in a full circle. *Christ, they're not taking chances with me.* There were also scientists monitoring her from monitors; Emilena stood tall and forced herself not to shiver from the new draft playing across the glops of gel running down her skin.

Suddenly the drain between her legs shot a jet of freezing water that made her squawk in alarm and smack her head on the top of the pod. A second spray from above her followed suit and the gel was washed from her body in the least comfortable shower imaginable. After the water drained, the vents started blow-drying her with gusts of frigid air. When she heard the pod door unlock, Emilena couldn't stagger out of the pod fast enough, spluttering and thoroughly discombobulated.

The guards and scientists were cracking up at her appearance; every one of her hairs were sticking straight out. "Like the new self-decontaminating pods?" laughed the lead guard, who had the same voice she'd heard before. He caught his bearings just long enough to jab a thumb at the left hallway. "There are civilian clothes in the locker room. Boss wants your team assembled in the hangar in the next ten minutes."

* * *

Guards marched towards each prisoner's cell in order to tell them the same thing.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 23, 2015, 05:53:18 PM**

"Right then. I see everyone's here. It breaks my heart to say it, but our precious time together's almost up." Rhaegson flashed a grin. "Hope you enjoyed your stay. Cosy, right?"

Axel ground his teeth. If he had to pick a bunch of reasons why he was most happy to get away from this place, this man's smug voice would be near the top of the list. After a few hours of sitting hunched over in his cell, staring at a damp patch on the wall and wondering what the odds were of him making it out of this alive (not good, he judged), a guard had stepped through the door and brusquely ordered him to get moving. He'd been brought to a large garage. A row of vehicles with coverings draped over them were clustered on the far end - a dark blue SUV had been driven forwards and parked in front of a sliding metal gate.

Rhaegson had been sitting on the SUV's bonnet, bouncing a tennis ball, flanked on either side by his guards. Axel recognised Marcus, one of the Purifiers who'd be going with them, standing rigidly next to Rhaegson. Axel was the last to have been led in, and when Rhaegson saw him he'd clapped his hands and jumped down, tossing the tennis ball to a guard beside him.

"Like I mentioned before, our well of information is... well, it's almost bone-fuckin'-dry. That being said, we do have a starting point." The small man gave a sly glance towards Axel. "Somewhere's that's probably gonna make our healthy looking friend here feel closer to home. There's a chop shop running in north Seryet that we've had our eye on for a while. You know, for interest's sake. Stolen augments go in, the rat takes them apart, and the parts get sold off." Rhaegson wagged a finger. "Very naughty stuff. Anyway, months ago we noticed that a butt load of parts were being sold to... well, that's the kicker. We couldn't find out who it was going to - whoever it was was good at covering their tracks, the bastards. At the time we didn't think much of it, but now..." Rhaegson shrugged.

"I don't know anything about that," Axel started.

The small man snorted. "We already know that, dumbass. You know how long we've been watching you? There *might* have been some talk about cutting your face off and seeing how long it took you to bleed to death, at one point..." he muttered, shifting mischievously. "Lucky for you this thing happened, huh? Anyway, we know that if you aren't busy being a nerd with your machines, you're holed up in your shit-heap apartment or getting drunk off your ass on the other side of town. You're a fuckin' loser and your boss knows it too. No way he'd trust you with that kind of information."

Axel glared daggers at Rhaegson, who smirked back at him.

"But there's a good chance your boss'd know where that shit was going. So my suggestion is you mozy on down there and see if there's any juicy tidbits he might be willing to offer up." Rhaegson looked across the group. "Be creative, have fun! Some people need a little... poking before they spill their guts." He leaned back casually against the SUV. "Questions, comments? Come on guys, this is a team activity, don't be shy."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 23, 2015, 08:48:06 PM**

Soren said nothing but inside he was fuming. He would have admired Rhaegson's incredible charisma but the man's slimy demeanor was incredibly off-putting...That and the man in front of him was the reason he ended up in this clusterfuck of a situation.

Anne, on the other hand, seemed to be ice-calm. Soren looked at her and wondered if it was drug-induced or if it was her natural state...as natural as could be given that she was always smoking, snorting or eating something mind-altering.

Soren watched as her splayed ears suddenly pricked upright. "You know, I recall hearing some news a while back about a bunch of Augments just dropping dead and then after that, a siege at Sky Farms," she said.

She then scratched her chin. "Soren, is it known that Sky Farms has Augments in its workforce?"

Soren nodded. "Yeah but what..." He trailed off as soon as he realized what Anne was saying.

"Right." Anne leaned against a concrete pillar. "I believe Sky Farms may be growing more than just crops."

Aaron was opposite Marcus and next to Rhaegson. The powerful muscles he had gained through years of construction, demolition and brawling were still visible under the blue laborer's jumpsuit he wore.

"We don't got a lot of time," he growled. "I suggest making your choices quick."

He leaned against the the blue SUV and impatiently drummed his fingers against the tinted glass.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 24, 2015, 12:56:31 AM**

Emilena couldn't stop flexing her fingers instinctively. It was uncanny how little she felt in her hand. It felt...*normal*. It was only when her other hand pressed into her fingertips that she felt the unyielding metal joints of her cybernetic skeleton. Her brain couldn't tell there was anything wrong with the hand. It was still repulsive, of course, but she was having to consciously remind herself of the fact.

"Let's do it," she chimed in. She jabbed her cyborg thumb at Marcus and Aaron. "Me and the jarheads will go with Axel to the chop shop, and if he can't get any info from his old boss the friendly way, we break some kneecaps. Meanwhile Soren can interview some farm animals so he feels useful."

She boarded the SUV. "I want a concealable pistol," she said over her shoulder to Rhaegson. "You're equipping us, right? After all we're all teammates here, like you said."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 27, 2015, 07:38:17 AM**

"Guns're in a bag in the trunk," Rhaegson said over his shoulder. "And if you want to check out the farm, you go for it little buddy." He motioned to Marcus. "Bag 'em."

The doberman stepped forward, pulling a bundle of black sacks from behind him. Leaning into the car, he slipped it roughly over Emilena's head and yanked a cord around the base, cinching it tightly around her neck.

"Not that I don't *completely* trust you all, but I'm not sure I want you to see where where it is we call home," Rhaegson explained. "Call me coy."

Marcus pulled sacks over Soren and Anne's head, then stepped in front of Axel. As the bag was yanked down, his world snapped to black. The sound of his breaths filled his ears, the action made strenuous by the tightened cord cutting painfully into his neck. He felt a strong hand gripping the back of his top, and then he was being pushed forwards.

Casually putting his hands in his pockets, Rhaegson watched as Marcus escorted the rat and pony towards the SUV. "Keep their hoods on until you're half an hour out."

Marcus nodded as he shoved them into the vehicle. He gritted his teeth as one of his claws scratched against the rat's metallic, unyielding, *unnatural* arm. *The sooner we get this job done, the sooner they'll be out of my sight,* he told himself. Going back for Soren, he glanced over at Aaron. "You drive."

Rhaegson moved away from the SUV. "Have fun!" Lowering his voice, he spoke to a purifier next to him while still keeping an eye on the car. "Take two more. When they split up, follow the one that suggested the farm. If it looks like he's gonna make a run for it, contact us. And be discreet, for fuck sake." As Soren was led past his voice returned to normal. "Make sure you all dress warm, I don't want you catching a cold!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 27, 2015, 12:12:49 PM**

"How the fuck can she be so calm!?" Soren muttered just before the bag was pulled over his head and tightened. He swore as he was thrown into the SUV's backseat and the door closed.

Soren began to hyperventilate but he forced himself to take deep calming breaths. He had to remind himself that cooperating with these *very* dangerous men was his best bet of staying alive.

He heard Anne mutter something about it being like her old jobs in Lanthae.

Aaron climbed into the SUV's driver seat. He noticed the pistol tucked into where the maps would normally be placed. He shut the door and buckled himself in.

He then turned to Emilena, Axel and Anne. "You three go digging through chop shop's goods. I ain't touching no augments! *Especially*, ones that've been cut out of some poor fucker."

He then pointed to Soren. "And you, since you're so adamant about heading down to the farm, tell us where it is."

"How about you let me drive you guys there?" Soren replied.

"Nope. Boss's orders."

(OOC - Soren will be alone with the two unnamed Purifiers, right?)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 27, 2015, 12:53:22 PM**

Marita meanwhile was driving her vehicle with Marie in the driver seat and rose sitting between flora on her left and lily on her right." drive another ten miles said a voice from a audio file on maritas computer which was open so she could remain in contact ' now some of your old friends are headed in your direction. you'll get to reunite but dont try any funny business Miss Jones or we'll blow your brains out as well as the brains of everyone of your little group. we;re cutting you some slack- not much mind you, but some- because we want these bastards out of commission."
I got you the first time. you dont need to repeat yourself. ' marita said " just making sure you realize the stakes. you're a smart one, one of only a couple in your lot that can be said of. keeping driving and turn left. look for the SUV that will pull up.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 27, 2015, 01:31:23 PM**

A Wolf Purifier operative rapped on the SUV's window. Aaron pressed a button and the window rolled down. "What is it?"

"You're taking Inspector Gadget--"

Aaron scowled. "Who the fuck is 'Inspector Gadget'?"

The Purifier's ears flattened against his head. "That would be, uh, Soren Almaya. The Human."

"Fine. Just get to the point!"

The Purifier's ears returned to their normal position as he cleared his throat. "Anyways, we're meeting up with the other half of the 'team' and transferring over Inspector Gadget to them so they can get to the farm. I'll be following them per the boss's orders. You and Marcus go with the rest of the crew to the chop shop."

Aaron nodded. "Gotcha." He rolled up the window and turned to Marcus. "Okay, let's get this show on the road."

He pressed a button hidden under the SUV's steering column and the garage's heavy gates slowly swung open.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2015, 10:42:48 PM**

Emilena's heart leapt into her throat as the bag went over her head. "A gun. In my hand. Now," she demanded in the direction of the Purifiers who bagged her. "I'm not going anywhere unarmed and blind."

Of course they didn't respond, and after a fifteen minute drive she was feeling light-headed from inhaling carbon dioxide.

"Sweet. Can't wait to meet them!" Flora piped up cheerfully. She was resolutely keeping up her chipper attitude hoping it would bug the older women, or at least drive home just how pleased she was to be free of their hovel apartment.

Lily was keeping her eyes out for the SUV. If she could catch a glimpse of the direction it came from, she'd have an easier time triangulating the Purifier headquarter's location.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 29, 2015, 06:58:39 PM**

"We're almost there. Taking the bags off. Don't try anything."

Axel snorted at Marcus' voice, the sound harsh and ragged from within the confines of the bag. As weary as he was feeling from everything that had happened to him since he'd been ambushed outside the bar, he wasn't entirely sure he could fight his way out of a paper bag. The material of the sack over the rat's head was so thick that the only thing he could see was darkness and for what felt like years the only thing he could do was sit and listen to the hum of the SUV's engine, his hands clenched uncomfortably in his lap.

He felt the cord around his neck loosen and suddenly the material was yanked off. The flood of light blinded him and he flinched, squinting his eyes against the glare until his vision slowly returned to normal. Looking around, Axel saw he was in the middle row of seats in the SUV, Emilena sitting to his right. Soren was riding up front in the passenger seat, next to the other purifier, Aaron, who was behind the wheel. He glanced behind to see Anne sitting behind with Marcus beside her... holding a sawed-off shotgun. The gun was resting with the barrels pointing to the back of Axel's seat as Marcus removed Anne's hood.

"Fuck!" Axel yelped, flinching to the side. In the close confines of the vehicle, if the gun went off anything (and anybody) in front of it would be turned to mincemeat. "Point that somewhere else! Please!"

Marcus' eyes stared darkly at him. His expression gave nothing away except disgust, but after a moment he lowered the shotgun - while still keeping a firm grip on it. Looking to the front as the car rounded a corner, he spoke to Aaron. "There they are."

Following Marcus' gaze, Axel looked out the tinted windows and saw another vehicle parked up ahead, a little further up the road. He could just about make out vague, dark shapes moving around inside it. Boarded up, run-down looking building surrounded them, and he couldn't see anyone else around. "Who's that? Nobody said we were meeting up with anyone else..." he muttered uneasily.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 30, 2015, 09:48:39 PM**

Anne shook her head as the hood was pulled free. She looked around the dingy street. The watery sunlight filtering through the smog seemed to blind her. She blinked a few times and looked at the unfamiliar vehicle.

She was familiar with things like this when it came to picking up drugs or other transactions of questionable legality.

"Soren, I think that's the 'other half of the team' that Wolf was previously talking about," Anne said as her ears pinned back slightly.

Soren said nothing.

Aaron drove the SUV closer to the unfamiliar vehicle. He paid no heed to the sign that read "Do not block driveway" riveted to the battered steel bar gate that was at the end of a small driveway where the new vehicle was parked.

He shut off the engine. "All right, Marcus, we're here, let's do the transfer and get going."

The German Shepherd pointed to Soren. "All right, Inspector Gadget, get out and stand by the other vehicle. And remember, any funny business and you go over the side." He pointed to the concrete barrier bordering the elevated highway they had just driven on.

Soren said nothing but unbuckled his seatbelt and opened the passenger's side door and got out of the SUV.

He stood on the battered concrete driveway between the new vehicle and the Purifer's SUV.

Aaron pressed another button that automatically closed the passenger's side door. He turned to Marcus. "So shall we get going or wait until the others get here?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2016, 03:00:54 AM**

Emilena suddenly felt a pang of genuine dread when she saw the other SUV. "Axel, hold on," she burst out suddenly as their SUV ground to a halt and everyone started departing. "Stay in the car! There's something you need to know about--"

The side door to Marita's SUV opened and Lily climbed out. She glanced at Soren and her eyes narrowed. "So. You're working with the Purifiers now, huh? I'm surprised, honestly." Her eyes glanced over the SUV, trying to get a glimpse of the occupants still inside.

Flora skipped out of the vehicle. "Oh, fun! New people!" she beamed. Skipping over to the big burly man who'd been driving, she tapped him on the shoulder, paying no heed to his firearm. "Hello handsome, care to fill a girl in?" she fluttered her eyelashes, hoping Marita would feel either jealous or scared for her safety. "Where's our destination now that we're all together?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 01, 2016, 01:19:51 PM**

Marita got out of the car and looked over at Soren and emilenas and Anne ' good to see all of you still alive. we're in yet another mess,aren't we? She chuckled briefly.
_ hi Anne Rose said waving at the mare. you guys ok- well relatively speaking? you guys havent exactly been at the Club Ritz..
so i'm guessing we'll squeeze all 8 of us into the SUV..
_ don';t get any ideas miss' the guard said to Flora" remember, you have a deal to fulfill. ALL of you. now get over there with your group' he made a motion with the gun for flora to step back.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 01, 2016, 10:25:32 PM**

Soren didn't need any prompting to step next to the van. The Wolf guard looked over the group. When he seemed distracted, Soren sidled up to Lily.

"Lily, it's not what it looks like," he whispered, shooting a glance at the Wolf who seemed to be chatting with the SUV's driver. "Axel, Anne and myself have been kidnapped by them. They want us to find out who's been killing their guys. And we didn't get much of a choice. We'll be rewarded handsomely if we help them...if we don't we'll all be killed."

"Hey!" the Wolf shouted.

Soren's heart leapt into his throat. Had he heard him talking about his predicament to Lily?

"All of y'all! Shut the fuck up and get into the van!" He gestured to the van with his pistol. "Inspector Gadget goes up front with me. Everyone else, in the back! We don't have a lot of time!"

Parked under a dingy warehouse next to Aaron's SUV was the third vehicle. It was the one the Wolf had come out of. Two more operatives were inside. At his order, they'd follow them to the farm under the guise of being reinforcements.

Anne waved at Rose through the SUV's tinted windows. She looked at Axel and Emilena. "So let me guess, I'm going with you three?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 02, 2016, 05:44:13 AM**

Axel frowned at Emilena, half out of the SUV. "What? Who? Who're you..." He saw Marita climb out of the other car, and his stomach started to knot. Then he saw Lily walk around from the other side of the vehicle, and the knot became a lead weight. Axel stared for a second before dropping back in.

He turned an incredulous look towards Emilena. "Oh, you've got to be fucking with me. *She's* gonna be here too?" Looking at the woman's face, at her eyes, was enough to bring back the memories of their time after Lanthae. Whatever that thing was back at the Purifier's hideout, he'd been stupid to let his old emotions come back. Now, when he looked at this Lily, the *real* Lily, all he felt was...

Part of Axel wanted to jump out of the car - but to do what? Shout? Yell? Instead, the rat stayed sitting, shaking his head angrily. "This is a mistake. You don't know what she's like now. She's..." His jaw bunched. "Things changed." Distantly Axel heard Anne speak, and, irritably, he shrugged his shoulders. "Yeah. Whatever."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2016, 08:25:00 PM**

Lily realized Axel was in the other SUV at around the time he saw her. Her eyes instantly narrowed and her pupils dilated. She opened her mouth to speak but was interrupted by Emilena scampering out of the car. "*HEY LILY* long time no see how are you doing?" she stammered. She grabbed Flora, who protested loudly. "Sorry Lily but there's no room in this car guess you gotta go with Soren to the farm so have fun at the farm bye!!!"

Practically stuffing Flora into the seat Soren vacated, Emilena whacked the back of the driver seat. "Move it!" she snapped. "To the chop shop!"

Lily, on the other hand, had remained eerily silent. Brow furrowing ominously, she began walking rigidly towards Axel's SUV, never breaking eye contact with the rat.

"I swear to god Aaron, start moving the truck *now* before she gets here!" Emilena demanded, not fully able to keep the panic out of her voice.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 03, 2016, 06:29:23 PM**

Something in Emilena's panicked tone made Marcus focus on the woman now walking determinedly towards their car. She didn't *look* particularly tough, or different from just any woman he'd pass on the street without looking twice. So the fact that someone like Emilena seemed intimidated by her was... puzzling to say the least.

"You know what, fuck this," the rat muttered from in front. Suddenly he wrenched the door open and started to climb out again. "So *you* decided to turn up, huh?"

He couldn't see the rat's face, but Marcus could hear the disdain in his voice. Obviously there was something between the two of them, but right now Marcus didn't care about that. What he did care about was the rat making a scene and bringing down more attention on them than necessary, even if the immediate area did look empty.

"What, d'you get bored-" Axel was continuing. Marcus reached over and seized the back of his top, Axel's head banging against the roof of the car as he folded back in, the door slamming after him.

Axel hissed a curse, rubbing the back of his head and glaring daggers at Marcus.

The doberman glared back. "Stop drawing attention. Aaron, get us out of here," he commanded, turning his head. "Drive."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 03, 2016, 07:01:17 PM**

Aaron nodded. The SUV's electric motor whined as he sped off, throwing a fantail of loose gravel into the air.

Soren wrinkled his nose at the odor of burnt rubber that wafted through the open window.

The Wolf Purifier watched the other SUV drive off. He rolled down the window. "Hey! All of you lazy fucks quit standing around with your fingers up your asses and get in!" he shouted. He looked around.

This particular area of Seryet City used to be an industrial hub but when an explosion caused by corporate sabotage destroyed the maglev tracks, the entire area fell into decay. Now, petty criminals and clandestine industries ruled the area.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 05, 2016, 11:55:55 PM**

Lily watched the SUV raced away. She couldn't help but keep an unpleasant smile from playing across her face as Axel abandoned her at top speed. *Nothing new there...*

"The hell was that about?" muttered the Purifier guard who'd rebuked Flora.

"Huh? Beats me," shrugged Lily innocently. "I'd just wanted to shake his hand..."

* * *

Emilena caught her breath as she saw Lily allow them to leave without protest. Her heartbeat slowly started returning to normal.

"What the hell?" protested Flora loudly. "Can anybody refrain from manhandling me within seconds of actually meeting me? I feel like a hacky-sack!"

Emilena didn't answer. Instead she glanced at Axel through the rearview mirror. Did he know about Lily's powers? Does he know just how powerful they've become? She needed to find an opportunity to talk to him in private.

The trip passed in uncomfortable silence. Flora got over her bridled annoyance when she realized she'd just been accidentally liberated from the lesbians' sight. *Oh my god, they're on the complete opposite side of the city...* she digested, eyes lighting up.

After a silent drive the SUV pulled up to Axel's old chop shop.

"All right, the ladies man does the talking," growled the unnamed Purifier, jabbing his thumb at Axel, "We see what he can get, and then we scram easy peasy."

"What did you do to get on Lily's bad side anyway?" Flora asked Axel as she got out of the car. "Request to be treated like a rational human being?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 07, 2016, 01:36:48 PM**

Marita climbed into the SUV and sat quietly. flora had been split off of from them. she hoped flora wouldnt get into too much trouble wnhhile she was with the others.. ' so what are we exactly looking for at this farm? Marie asked as she got into the SUV. rose got into the far back of the SUV, her face twitching at the smalls of the inside, clearly this vehicle hadnt been cleaned in awhile.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 07, 2016, 02:53:26 PM**

Soren turned to Marita and Marie just before they climbed in. "We're looking for anything that could explain why a bunch of Augment farmers just up and died while working. And we want to see if that hostage crisis had anything to do with that." He shot a glance at the Wolf in the driver's seat. "Or if the Purifiers were involved in some way."

The Wolf started the SUV's motor with a simple push of the button. The electric motor rumbled as it came to life. He saw Soren about to get in the back seat. "Oh no, you're ridin' shotgun with me since I don't know shit about where we're going. Now put in the name of this place!"

Soren obliged. He noticed the GPS mounted in the center console along with radio equipment. "Sky Farms," he said clearly.

The GPS chimed as it came up with the directions to the aforementioned farm. The Wolf smiled and rolled up the windows. "All right y'all! Let's do this!"

The SUV sped out of the empty loading dock. The other Purifiers who were in the SUV tucked between two ramshackle warehouses followed them.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 08, 2016, 06:18:38 PM**

"More like she got tired of being one," Axel muttered, climbing over and stepping out of the car. Now that he'd had time to calm down, he was irritated at himself for his outburst - if only because it probably made it all too clear how much he was hurting. *Shit... for all I know, she enjoyed it.[/]*

Trying to push it from his mind, Axel looked up at the familiar shop front. The neon lettering spelling out Thompson's Brightsmile Bakery above the entrance seemed to loom above him, and the dark windows glared at him reproachfully. Axel's jaw clenched as he took a second to try and come up with a strategy. Thompson was a lowlife, sure... but the rat wasn't sure if he wanted to be the reason the guy got tortured.

He let out a slow breath then looked across at the two Purifiers. "Just take it easy, okay? I can do this."

"If it looks like he'll call for help..." Marcus warned.

"Yeah. Yeah, I know." Slowly, Axel walked forwards and pushed the door open. The 'bakery' was just as dusty as ever. On the other side of the room, beneath a dim bulb that cast a glow onto the service counter, Axel could make out movement as someone rummaged in the cupboards beneath the counter. The rat stared for a second then cleared his throat. "Thompson."

The shape gave a gasp of surprise and straightened up, revealing the small man. His black, beady eyes widened in surprise when he saw who the voice belonged to. "Axel. Christ, you scared the shit outta me. Where the fuck have you been? Got parts coming up to my ass 'cause you weren't here last night to..." Thompson's face pinched in as he noticed the others behind Axel. "... to clean up the shop. Who're they?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 08, 2016, 07:04:52 PM**

"New customers," Anne said. She pointed to the horn on her head. "I've been looking for something to replace this old model. What do you got?" She leaned on the grimy counter and pricked her ears up in interest, hoping Thompson would cough up the goods.

Aaron, on the other hand, was looking around the "bakery". Next to the entrance was battered "baked goods" display case filled with decrepit-looking models of cakes that he was almost certain never existed in this bakery. Indeed, the only edible thing in the bakery was a half-eaten grilled catfish sandwich from a local eatery sitting next to the cash register.

The German Shepherd sniffed the air and was immediately able to pick up the metallic stench of blood and he noticed that it seemed to be coming from the back room. His ears leaned forward in interest. Luckily, his back was to the door so his horizontally held tail didn't give away his interest at noticing the odor of blood. He leaned over to Marcus and whispered in his ear.

"Marcus, I smell something interesting from the back room. It's blood. Keep the guy busy and I'll go check it out," he said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 10, 2016, 03:53:31 AM**

Emilena hesitated before entering the store. "I'll be back soon," she told the others. "Just grabbing gloves from the goodwill next store."

"You better not run off," a Purifier growled.

"I'm not walking around with my hand looking like this!" she snapped, marching off without another word.

She was leafing through the available second-hand sweatshirts when a voice right behind her made her jump. "You might want a hoodie too. Keep your face private. With those scars you stand out in a crowd."

Emilena noticed the black wolf girl she'd grabbed to escape from Lily. "Who the hell are you?" she growled.

"Name's Shirley. I came with Marita and Rose." Shirley extended a hand.

Emilena went back to ignoring her. She picked out a dark green sweatshirt with deep pockets, good for hiding a gun.

Shirley sighed loudly. "Are you all completely asocial? I can't get anyone but the desperate lesbians to even give me the time of day!"

"This isn't a field trip!" Emilena snapped. "Also keep your voice down." She took a second look. "You came with Marita? What's the relation?"

"Platonic, to their chagrin," Shirley rolled her eyes and Emilena couldn't help but smirk in understanding. "Look, you wanna be a dickhead, each to their own. You'd be in good company." Shirley folded her arms. "But all I'm looking for is somebody to actually talk to me. And I thought since you're a fellow chick I might take a chance on you."

Emilena sighed and weighed her options. Last thing she ever wanted was to waste her time on a kid, but she could appreciate someone being straightforward and open to communication. That could come in useful later, especially with so few allies she could consider trusting. "All right. After the chop shop I'll clue you in on all the details. On one condition." She picked out a pair of black leather gloves and headed for the cashier. "Afterwards you tell me why you dyed your fur black."

Shirley raised an eyebrow.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 14, 2016, 01:22:22 AM**

The shopkeeper glanced at Anne. "Huh. Don't see many people going for the exterior models these days. You wanna upgrade that to something subdermal? We got a cash-in program, you could save up to 75% of the cost."

While grabbing her a brochure from the pile next to the cash register, he surreptitiously he fingered the second of two buttons on the till marked 'CREDIT'. In actuality this button alerted the Seryet Police; he'd been selling too long in a town like this to not sense danger when it walked through his front door.

Lily glanced idly out the window at Sky Farms grew ever closer on the GPS. She didn't say anything, but in the window's reflection she was sizing up the Purifiers that were guarding them. She could kill any of them with a single touch, but they were more valuable alive until she could press them for information, not to mention it would be a minor inconvenience if one of them had the reflexes to kill her and the others first.

For now, she'd let Soren investigate something on behalf of the enemy. But she wasn't interested in forming plans that took any longer than necessary.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 14, 2016, 03:55:17 PM**

Marcus inclined his head slightly. He smelled the blood too, subtle and faint - but for someone as familiar with the scent, the sickly copper smell was obvious.

Axel winced at Thompson's recommendation. The sub-dermal augments were always the messiest when they came into the shop. Small strips of flesh still clinging on, globules of who-knows-what... gentle removal wasn't a focus when it came to the business. "She doesn't want an upgrade. Look, we just need to ask a few questions then we'll be gone, no big deal."

Thompson's eyes squinted in suspicion. "Questions? What the fuck're you talking about? And who're these people?"

"Friends," Marcus grunted.

Thompson's breath whistled out of his nose. "*Friends*? Sure, and I'm King Kong."

Shit... Axel's jaw clenched. He was messing this up almost straight away. "We just-"

Shaking his head, Thompson turned his attention back to Anne. "Why do you look so familiar? Something about you..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 15, 2016, 09:46:03 PM**

"You must be mistaking me for someone else." Anne replied. "Anyways, no subdermals. I want everyone to see what I've got. Besides, I can't use a subdermal implant as a weapon, now can I?"

It was then she picked up radio chatter from Seryet City PD...and they seemed to be coming closer. "Come on buddy, we're just here to buy some goods. Did ya really have to go and call the cops on us?" She leaned over the counter and batted her eyelashes at Thompson.

Aaron scowled as he looked over the goods in the display case. Anne was shamelessly flirting with Thompson. He had to admit, that mare was quite savvy...despite her obvious addiction.

Of course, this was a lie. Anne had in fact sold some scavenged augments to Thompson but she always made sure to wear a hat and bandanna to cover her face and the distinctive horn.

The SUV pulled up to the parking lot at Sky Farms. As Sky Farms had produce market and an informational exhibit, it was open to the public. And today was quite a busy day. The scent of seaweed and plants mingled with the industrial odor of Seryet City.

The driver of the SUV got out and opened all the doors. "All right y'all! Let's move on out! And no funny business!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 16, 2016, 04:09:52 AM**

"You called the cops?" Axel felt his eyes widen. "Goddammit, Thompson..."

The man's mouth opened, closed. Then his expression hardened and he scowled at Axel. "What the fuck are you doing? You had it good here. At least you could feel useful, you little fucking *asshole*."

Axel turned to Marcus and Aaron. "Grab him. We need to do this quickly." With the illegal augment business raking in a decent amount of money, Thompson had known it would only be a matter of time before the cops caught wind of it and paid a visit. Luckily for him, the police department in this sector was as corrupt as it was brutal and it had been easy for him to establish a deal - in exchange for a cut of the income, they'd ignore what went on, and would deal with any potential problems. Axel knew they didn't take prisoners.

"Piss off," Thompson sneered. "You'd all better leave before-"

Marcus darted forward, reaching over the counter and seizing him by the neck of his shirt. Thompson's foot knocked into a metal display shelf, sending it clattering to the floor as Marcus dragged him over the counter. The doberman held the human upright, towering over him. "Been selling the bulk of your... product to someone. Who?"

"Your mother, you fucking-"

Marcus' fist shot forwards, slamming into Thompson's face like a brick. Axel heard the wet crunch of tearing cartilage as the man's nose broke. Thompson's legs folded and he would have fallen if Marcus hadn't been holding him upright. "Who?"

Thompson gasped, one hand clutching his face. Tears shimmered in his eyes. "*Fuck you.*"

Axel swore under his breath, aware of time running out. "He's got an office in back. Help me look through it, maybe we'll find something," he said, glancing at Aaron.

From a corridor leading off in the back, a toilet flushed. Axel paused mid-step, his damaged ear twitching. For a moment, the only sounds were Thompson's pained gasps. Then the *click* of a door unlocking, heavy footsteps approaching. Axel looked at the others, but before anyone could do anything a tall, beefy man emerged from the gloom of the corridor, looking at the floor as he dried the back of his hands on his jeans.

"Thanks for that, Ray. Been dying to use the crapper since..." The beefy man looked up, and froze, confusion plastered on his face as he took in the situation facing Thompson. "What the..."

Axel took a step back.

The man's arm flashed back and pulled a revolver from behind him. He snapped it up, trying to cover everyone in the room. "What the hell's going on?! Let go of him!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 16, 2016, 06:01:14 PM**

Seeing as there was going to be trouble when Thompson had started mouthing off to Marcus, Anne had already unscrewed her horn. She held it at waist level, hoping that Marcus and Aaron both concealed her actions.

When the man with the revolver came out, she made her move. She pressed the point of her horn into Thompson's neck while Marcus was holding him upright.

She then turned to the armed man. "Put the gun down and no one gets hurt!" She scratched Thompson's neck with the point of her horn for emphasis. At the same time, one of her ears was swiveled towards the entrance as she kept an ear out for Seryet City PD.

"Didn't think she had it in her," Aaron muttered. He turned to the armed man. "Look, do as she says before we all end up in deep shit with the cops."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 17, 2016, 10:51:24 AM**

Emilena and Flora were returning from the goodwill when they heard the sirens.

"Shit. Shirley, get down." Emilena removed her sweatshirt and stuffed it on the teenager. "Also wear this. Your identity is more valuable than mine."

Flora cowered behind a trashcan fearfully, the sight of the pistol in Emilena's waiststrap bringing back a flash of unpleasant memories. "Please let those be fire trucks..." she stammered, failing to keep her voice level.

Emilena rolled her eyes. "Shirley, get back to the goodwill and act normal. We'll come grab you--"

"--Freeze!" An otherwise normal-looking SUV rolled down its window and an undercover cop flashed his badge. "Hands up! Nobody move!"

Emilena swore profusely as she grabbed Flora's hand and practically dragged her towards the chop shop. "We got company!" She announced, bursting through the door as a gunshot shattered the glass behind her.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 17, 2016, 05:21:30 PM**

As Emilena and Flora burst through the door, the man with the revolver jerked in shock. His finger tightened on the trigger just as the shot from outside caused the window to explode. The bullet exploding from the end of the revolver went wide, zipping out the window and taking out the window of a car parked opposite.

"Bastards are returning fire!" Axel heard someone shout from outside.

Suddenly the rattle of automatic gunfire filled the air, almost rupturing Axel's eardrums as bullets tore through the room, ripping chunks from the walls and shattering display cases. "Shit!" the rat yelled, doing the only thing he could - dropping to the floor, cowering with his hands over his head, praying none of the flying metal hit him. The man with the revolver wasn't so lucky, the volley of gunfire tearing him apart and throwing him back into the hallway he'd just appeared from.

Marcus felt his body shift into automatic. Grabbing a hold of Anne, he threw her and Thompson over the counter then leaped over after them, hunkering down behind the meagre cover offered by the thin counter. Now free, Thompson crawled away but Marcus couldn't go after him, not with the more pressing threat outside. He yanked out the sawed-off. He'd need to wait until their attackers came closer - it was too short range and they'd be able to cut him down easily. "How many?!" Marcus yelled across to Emilena.

The gunfire stopped abruptly. Axel's eyes opened, his ears ringing. Hyperventilating, his body trembling, he started to drag himself across the floor towards the hatch set into the floor just by the counter. If he could get into the basement where the augments were kept, maybe he could put together some sort of weapon. It was better than just waiting around to be shot to death.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 17, 2016, 05:55:15 PM**

"Fuck!" Aaron shouted as a piece of shrapnel grazed his cheek. He pulled out his pistol...and then nothing, the gunfire abruptly stopped. His ears still ringing, he pointed to Thompson trying to crawl away from the fracas.

Anne said nothing as she screwed her horn back into place. When the gunfire stopped, she picked up some radio chatter from the cops. "They're coming in through the back door and front door. We got about ten or so--"

"Use that horn and do something!" Aaron shouted.

"Okay! Just wait a moment!" Anne took a deep breath. "I sent out static over the police frequency. Hopefully while their ears are ringing, we can get moving!"

Aaron nodded and turned to Axel. "Axel! That hatch better lead to an exit!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 18, 2016, 06:48:49 PM**

Marita Rose and Marie got out of the vehicle as and looked around Sky Farms. At first glance this farm looked like any number of farms that surrounded seryet. "well guys blend in and dont do anything stupid one the purifiers said to them. ' alright ' marie you check out the brochure. Rose you check out the Produce ' soren and i will check out the farm itself we'll meet back here in 20 minutes . marita turned to Soren. " lead the way you're more familiar with this place than I am.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 18, 2016, 07:23:55 PM**

"I only saw one!" Emilena gasped, ducking behind a rack of what looked to be microcams. She spared a glance, but from her vantage point she couldn't see anything. Her augmented fingers twitched as she tightened her grip on her silenced pistol. *All right you stupid hunk of metal, you better work as well as Soren says you will...*

Flora, for her part, was crouched with her legs locked in the center of the store and shaking like a leaf, arms wrapped protectively over her head. Luckily, she was doing such a good job of looking like a civilian that the police probably wouldn't even target her, but regardless Emilena hissed, "*Shirley!*"

Abruptly Flora screamed, a high-pitched siren shriek that threatened to give Emilena tinnitus. Cursing loudly, Emilena yanked her behind the rack. "Goddammit, move!"

"How can you be so *calm?*" stammered Flora, eyes wide as she scrabbled her knees and fingertips against the tiles for purchase.

Lily dawdled at the cars.

"Hey sweetheart, what'chu lagging behind for?" A purifier accosted her, eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"I--I don't think I'd be much help," Lily stammered, recoiling just enough to look weak. "I was going to stay here and watch the car."

"Nuh-uh. Move it." The Purifier grabbed her roughly. "We stick together, and if you keep being useless, we'll just...uughhh..." Abruptly his eyes clouded over and he stumbled away from her.

"Joker, what is it?" another asked.

"'Snuthin," Joker shook his head and cleared his throat. "Got a bad headache all of a sudden." He shot a glare at Lily. "Git the hell moving, cupcake."

Lily complied, fighting to keep a small smile from showing. "You should drink more water," she told Joker helpfully. "It's probably dehydration..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 19, 2016, 07:43:27 PM**

Soren walked past a group of schoolchildren. He went to a door labeled "Employees Only". He waved his ID card at a sensor near the door and it opened. He held the door open for Marita.

Soon, a Mexican man who was helping offload some frozen catfish burgers onto a motorized cart turned to the duo.

"*Amigo*!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been? And who's this lovely woman?"

"Well Uziel, I had a family emergency to attend to. So what's going on?" Soren asked.

"Catfish burgers! Real popular! I'm supposed to be restocking them."

"Okay. She's a friend of mine and she's interested in getting a job maintaining all the computers and shit. I'm just going to show her around."

"Ah! The computers are what makes everything here-" Uziel indicated with a sweep of his arm the entire glassed-in growing area. There were numerous fruit trees being tended to by workers wearing flying frames or using ladders (Augment climbers were now restricted to ground-level work for their own safety ever since the incident where several of them fell to their deaths when their augments failed) "-work."

He tossed Marita an orange that had obviously been picked from one of the trees. "Good luck on your job search." Uziel then hauled the cart full of catfish burgers off to the produce stand.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 20, 2016, 11:46:52 AM**

Over the ringing in his ears, Axel could make out someone addressing him. "No! No exit, just... just keep them busy!" Gripping the edge of the open hatchway leading down, he pulled himself through and wormed his way down the stairs. Reaching the bottom, the rat struggled to his feet and stumbled into the workroom, crossing to the storage area containing dissembled augments and the other parts still waiting their turn. *Shit... what now...* He tried desperately to think clearly, trying to ignore the dozens of panicked thoughts flying through his mind.

From up top, Marcus heard a crash as the back door was kicked in. Cautious footsteps from out the front announced the presence of a second attacker. "Almost on us," he growled. His ears flattened at Flora's shrieks. His dark eyes narrowed at Emilena. "Shut her up..."

The noise of the back door being kicked in send a fresh rush of panic through Axel. "Shitshitshitshit!" His desperate eyes passed across one shelf and he paused. *Okay... better than nothing...* "When I say *now*, drop and cover your eyes!" he called up to the hatch, frantically pulling parts from the shelf.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 20, 2016, 06:36:00 PM**

thanks for the orange ' Marita said as she was hurried along by Soren. ' so whats the plan/ she whispered ' what exactly shouldf i be looking for? archives of when the augments here croaked?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 22, 2016, 04:03:07 PM**

"I've got access to the personnel records," Soren whispered as he opened the door to the records room.

The room itself was nothing spectacular. Just a workstation with a chair, computer terminal and printer.

Soren sat in the chair and logged in. A stormy expression crossed his face as he read over the records. "That's not good. Something stinks here."

He pointed to the list of accident reports. The ones involving the Augment workers had been deleted or otherwise moved. "Okay, here's what we're going to do. Marita, see if you can recover those accident reports or other pertinent information. I'm going to the workshop."

Aaron kept his eye trained on the back door as it shuddered under a heavy impact. Thanks to Thompson's line of work being rather lucrative to criminals, the door was heavily reinforced but it wouldn't hold forever. "What the fuck's taking so long!?" he shouted down into the passageway.

Anne clutched the SMG she had pulled out from under the counter. Her ears were pinned at Flora's shrieking.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 22, 2016, 11:44:56 PM**

Emilena boxed Flora's ears. "Listen to me!" she snapped. "Freak out all you want but do it *quietly*!"

"I wanna go with the cops," stammered Flora, tearing up. "I want to be safe I don't want to be with nutjobs like you people anymore!"

Emilena glanced at the side door, weighing the possibility. Flora, realizing her statement was about to be taken at face value, backpedaled quickly. "Wait never mind! Don't abandon me!"

"Stop being annoying then!" Emilena sighed loudly. Every fiber of her being wanted to start firing, but with the tentative ceasefire at the moment and her complete lack of cover (she had no idea if this shelf was even bulletproof), but at the moment the best course was trusting Axel to make valuable use of his time.

Joker was looking worse as the day progressed. He seemed pale and the sweat glistened on his face.

"What on earth is wrong with you?" asked Lily, stepping forward to mop his brow as they waited outside the farm for Soren and Marita to return.

"Shut yer mouth!" snapped Joker, almost losing his balance as he whipped his gaze to glare at her.

"I'm only trying to help," glared Lily right back. She glanced at the other Purifier. "What should we do about him? I think he needs medical attention, or at best something from a pharmacy."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 23, 2016, 12:40:07 AM**

I'll see what I can Find " Marita said sitting down and began typing away " recovering deleted files is tricky, depending on what deleting software was used..hmm.. ' she typed away, her claws running rapidly over the keys.. drat. they used a high end wiping program.. hmm . something definitely smells here. usually that level of program is reserved for government documents, high level corporate secrets and other things like that. info about run of the mill augments would not warrant such secrecy under normal circumstances.. lets see here.. Lerserut City.. thats a ways away to the north.. its pretty a rich persons enclave.. they've got walls around it to keep anyone not worth at least 1 billion creds out

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 23, 2016, 12:57:18 AM**

Soren had entered the workshop. There, an Augment was sitting on the bench and swapping out his sprayer arm for one with a set of shears.

"Yo!" the Python said. "Glad to see you back!"

Soren smiled as he watched the Python slither off. "Glad to be back!"

The Human looked around. The workshop had all sorts of augment limbs in carefully labeled lockers. Several large drums of lubricant, hydraulic fluid, cleaners and other chemicals were chained to the back wall and connected to hoses that dispensed whatever was needed. A computer along with a beat up neurotester and several tools were next to a prosthetic arm that had apparently been gnawed on by a catfish.

He then noticed something odd. He normally had a section that was for augments and equipment that was to be returned to the manufacturers. Which was where he had placed the damaged Brennan Synthetics augments. And all of them were gone.

He went over to his workstation and logged in. Frowning, he looked over the records. The company nor the police had never arrived to pick the augments up. In fact, it was as if those augments had never existed in the first place.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 23, 2016, 07:02:35 PM**

Axel flinched as Aaron shouted down. "I'm hurrying!" he snapped back. What it actually sounded like was "*Argh hurrigah!*", cables clamped between his teeth. The cables belonged to a small power unit, a component that Axel had recognised was common among the cheaper augmentation parts. Biting down, Axel bit through the rubber and stripped it off, exposing a length of the bare wiring. Spitting it out, the rat dropped the power unit onto the workbench next to five identical parts, and turned his attention to a battered looking robotic hand. The augment was torn at the wrist where it had been 'removed' from its previous owner, the internal circuitry hanging loose.

Dammit... this is a long shot, he thought, even as he snatched up the hand, pulling out the wires and splaying them. Trying and, somehow, succeeding to keep his fingers stable, Axel started to connect the power units to the augment. There was a reason these types of power units were only used in the cheaper, less reputable brands of augment - made with less hardy and reliable parts, they had a tendency to overcharge. Normally this would just result in the augment losing power - but Axel knew that if more energy was supplied, chemicals within the battery could become... excitable. And he was connecting six of them to the same unit.

He heard a creak from the floor above. Whoever had come in the back door was slowly making their way through to the front, where the others were. Gritting his teeth, Axel grabbed an electrical 'wand' from the workbench, a small, thin device designed to deliver an electric current to small augment parts. He flicked it on and applied it to the first power unit. Almost immediately, the fingers of the hand started flexing.

Up top, the front door was hammered again, the hinges straining. Marcus could see it could only take another few blows. *Shit...* He could try sneaking out, getting close to the door and blowing a hole in whoever came through, but that would mean moving out of their cover, flimsy as it was. And if the other person came out from behind, he'd be as good as dead.

Axel threw the wand down with a clatter and hurriedly picked up the twitching hand. The power units trailing from it were humming, the batteries beginning to glow red. The spasms wracking the hand became even more intense. He didn't have long. His mouth dry as sand, Axel turned and ran for the hatch.

The front door smashed inwards. Machine gun first, the officer came charging through. The sudden transition from daylight to the gloom inside widened his pupil as his eye struggled to adjust. At the same time, his partner emerged from the rear corridor on the opposite side of the room. She indicated towards the counter on the right. "There!"

Reaching the bottom of the stairs leading up Axel heard the shout, and tossed the bundle. It flew up, over their heads of the others taking cover, arcing over the counter. The officer's eyes flicked towards the object. "*Now!*" Axel yelled. Marcus hunkered down, closing his eyes.

The power units and the augmented hand exploded as one, suddenly flooding the dark room with a piercing, blinding white light and peppering the room with a shower of razor-sharp augment pieces. Their attackers screamed as their vision was destroyed, blood streaming from the man's face.

Hearing their screams, Axel could only guess it had worked. "Kill them! Kill them now!" he roared up.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 23, 2016, 08:19:31 PM**

Aaron crouched into a protective ball behind the counter upon Axel's command. And now that the *ad hoc* grenade had detonated, the officers were stumbling about trying to regain their vision. A few officers had either been wearing shielded visors or had augments that negated intense flashes of light. Of course, the shrapnel in such a confined space had proved to be deadly, tearing up the officers.

The moment Axel had shouted his command, the German Shepherd immediately leapt to his feet and drew his pistol. "You heard him! Start shooting!"

An officer twitched, painting the wall behind him with blood as Anne emptied her SMG into the unfortunate man's chest at point-blank range. "What do we do now?" she yelled over the gunfire.

Gunshots rang out as Aaron took cover behind the ravaged counter and systematically started shooting anyone he saw. "Clean this shit up and then we go see what's in the back room!" Aaron reloaded his pistol and chambered a round.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 23, 2016, 08:39:02 PM**

The other Purifier looked uncertain. "I need to be checking on Inspector Gadget anyway," he said dismissively. "Joker, take some tylenol or something and nut up. We've got a job to do."

"I'm doing that!" snapped Joker angrily, eyes bulging. Seething partially from emotion and partially due to lack of breath, his face grew more pale as the other Purifier walked into the farm to check on Soren and Marita.

"Come on, back to the car," insisted Lily, and Joker was quickly losing the strength to argue. The man knew something was awry, and he kept his hand on his pistol holster.

But that didn't help him much once Lily had him alone in the confines of the SUV. "All right you son of a bitch," she snarled, grasping his wrist in a death vice and draining him of energy until he could barely lift a finger. "Your white blood cells are declaring war on the rest of your body, and your red blood cells are shriveling up, starving your heart and brain of oxygen."

She batted his hand away from his pistol. "I can revert the damage and save your life, but only if you tell me where the Purifier base is." Her eyes narrowed as she stared Joker down. "Start talking or I'll watch you endure one of the slowest, worst deaths you could possibly imagine."

The female officer had managed to take cover behind the back door, but that didn't help her when Emilena vaulted over her counter and pinned her against the wall. Kneeing her viciously in the crotch, Emilena forced her hands around the young woman's neck and snapped it with a snarl.

Flora skittered on her hands and knees towards the back of the shop, hyperventilating with fear. Unpleasant flashbacks from her previous experiences with gunfire were constantly pulling her out of the present, and her life must have flashed before her eyes at least three times. *They're going into the back* her mind realized in a panic. *Make sure they don't leave you behind!*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 23, 2016, 09:16:57 PM**

Marita sent ' Soren a text " found a few things. whoever wiped the computers did a very good job and used a high end wiping program normally reserved for top secret government files. records show a delivery was made a week ago to Lersuret City, and that there was a email from Brennan about 2 weeks ago claiming that those augment deaths were due to corruptions in the Augments due to exposure to seawater before implementation. a total line of bs if you ask me, total C. Y. A on the companies part. and that was before the death total topped 100. what have you found on your end?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 25, 2016, 06:25:48 PM**

Soren's phone buzzed as he received Marita's text while he was digging through the workshop. It was then he noticed a flash drive that someone had left behind on the workstation.

Judging from how it had been wedged into the space between the computer tower and the desk, it was obvious whoever put it there hadn't intended it to be found. He grabbed it and pocketed it.

He made sure the door was shut and began texting Marita.

"*Found some stuff too. All Brennan augs taken. No records of them being taken by company or cops. Also, found flash drive hidden in workstation.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2016, 02:51:53 PM**

Joker's voice was hoarse and ragged as he gasped for air. "You think..." He choked, "your titless ass can scare me?" He forced a weak laugh across his lips. "Fucking kill me then...there'll be more...here, I'll help you out..."

With the last of his strength, he grasped his pistol and pulled the trigger. Lily's eyes went wide and she immediately cut off the oxygen supply to his brain, resulting in permanent blackout. Thankfully, the pistol's safety was on or his blood would have sprayed all over the inside of the car.

Despite having barely exerting herself, Lily was panting with effort. Face pale, she had to fight hard to keep her fists from trembling with rage. Clumsily she pushed Joker's body out of the far side door and rolled him into the tall grass. Then she began the long and painful process of decomposing the body at an accelerated rate. Before long, Joker's remains were dust.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 26, 2016, 03:47:50 PM**

'Hang on to that drive, might be useful. Whoever took the augments, didn't want a record trial.. only been able to recover pieces of it. mentions of a corporation named Mursul, which is a genetics firm. i'm done here lets go get the others and head to Lersuret M out" marita sent the texts then finished her work on the computer.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 26, 2016, 04:00:51 PM**

When he heard the shooting and sound of struggling stop, Axel cautiously started to climb the stairs. "You guys alive?"

"More than they are," he heard Marcus' gruff voice reply. "Seeing what's in back. Might be something to go on."

Letting out a sigh of relief, Axel carried on up, climbing out from the hatch and pausing as he took in the two crumpled bodies across the room. "Christ..." He started to go around the counter and promptly caught his foot on something, almost falling flat on his face. Catching himself, he glanced down to see what he'd tripped on. "Aw... fuck." Thompson's face stared up at him - or rather, what was left of his face. He'd caught several stray bullets to the head, turning his features into a mesh work of wet, red craters. *Why the hell did you call the cops...* As the initial shock at seeing his former - boss' corpse wore off, Axel became aware of hearing the rest of the group moving towards the back. Thompson had never let him in there, and at the time he'd had no reason to care what was in back. Now, he could only hope it had something of use.

Hurrying after them, not particularly relishing the idea of being alone in case more showed up, he almost went down a second time as his leg knocked against the young girl who'd jumped into their vehicle, crawling jerkily towards the back corridor. "Goddammit, watch out!" he snapped down at her, stepping around. "Guys, Thompson's... he's dead," Axel called out as he followed the corridor along. *Jesus, I need a drink about now.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 27, 2016, 12:25:26 AM**

(Sky Farms)

Soren read the text as he logged off. He scratched his head. Why would a genetics company want augments anyway. He shut the door to the workshop and headed out to the main lobby.

Uziel stopped him. "*Amigo*!" he said, laying his prosthetic hand on Soren's shoulder. "No work today?"

Soren shook his head. "Nah. The boss doesn't need me now."

The man smiled and bumped fists with him. "All right. Catch you later!" The cart's electric motor whirred as Uziel hopped aboard and headed to the ramps that would take him to the fish farming level.

He pushed the door open and tound himself in the lobby. All around him were tourists and locals trying to peer through the glass windows to the farm.

Soren took a seat as he waited for the others.

(Chop Shop)

The iron stench of blood hung thick in the air. Aaron wrinkled his muzzle at the odor. He kicked aside the corpse of an officer, half of her skull blown away from Marcus's shotgun. The German Shepherd turned away in revulsion as he saw her artificial eye dangling from its socket.

Anne, as she had some chopping experience, was digging through Thompson's pocket. She held out an electronic keycard and a wallet. "So...wanna divvy up the creds?"

Aaron scowled. He didn't have a problem with lifting creds off a dead man...especially one who had just tried to kill him but the Shetland Pony had some *seriously* skewed priorities. "For fuck's sake, we just survived a shootout trying to get information and all you can think of is creds!?" he snapped, his ears pinning back in response.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2016, 01:17:32 PM**

Lily bundled up Joker's uniform and poured it in a dumpster on the far side of the farm. She walked past a number of tourists and workers while carrying it, but because she acted nonchalant and the uniform was bloodless nobody gave her a second look. After briefly touching herself up in the public restroom, she returned to the lobby only looking slightly shaken.

"What did we find out?" she asked Soren. "Also, where are the Purifiers who are supposed to be watching us?"

Flora tried to get to her feet and, failing that, catch her breath. She was still shaking like a leaf when Axel nearly ran her over. "H-how are you all so *calm*?" she stammered, staring in horror at her uncontrollably palpitating hands. "We almost DIED!"

Emilena was the last member of the team to leave the chop shop lobby. Narrowing her eyes, she looked a little closer at the young officer whom she'd just murdered. The woman's body size was roughly the same as Emilena's, perhaps had a little more going on in the bust but a hot washing machine cycle might be able to shrink it.

Picking the corpse up gingerly so as to make sure it didn't touch the bloodstains and corpses littering most of the shop, Emilena lugged it into the back with her team. Throwing it on an operating table used for augment installation (or possibly removal), she began stripping it for its uniform.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 12:04:13 AM**

Marita came out a few minutes later and sat down next to Soren. ' well now all we have to do is find the closest route to Lersuret..we'll have to come up with a story as to why we are there.' she said as Rose came up carrying a basket of produce, and marie came up with a handful of brochures to various places.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 31, 2016, 07:19:07 AM**

Marcus narrowed his eyes in disgust at the pony as she looted Thompson's corpse. He had no feelings of remorse over the man's death (besides the fact that they'd managed to lose a potential lead so early on), but watching Anne root through his pockets for *money* turned his stomach. *What else would I expect from an aug.*

Axel, after a brief pause, accepted the wallet off Anne. He fished through it, taking a stack of creds and tossing it back to her. Feeling eyes on the back of him, the rat turned and shrugged at Marcus as he slipped the creds in his pocket. "Seems like it'll be more useful for us than him at this point, doesn't it?" His voice still shook slightly, adrenaline still tweaking his nerves after the situation they'd wound up in.

Grunting his distaste, Marcus turned his attention to what Emilena was doing. He watched for a moment as she pulled off the dead cop's top, then nodded towards a small ID card clipped to the belt, complete with a small photo of the woman. "Make sure you hide that."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 31, 2016, 02:19:22 PM**

(Chop Shop)

Anne pulled the remaining creds from the wallet and stuck the plastic chits into her pocket. She continued digging through the man's pockets and came up empty.

"All right, let's see what we got here." Aaron approached Anne and Axel and noticed the electronic keycard Anne was holding. The pony handed it over to him while she went to a little alcove near the shop's entrance and started rooting through the assorted debris the man had accumulated.

"What are you looking for?" Aaron demanded. "We got the keycard!"

"He might have an address book or a phone or something else that may be of use to us," Anne replied as she threw a half-eaten bag of chips aside.

Aaron then held the card up to Axel. "You know what this keycard opens?" he asked.

(Sky Farms)

Soren looked up as he heard the sound of footsteps and saw Rose along with Marie and Lily. A glance into the crowd told him that their Purifier guard was busy flirting with a Chow-Chow who was selling some fresh lychees.

He then waved them over and when they all arrived, he decided to speak, relying on bustle of the busy marketplace to thwart eavesdroppers. "Well, here's the thing. Every one one of the augments implicated in the whole incident vanished. I placed them aside in a special area in the workshop where we usually keep the augments until the company can come pick them up.

Well here's the thing, there was no record of either Brennan Synthetics or the cops picking them up. And what's more, all the info on those augments went missing. Marita can explain further

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 03:12:32 PM**

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a genetics company named Mursul in Lersuret City came up in the files. they had inquired about acquiring augments from Brennan. what if..' Maritas eyes widened ' What if they wanted the augments in order to find a way to develop a way so that people could be BORN with augments already in them? Right now, Augments can only be added after birth, to replace damaged parts of the body or enhance natural abilities. but if they could find a way to make it so that augments develop along with the fetus inside the womb, so that they are functional at birth.. why they could be worth quadrillions of credits.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 31, 2016, 04:31:33 PM**

Soren's jaw dropped. "But...that's impossible! Nanomachines for manufacturing cannot be used inside the body...let alone during development! The closest we can do are nanomachines to fortify bones and replace damaged bones with cermets. And even then, the nanomachines have to be removed from the body."

He rubbed his forehead. "I doubt they're trying to do anything that borders on magic. My guess is that they just want their resources and customers. Or maybe they trying to drive them out of business."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2016, 05:01:28 PM**

"If they had some miraculous new technology, they wouldn't have to kill their competitors," Lily noted. "I'd be more willing to bet the moneymakers belonged to the company that got trashed."

She furrowed her brow. "What motivation is there for disposing of the evidence? It sounds like somebody set Brennan up to fail and then stole their faulty augments back. That just draws more attention to themselves. I think we need to focus on locating where the actual Augments went."

Emilena nodded partially in agreement with Marcus, and partially in approval at the quality of the uniform she'd extracted. "Not bad. Avoided most of the bloodstains, a good round with some bleach at the laundromat and this thing's ready to march back into the police office."

She grinned. "Which is exactly my plan. But first the corpse needs to be completely removed from the picture. This place have an incinerator or something?"

Flora continued to look in disbelief at her teammates as they casually discussed horrific crimes and showed no ill effects from the previous shootout.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 03, 2016, 06:17:08 PM**

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killing the competition through faulty parts so you are able to 'fix; the problem makes logical sense. kinda like the guy who helps put out the fire he started. also brings you a lot of money and positive press. corporations are all about both after all 'marita said : in the mean time, i'm sure we'll find out more in Lersuret."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 04, 2016, 12:21:26 AM**

"Why do we even care?" interrupted Lily. "We're just going to be the Purifier's errand boys now?" She double-checked nobody was listening in. "Let's just overpower the ones with us, leave somebody alive and torture him until he gives us the location of the Purifier headquarters. Then rig me full of explosives, drop me out of a plane onto the base and I'll blow both of us sky high. I'm prepared to die to cripple their movement."

She glared at Marita, who she knew was going to protest. "It's my choice and my right to do so."

Emilena chucked the uniform at Flora. "Here. It bothers you so much to be around, take this to the laundromat across the street. Use the best detergent they got, I'll reimburse you."

"I can afford it myself!" Flora shot back, voice almost cracking. bundling the items up, she wasted no time in stumbling from the establishment.

Emilena glanced at Axel. "Got anything good? We can't be here much longer; it's probably going to be swarming with cops in a matter of minutes."

(OOC: We close to a time skip or anything? Not sure if anything important is happening in either storyline to not warrant fast-forwarding to the next interesting bit)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 06, 2016, 08:35:44 AM**

Axel took the keycard from Aaron and held it close, looking it over. "No... haven't seen him use this before. I mean, he might have a safe somewhere but it's like she said. Not like we have the time to check the place over." As if to emphasize Emilena's point, the other cop's radio crackled from the other room, the low, garbled static serving to remind them of the seconds draining away.

"What about getting rid of the body?" Marcus demanded, staring down at the stripped corpse. "Can't have them finding it. At least until Echo's finished at the station."

"Hang on." Axel dropped the keycard into his back pocket as he tried to think. "There isn't an incinerator - but there's a compactor downstairs. We use... *used* it to crush up any scrap we wouldn't use. With the rest of the crap that's in there they'd have to look hard to find a body in what comes out. Could that work?" Even as the words left his mouth he felt sick speaking them. Just yesterday he'd been trying to lead a normal life - or as normal as he could make it. Now, every moment felt like it was slipping back to how it had been before. Axel forced himself to push those feelings back down, to suppress the horror he felt and focus on the situation.

"It'll have to. Not risking bring the body with us." Marcus bent and grabbed the body by the arms. "Me and the rat deal with it. Aaron, get the others to the car." Stiffly, Axel took the legs and helped Marcus lift it, panting with the effort as the carried the corpse from the room.

Five minutes later, they both emerged from the shop front, Axel looking queasier than usual as he followed in the tall doberman's wake. Stopping next to Aaron's window, Marcus looked around, checking to see if anyone was watching. The streets were clear, the nearby residents used to keeping low at the sound of gunfire. "Let's go," he grunted.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 07, 2016, 10:42:27 AM**

Aaron nodded and ushered Anne and Emilena out of the building and into the car. He did allow Anne to to keep the stolen SMG...provided he held the ammo. Of course, before they were on a mission, he'd pass the magazines to her.

He looked at the GPS unit and pondered where to go next.

Five minutes later, when Marcus and Axel arrived, Aaron started the SUV's motor. He then pulled out of the grimy neighborhood. And just in time too, the sound of sirens approaching could be heard as he pulled into the main thoroughfare and merged with the rest of Seryet City's traffic.

He then turned to Marcus. "So what's next on our list?"

Soren shrugged. "I'm not going to stop you but I'm interested in staying alive than destroying their organization for now."

He then turned to Marita. "Why don't we look at that flash drive first before we head to another city. Speaking of which, what's with the produce and brochures your friends got?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2016, 11:40:16 AM**

we wanted to blend in, act like normal visitors' rose said ' besides this stuff is actually really good," she held up a piece of fruit that she had been eating. 'the brochures are just that brochures" Marie said ' i picked them up as i was walking around, letting you guys do your thing ' Marie said to Soren.
_ you wanna go kamikaze, Your choice ' Marita said to Lily ' but you'll be on your own for that. not to mention our lives are currently hanging in the balance right now. we need to get to the bottom of this augment thing, More people are dying every day from those defective augments. death tolls over 200 by now, and that just whats been made public. figure at least twice that have died. we dont get to the bottom of it, the death tolls will reach staggering numbers, there are millions of augments that could possibly have these bad augments. we're talking Holocaust level of deaths here. i dnt want that on my conscience.' she sighed then turned to Soren' sure we can check the flash drive before we head out. see if theres anything of note on it.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2016, 07:38:39 PM**

Flora watched the clothes in the washing-and-drying machine spin round. Round and round with the rinse cycle. Mixed among them were tiny blue packets; the only detergent they sold at the laundromat came from gumball-styled dispensers. The pods tumbled in a world of blurry clothing and suds, each waiting for the water to disintegrate it until it popped. Right now she felt like a pod. Struggling to keep her head afloat as the world wears her down, waiting for the time it breaks her defenses and she bursts like a bubble.

When she'd been in school, a boy named Randall had explained the theory of quantum immortality to her. In short, everyone has an infinite number of timelines, new ones being created every instant showing all possible decisions and outcomes. When you die, you can no longer experience that timeline, so you shift to another. One where you survived the incident, or it never came to pass to begin with. You can't even remember the old one.

Isn't it telling? she could hear Randall's voice in her head. *Isn't it telling the time period we were born? We're not cavemen, we're not ancient Egyptians, we were born in the first era of human history that has the technology to cure death! Cryopods, cybernetic parts...we live now because every timeline where we were born earlier, we were guaranteed to die!*

Ironically, Randall had passed away from leukemia before they graduated. But his theory still made sense to her. It fit with her psionic power, her money, and her life direction. Who better to live forever? But these last few days everything spun out of control. Everything did *not* go according to plan. She'd almost died three times, and more than ever, she was aware of her own inevitable death. Regardless of her behavior in life, she will one day be particles in a spinning nebula. Just mindless energy.

Should she run? These dangerous people have left her alone for the moment. They wouldn't care either way; if she picked a direction and never stopped sprinting, maybe she might get to experience a few more tidbits of infinity. Then again, where would she run to? All evidence has suggested this city is nonstop violence in every direction, and she was a bright blinking target as a young unaccompanied female.

She spared a glance back at the chop shop. Whoever these dangerous people were, they'd accepted her as one of their own. And they'd protect her, albeit as a side effect to getting their job done. They didn't even need to be bribed by Bailey. And Emilena promised to explain things after the chop shop...

The machine slowed to a stop as the drying phase beeped its conclusion. Sighing, she bundled the uniform into her hands and returned to the parking lot where the others were waiting.

"You two are pathetically short-sighted..." sighed Lily. "Gonna just help the Purifiers because you're afraid of being killed..." She folded her arms. "Disgraceful. Whatever happened to the people who stormed the Purifier HQ in Lanthae? What would they think of you now? How do you sleep at night knowing how brave you used to be?"

Emilena took the police uniform from the silent folf. "Good to see you can follow simple instructions. Christ, what a world this is where I can barely find people with that quality." She started changing into the uniform. "Next stop, the Seryet PD. Don't worry, none of you are coming in with me."

"Why the hell do you think we'd let you walk unaccompanied into a police station?" a purifier grunted.

Emilena rolled her eyes. "Oh darn, you got me. My plan was to rat you all out and get thrown in prison for eternity for multiple homicides and terrorism acts with warrants in multiple cities. And then have nothing else happen because the only person I'm putting in danger is myself."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 09, 2016, 08:27:29 PM**

Soren narrowed his eyes. "Those guys know my history. Why do you think they let none of us carry a gun...even though Rhaegson said he trusted us?"

He heard the sound of shouting as one of their Purifier guards accidentally bumped into a young mare...and her large Holstein Bull boyfriend took exception. The crowd shifted as people scrambled to get away from the fight...and to watch. "Anyways, let's go somewhere where we can get some privacy and see what's on the drive."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 14, 2016, 11:07:55 PM**

lead the way then ' Marita said curtly. she turned to lily ' that was before i had family to think about, once you have family, priorities change. its no longer just about you. but rest assured Lily. I'm not a coward. I'm not doing this because i LIKE it, its because i have NO CHOICE, in the matter. And you've changed as well i might add. the Lily we knew back in Lanthae, wasnt a single-minded suicide Bomber with a short fuse.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 15, 2016, 11:16:05 AM**

"You could draw attention if you're just wandering around without knowing where you're going. And asking around could make them notice as well," Marcus noted. His jaw bunched. "A plan of the building's layout would help."

Axel squinted irritably, staring out the car's window as the sidewalk rushed past. "Easy. We'll just head onto their web page, hack in and find a convenient map. Give me a second to pull my bullshit magic laptop out my ass." The rat could feel his temper fraying. His throat was growing parched and his skin hot as the desire for another drink started to gnaw at the back of his mind.

Marcus glared at him for a second then returned his stare to Emilena. "If you're going in blind, you'll need some way to communicate with us in case something goes wrong." He glanced out the window and grunted at Aaron. "Stop here for a moment." The car pulled up outside of a small convenience store. The doberman turned to look at Flora, handing her a small amount of credits. "Go in and get two pre-paid cell phones. Move quickly but don't look suspicious."

When she returned, Marcus nodded for Aaron to continue, then tore the small phones, or 'burner phones' out of their plastic packaging. He studied the back of one case then punched a series of numbers into the other phone. When the other phone started to ring, the doberman hit the *answer* button and tossed it across to Emilena, keeping the other cell phone in his hand.

"Keep the call connected. Put it in your shirt pocket or somewhere else where we'll be able to hear clearly. If you get found, its better if its harder for them to know who you're in contact with," he explained.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 15, 2016, 10:36:11 PM**

Lily rolled her eyes. "Yeah, I stopped being a meek little doormat. Who couldn't accomplish anything without relying on other people to make all the decisions. And thank god."

She allowed Soren to lead them back to the SUVs. The remaining unnamed purifier saw them. "Hey, y'all seen either Joker or Aaron?" he asked.

Lily ignored him; there was something new in the car. A manila envelope. Her curiosity was piqued. Hopefully whoever left that didn't see her stunt with Joker...

Grabbing the envelope, she opened it and peered at a photocopy of a marriage certificate. Her pupils dilated and she almost dropped it in shock.

This is to certify that Denny North and Lily Sybil were wed on the 16th day of February in the year 2026...

"I...I'm not coming with you all," Lily said. She could hardly process her own words over the stunned realizations that were drowning out her ability to register the world. "I need to investigate something else."

While they were driving to the new location, Flora nudged Emilena. "So? You were gonna explain some things to me."

Emilena started with a jolt, distracted by her mental preparations for her upcoming espionage. "What do you want to know?" she asked.

"How many people have you killed?" Flora decided to cut straight to the good stuff.

Emilena's mouth flattened. "None."

"Then why would the police arrest you for murder?" Flora pressed.

"Because they consider Augments people."

Flora cocked her head in surprise but couldn't find a response to that. The Purifier on her other side chuckled his approval at Emilena's answer.

"Looks like we're almost there," Emilena regarded their proximity to the police station. "We'll have to put this conversation on hold. But I answered one question, so now it's your turn."

Flora bit her lip and looked around the SUV at the other occupants. Emilena, quickly guessing the reason for the teenager's consternation, quickly added, "...to wish me good luck. And then we can talk later." At the same time, the car pulled up to its stopping point.

Flora bit her lip. "You won't need it. You've got this. Break a leg."

Emilena chuckled, setting up Marcus' call as he asked. "Just keep things quiet on your end," she replied to Marcus. "Last thing I need is to draw attention to myself because an ice cream truck drives by your car."

Exiting the car, she straightened her collar, got into character as the stiff-backed constable, and marched smartly towards the station.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 16, 2016, 09:53:18 PM**

Soren shrugged. "Okay. Good luck Lily," he whispered.

He then turned to the other Purifier and pointed out the window at a group of people attacking someone. "Yeah. Joker or one of your other buddies just fucked up *big time*. He apparently got caught ogling some dude's girlfriend."

The man looked away. Generally, in a situation like that, it was better to let the mob disperse (or wait for the victim to get away) and then rescue the victim. But they were running on a tight schedule here.

The SUV's motor hummed as he pulled out of the parking lot to Sky Farms.

Aaron nodded as the SUV stopped by the convenience store. The store was located in a rather bad part of Seryet City, as evidenced by the long-dormant factories and warehouses that lined the street. A homeless man was lying sleeping next to the store's entrance.

When Marcus got back into the car, Aaron continued on his path. An overly aggressive panhandler backed off upon seeing Emilena in full uniform, assuming that the others in the car were undercover SCPD cops.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 19, 2016, 08:03:32 PM**

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marita sat in the back of the suv inbetwee soren and rose. Marie was pasing the time reading the brochures she had picked up. " So what do you think could be on the disk? Marita asked him " Migt have been a list of staff passwords or something..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 21, 2016, 03:52:25 AM**

Harras Grove was a typical upper-class suburban neighborhood. The cream-colored two-story house Lily found herself standing before looked identical to every single other residence around the cul-de-sac.

Lily walked up to the door and raised her hand to knock. She paused momentarily, fascinated by the realization that she was slightly trembling. It had been a long time that anything elicited fear from her, and yet she was nervous to see her former husband. How long had they shared a life? What memories might he have that she'd forgotten?

She rapped lightly on the door. After a few minutes, she made to knock again when it opened and a sallow man with stringy brown hair opened it. "Yes? How can...?" He trailed off. "Lily???"

Lily bit her lip. She'd seen his face years before on a television screen in a Lanthae clothing store, and was hoping he looked better in person. She'd never spared much thought to her married life, but she was somehow surprised that she'd apparently chosen to live almost a decade with someone so...unremarkable. "Hi Denny."

Denny was gaping like a fish. He stumbled backwards and almost slammed the door shut on her "How are you...how could you be...?"

"It's a long story..." Lily said, inviting herself in. "I lost my memory, so I didn't--and don't--remember anything about you, our kids, or this house." She looked around and marveled at the otherwise unremarkable simplicity of everything. How long had she lived here? How often must she have cleaned every item in this house, items that sparked no sense of familiarity whatsoever?

Denny was still dumbfounded. "You're alive! Did you tell anyone? We could make headlines!"

"*Don't* tell anyone!" Lily interjected. "Please Denny. It's more complicated than you think."

Denny closed the door. "I...of course, my love," he said slowly. "Anything you say. Welcome home, after all this time. You seem...different."

"How so?" asked Lily, heading into the kitchen. Denny didn't strike her as a cook, so presumably she spent much of her adult life in this kitchen. However even this did nothing to pique any memories.

Denny walked into the kitchen to see Lily examining silverware. "Could I get you something to drink?" he asked politely.

"Um, sure," Lily answered, putting the silverware back quickly. "How about...my favorite?"

Denny took some blueberry-pomegranate juice out of the refrigerator, and surreptitiously grabbed a small vial from a hidden drawer under the counter. "So...you don't remember anything of living here?" he asked, keeping his tone neutral as he spiked the glass.

"Nothing at all," Lily admitted. "I'm hoping that this visit could jog my memory."

"Visit?" Denny brought her the glass of juice. "You don't plan on staying? What about your children?"

"The children!" Lily was about to take a drink, but stopped when they were mentioned. "Can I see them? Where are they?"

"They're up in their rooms." Denny pushed her juice towards her. "Drink up, and then we can go see them..."

Lily acquiescently sipped the juice, and registered a deep satisfaction in her palate; apparently she did indeed hold a preference for rich citrus. This discovery galvanized her. "All right, lead me!" she ordered, stumbling somewhat as she left the room. "Goodness, this drink is...powerful…" she suddenly felt very sleepy, but she could feel her psionic regeneration recycle new energy through her system in record time. Had she been less focused on getting to see her children again, she might have noticed that as the warning sign it was. Denny for his part was furrowing his brow in disbelief as he watched Lily drain the glass with no outward side effects. Putting the vial back incredulously, he led her upstairs.

Emilena steeled herself as the police station lobby drew closer and closer. It looked so much like the old one back in Lanthae.

She wasn't sure what she felt. Certainly not fear. She'd been policing for so long that she'd probably top the charts for experience amongst her peers, if they'd only allowed her to be herself. Instead, she was Candice McCutcheon, a mousy woman with a dopey expression on her ID card. Emilena hoped she wasn't an airhead, because she had no interest in faking a whole new personality. A lot of old memories and habits were resurfacing as she drew closer to the one place in any city she'd always felt most comfortable.

She marched through the door. The only person in sight was the receptionist, behind her bulletproof window. She spared Emilena a glance, and while she clearly didn't recognize her, the uniform was enough for her to turn a blind eye.

Offices were to the left, just like in Lanthae. Swallowing, Emilena tried to locate the door to the archives. Unlike computers, paper doesn't ask for passwords.

After ten minutes of fruitless searching, Emilena realized that there'd been a surprising dearth of personnel in the offices. "Hey you," she interrupted an intern who was scrambling down the hallways with a stack of papers. "Where is everyone?"

"You-you don't know?" he stammered. "They're at Thompson's. There was a shootout!"

Emilena grumbled. "Well, that's just great. They dispatched me from the south division and I'm supposed to meet here with Chief Travis."

"Welp, he's, uh, on the field supervising at the moment…" the intern gulped. "B-but maybe I could take a message for you?"

"I don't have time for messages. If you could show me to the archives, I'll wait for him there."

The intern quickly led her past the forensics laboratory and down a flight of stairs into the basement. Emilena swiped McCutcheon's ID card and the door unlocked with a beep.

"Thank you Noah," she said backhandedly, already leafing through files. The intern gratefully took the opportunity to leave her presence.

Meanwhile back with the team, Marcus' radio bleeped as a one-sentence message relayed to him from a secured Purifier channel: *FIND AN EXCUSE FOR AXEL TO BE ALONE*.

(OOC 2018: Accidentally used Carriage Hills later in a much more important setting, so I came back and renamed this one after noticing I'd double-used the location name)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 21, 2016, 10:53:38 AM**

Soren shrugged as he watched the buildings whiz by him in a blur as the Purifier continued driving. He had informed them that they were going to meet up at a some abandoned industrial lot or somewhere so they could exchange data and plan their next move.

He turned to Marita. "I'm not sure but I have a feeling it might be something useful. It could be passwords, manifests, communications...hell, it could be damn near *anything*. All I can say is that whoever put it there clearly didn't intend it to be found."

It was then he had a flash of inspiration. "Hey, Marita, can I borrow your laptop for a bit?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 21, 2016, 11:28:31 AM**

Once Marcus saw Emilena disappear through the large, imposing doors of the police station, he nodded at Aaron. "Park on the next block." Though the windows were tinted and chances of being noticed through the glass were next to nil, waiting directly outside the station made him uncomfortable.

As Aaron pulled into a parking spot, Emilena's voice came through the burner phone, the sound muted on their side. "... dispatched me from the south division and I'm supposed to meet here with..." Marcus let a low, long breath out. At least she hadn't been recognised the instant she stepped into the building. The way their luck had been going so far, that had been a distinct possibility. *This needs to work...* He glanced at the other three teammates he and Aaron had recently acquired. Two worn and used-up looking augs and a girl who seemed so out of her element that he couldn't help wonder why she was here. Marcus shook his head slightly. The quiet sound of footsteps now, as she followed someone to the archives.

Suddenly the stillness in the air was interrupted by a bleeping from his cell. Pulling it out, he opened it and frowned at the message on the screen. "Aaron, keep an eye on these two. I need a word with Whent."

Axel, flinching at hearing his name, turned to glare at him. "What?"

Marcus didn't answer. Checking to make sure nobody was coming, he indicated with his thumb and climbed from the car, making for an alley just up from where they were parked once he saw the rat was reluctantly following. Turning into the gloom of the narrow passageway, he stopped a short distance in and started to reply to the message.

Axel held back, his eyes narrowed in suspicion behind his sweat greased hair. "What d'you want?" he demanded. "Gonna give me a pep talk?" The rat spat to the side.

"Just hold on," Marcus growled, baring his canines in annoyance. ***He's apart from the others. Track my cell. Be quick.***

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 21, 2016, 05:21:03 PM**

These files were organized by case number, which was a good thing. Case numbers weren't alphabetic; each decimal was its own code, breaking down the nature of the crime, the status of the investigation, and other details that would only matter to an actual police officer. By ignoring files referring to unrelated crime types and emphasizing the larger files (since she knew this was a big case), Emilena managed to relatively quickly locate the case files for Brennan Synthetics.

“Interesting…” she muttered. These were mostly witness testimonies and accident reports from the day all the gearheads died. The follow-up investigation seemed unsurprisingly lacking. Now if she could just figure out what the inside excuse was, that would give them a thread…

“Officer, what’s your serial number?” Someone had entered the room. Emilena kept reading; the gig was up, but she was so close to finding the info she needed…

“CR 57607,” she replied, using Officer Ellis’ code from Lanthae. “What did we learn about the shootout at Thompsons?”

The officer wasn’t getting sidetracked. “Noah contacted the south division and they haven’t sent anybody up here. I’m going to need to see your ID.”

Emilena tossed Candice’s wallet over, still engrossed in the paperwork. Every witness she’d come across quickly filed an Intent to Silence, explaining why there was no evidence for a followup investigation…

The officer primed a taser. “Stop reading and get on the ground!” He ordered. “You’re not Officer McCutcheon!”

When she continued reading the papers, he fired and sent her spasming uncontrollably to the floor, papers skittering out of her hand. But it was too late. She’d seen the name they needed to continue the trail of their investigation.

On the second floor around a hallway, three white doors sat nestled between an off-white carpet and adobe wall. Lily quietly pushed open the first door to see a young boy, maybe 13, with light skin and dark hair in a cereal bowl cut.

"Hello!" she beamed. The child just looked at her.

"This is Christian. You don't remember Christian?" asked Denny, coming into the room behind her.

"I...of course I do," Lily lied. She knelt down in front of her son. "How have you been? I haven't seen you in so long, I missed you so much!"

The child just continued staring blankly at her.

"Say hello, Christian," Denny demanded firmly.

"Hello," Christian said to Denny.

Lily's eyes clouded, and she put a hand on Christian's shoulder. "Oh god..." she whispered, eyes growing wide. "He's in...such pain..." She sensed... actually something even worse than pain. It was absence. The lack of having ever felt anything at all. Just feeling it brought tears to her eyes.

"He's mentally retarded," Denny explained, as he quietly drew the closet open. Inside was mostly clothing and sports equipment. "I should have warned you."

Lily turned suspiciously, ready to tell him that she'd met mentally ill and this felt different, but gasped in surprise when he noticed two young girls peeking at her from the doorway. One was a young teenager, dark-skinned with Denny's hair, and the younger one must have been 7 or 8, with Lily's eyes and complexion.

"Oh, hello! Forgive me, you both...startled me..." Lily rubbed her forehead and reflexively winced. Both of them were giving her the same emotionless stare as Christian. Lily's senses ached, numbed by the congealing sense of repression weighing heavy on the room.

"Aylin and Hannah. Also retarded," Denny said simply, drawing a padded wooden baseball bat and coming up behind his wife. "Ejlert is the smart one. I always figured when he was born he stole all the intellect you had to give, leaving none to go around for the rest."

"How could you say such a thing?" Lily stood up suddenly, looking aghast at her husband. She then realized he was poised to swing.

"Well," Denny replied, clubbing her viciously upside the head, "he was smart enough not to come into this room."

A second bat to the head while she was down, and Lily was out cold.

Leave his presence. I've got a man watching in case he tries to escape, was the reply to Marcus' message.

A figure slowly approached from the far side of the alley. Her gait was reserved and submissive, and her facial features were familiar.

"Axel..." Lily said timidly, "Do you remember me? We met at the Purifier base..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 21, 2016, 09:30:46 PM**

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here ' Marita said ' handing the computer to Soren ' put that i the slot to the left and se what it can tell us. Hopeful its something useful whatever it is.' She said , pausing to look at the passing buildings after handing over the Computer.. the quality of buildings went downhill as they headed into a more industrial area.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 21, 2016, 11:06:40 PM**

Soren carefully placed the flash drive in the slot and waited for the monitor to boot up. A jolt as the SUV ran over something caused the laptop to jump and slap against his knees; luckily, Marita had invested in a special shock-resistant laptop.

He opened the flash drive and noticed that it was full of employee records. Soren hen noticed that all of the listed employees were Augments...the same ones who had died when their implants failed. Furthermore, it also had documents that listed each and every augment that the workers had by make and model. He scowled; this was a strange thing to put on a flash drive tucked in a discreet location. Finally, there was also a document that listed the serial numbers of several computers. And those computers were the one that Soren recognized as having been stolen during the hostage crisis at the farm. He softly swore as he read over the flash drive's contents.

He nudged Marita. "This is big. I think this flash drive wasn't intended for us...it almost looks like a dead drop for a spy or something."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 22, 2016, 11:49:33 AM**

Axel fidgeted uncomfortably, uneasy by the fact that the purifier, Marcus or whatever his name was, had left him alone. *What the hell is this? Some kind of trap?* He blinked. *Do they... do they want to see if I'll run?*If that was the case, he didn't want to know what'd happen if they caught him. Seconds passed, but the answer didn't miraculously come to him.

Fuck it. If they wanted him to run, Axel wasn't going to let them down. Bracing his legs, preparing to sprint down the alley to come out on the opposite side, Axel gave one last glance to the side of the alley where Marcus and the others were waiting - and a familiar voice froze him in his tracks.

He turned, clenching his jaw as the figure slowly approached him. Sure, he recognised her, small, and vulnerable, just as she'd been all that time ago in Lanthae. Just as she'd been in the base - until the two guards had interrupted and her true side had been revealed. He felt a chill run up his spine as he saw that she'd returned to her timid persona, so at odds with how she'd appeared the last time he'd seen her. And now he'd been left alone with her again?

Whatever was going on with Lily, Axel's level of trust for her was running pretty low. His headache seemed to double in intensity, Axel's skull feeling as though it was splitting. "... what the hell do you want?" he heard himself say, his voice venomous.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 22, 2016, 06:31:14 PM**

"Don't be scared…" the woman said softly, looking concerned. "I wasn't mad at you back when we met...it was the guards who ruined our introduction..."

She came forward. "You can probably guess I'm not Lily. I'm a clone of her." Her cheeks flushed. "You remember the cloning pods that you and Emilena used to make her new body? Well, you left the DNA sample behind, and it was intact enough for the Purifiers to make one more."

She made to wrap her arms around Axel. "I shouldn't be telling you this...but I want you to trust me. I want you to see me for who I am." Tears shone in her eyes. "I have just as much of a claim to Lily's name as she does. Don't I?"

The taser had removed Emilena's ability to control her extremities. Her assailant was radioing for backup, and Emilena took that chance to give Marcus as complete a message as she could.

"I got-ot a n-name…" she wheezed, fighting hard to counteract the stuttering caused by the electric shock. "A-an offic--cer...all the w-witnesses were--"

"Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law!" informed the police officer, grabbed her and handcuffing her. Another officer appeared and the two dragged her into an interrogation room where she was roughly strip-searched and given an orange jumpsuit to wear. While they didn't seem to notice there was ongoing call, she doubted it was going to be much use trapped in an evidence locker somewhere.

"How the hell did you get this uniform?" demanded her interrogator.

"I stole it from the industrial laundromat." Assuming Seryet was anything like Lanthae, the police had their uniforms laundered in bulk offsite. "The ID was forged. I've never met the woman."

"What were you looking for?" The man had narrow black eyes that seemed surprisingly disinterested. Not the attitude she would have used for this class of interrogation, but it wasn't her job to help him out.

"Information on who's spreading lies about my actions in Lanthae." Since he hadn't bothered to demand her real name, they’d no doubt already identified her by sight. “I was never a Purifier and I never killed an Augment. Well, not those.”

He snorted. “And you breaking into a government building and impersonating a police officer is supposed to help your case?”

“I was not *impersonating*!” snarled Emilena. “They never officially took my badge!”

He rolled his eyes. “I’ve heard enough about you, Echo. At least we won’t get your weekly applications anymore." He slapped hands decisively on the table and stood up. "Pat yourself on the back; you finally made it into the Seryet police department. To stay!”

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 10:39:44 PM**

So something out of a Bond Film. Minus the martinis fast women and cars. nope, we get the dangerous files in a dead drop..' she shook her head ' i could go for a martini right now..' she said .' anything else on it Soren?' she asked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 24, 2016, 05:27:38 PM**

"You're a clone." *Of course she is. You fucking moron.* A strangled laugh seemed to force its way from Axel's throat, and he was gripped by a sudden urge to slap himself for not seeing the obvious. *Always a step behind.*

He suddenly noticed she'd stepped closer, and he opened his mouth to speak... but it was left hanging open as the woman approached and he found himself staring into her eyes. The same dark eyes that he'd looked at when they'd met, that he'd felt himself falling into during that night in the trees and gazed into when she'd saved him during the pulse attack. The same eyes that had scrunched in anger as the fights began, as their voices battled to be heard over each other...

Axel felt her arms touch him.

"No!" he hissed, jerking backwards out of her reach. "Don't... you don't get to..." Axel gritted his teeth as he tried to search for the words, his fist clenching in frustration as his mind came up blank. "You have *no* idea what we went through. No idea what we are. What we were. No *goddamn* idea!" Even as he spoke, the memories came rushing back, more bad now than good. The nights when he'd woken up screaming, the sheets drenched in sweat. The panic attacks, nausea, the days on end spent in bed, the curtains drawn to hide in the darkness, no courage or energy to venture outside. And through it all, Lily growing more distant, drifting away from him.

And with the memories came the realisation, that for better or worse, this woman *wasn't* Lily.

"You... aren't... her," he said finally, trying to keep his voice even, almost succeeding. "You look like her. You sounds like her." He swallowed. "You smell like her. But you're *not.*" Axel's ear twitched. "Trust?" The rat spat on the floor. "What the fuck has trusting people ever done for me?!"

Marcus' claws were digging into his hands. After Emilena's hasty message, they hadn't heard anything else from her, only the sound of rustling - and finally silence. The doberman made himself calm down, think clearly. "She found something..." he muttered, partly to the others in the car, mostly to himself. "An officer... and witnesses..." All the witnesses were... killed? Bought out? Witnesses to what? He couldn't make any sense of it. They needed Emilena.

He looked across at Aaron. "We need to get her out."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 05:39:35 PM**

"Nothing..." The clone agreed. She didn't even seem phased by his harsh words, her tone was almost motherly. "Trusting hasn't gotten you anything. But that didnt stop you from trusting HER." The woman balled her fists. "The other Lily...the one you broke up with...don't forget that *she's a clone too.* The real Lily is a mutated decomposing corpse with no conscience."

She didn't approach him again, but her cheeks burnt and hot tears ran down her face. "And yet you still found a way to reach out to her doppleganger. You loved her as if she were real. You gave her a chance. Do I not deserve that same chance?"

Emilena said nothing as she was escorted to her cell. The guard had no choice words for her and after locking the door he left he to her thoughts.

Her goose was cooked. She'd found nothing worth investigating. The police officer was a good lead, but it didn't help her any. Her team would go on without her. And she'd rot.

Sitting in the dark, options running through her head before terminating themselves at the altar of undeniable logic, she wondered how she'd wound up where she sat. All she'D ever wanted to be was a cop. And somehow that passion, that single-minded drive that had carried her through thick and thin, had finally betrayed her.

Why didn't I just leave Almaya alone...? she thought for the very first time.

"I agree," said Flora in regard to Marcus' decision to save Emilena. She wanted that honest conversation she was promised.

"We might want to reconnect with the others first," noted a Purifier. "Safety in numbers and all. Plus I bet they'll be watching her like a hawk for at least the first night."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 25, 2016, 09:59:09 PM**

Soren scrolled through the files and found nothing. He undocked the flash drive and held the small silver stick in his hand. He chewed on his lip as he examined it. The Human then noticed something engraved on the metal case. In barely readable letters was the name "Brennan Synthetics".

"Nothing on the drive itself," he said. "But I got a name: Brennan Synthetics."

He then noticed that the SUV was heading towards the police station...as evidenced by the rather well-marked overhead signs on the elevated highways.

"Hey!" he shouted. "Why the fuck are you taking us there!?" He made a move to grab the steering wheel but the Purifier elbowed him back.

"Look, Inspector Gadget," the man growled. "Shut the fuck up and let me drive!" He turned the wheel and pulled into the parking lot of what was quite clearly a strip club and shut off the engine. He watched as a lean Anaconda slithered up to the window, flick her tongue out and sway to some unheard rhythm.

The Purifier ignored the prostitute and radioed Marcus. "Marcus, we're at the strip club that marks Seryet's Red LED District. Are you done at the police station or not?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 29, 2016, 01:34:50 PM**

Axel stared at the clone as she cried, his twitching face only serving to highlight the war being waged by his emotions. "I loved her," he found himself agreeing hoarsely. "I loved her more than anything. And that's when my life went to shit.

I don't know if you deserve a chance. I don't care. I'm done. I'm *done* with this." Turning abruptly, his voice cracking, Axel made for the entrance of the alley as bitter tears of his own started to blur his vision.

"For now," Marcus replied. "But we'll need to return. Echo's been captured and we need to extract her. Could have information we need." One of his claws dug into the flesh of his temple as he tried to think of their next move.

"Bring the others. We need to regroup," he eventually growled. "Meet at the Gilesspi Motel. 7:00. Make sure you aren't followed." Located in one of the shadier parts of town and two steps away from dilapidation, Marcus thought the motel should be the ideal place to lie low while they came up with a plan to get Emilena out.

Through the vehicle's window he saw the rat emerge from the alleyway. Marcus pressed a button on the door, the window sliding down a quarter with a slight hum. "Get in. We're moving out."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 29, 2016, 04:31:33 PM**

"Enjoy your time alone then," the woman said quietly as Axel made to leave. "I want to protect you from her, but you'll need to allow me first. I've already sent her on a wild goose chase, so you'll have some time to yourself. But she'll be back. You're in too deep to not pick a side...and it'll break my heart if you get hurt...but maybe it's for the best if you have to experience *being alone with her* for just a while longer."

She didn't follow when he left the alleyway.

The next day, almost evening. Flora steeled her face and walked into the Seryet Police Department. The receptionist raised suspicious eyebrows, but Flora suspected she was just being profiled as a teenager in a hoodie.

“I’m here to visit a prisoner,” she said, keeping her voice steady. According to their website, the visitation period ends in twenty minutes.

“Mmmm-hmmm, which one snookums?”

“Emilena Echo.” Flora held out a clipping from today’s newspaper. “Says here you got her.”

The receptionist neither confirmed nor denied. “ID please.” She hardly glanced at Shirley’s ID while passing a locker key over. “You’ve got twenty minutes. Please leave all electronics and other items in locker 5T. That key’s the only thing you may bring into the visitation area.”

Twenty minutes later, Flora found herself sitting on one side of a table with a scarred and grumpy vixen in an orange jumpsuit looking tiredly at her. They were in a holding area with guards at every wall, and other prisoners were enjoying visits from their significant others. “You got balls just coming and seeing me like this, kid,” were the first words out of the older woman's mouth. “You know you’re on a government list now, right?”

“Shirley’s on a government list," Flora replied, keeping her voice casual but low. "And I’m sure you know by now that I’m not really Shirley.” Flora was banking on the hustle and bustle of the many other visits happening around them to mask their conversation. “Which is what I want to understand. How’d you know I dyed my fur black?”

“You have aquamarine eyes.” Emilena almost seemed disinterested in explaining herself. “Never met a black wolf with eyes like that. So I plucked a few of your hairs when I stuffed you in the SUV, and the follicles were pink. Which of course only added more questions.”

“It’s been a while since I’ve have time to reapply the dye. But don’t worry, I’m not an Augment,” she added quickly before Emilena snapped her neck or something. “At least not by choice. My parents just did a lot of messed-up shit to my zygote. They were...free thinkers.”

“Mmm,” nodded Emilena. “I’ve been there. Did you know I’m only eight?”

Flora blinked. “Eight what?"

“Look up the Accelerated Growth Program.” Emilena checked her nails. “So please don’t start blaming your parents for how messed up your life is right now. We’re all responsible for our own decisions.”

The fur bristled on the back of Flora’s neck. “I wasn’t. I was actually coming to let you know that we haven’t forgotten you, and see if you’d like to give us a bit more info on...you know. Cause you cut off kinda abruptly before.”

Emilena thought. “Hmmm. You know what? No.”

Flora cocked an eyebrow. “No, you don’t have any more info…?”

“No, I wouldn’t like to.” Emilena picked dirt out from under her claws. “I got exactly what y’all need; testimonies, witness statements, and the name of the cop who silenced all those witnesses to kill the case. Tell the Purifiers if they want the dirt, bust me out. I’m not interested in being left behind.”

“We wouldn’t let that happen,” Flora assured her.

Emilena spared her a disbelieving glance. “Who’s ëwe’? I hardly know you, and anyone who knows me thinks I’m better off behind bars.”

“Maybe.” Flora stood up; her twenty minutes were up. “But not these bars. Even if you don’t believe the others have your back, you’ll see soon enough.”

Emilena narrowed her eyes and resolved to try and fashion some sort of weapon as soon as she was back in her cell. “Hey,” she interrupted as the folf was making to leave. “I never got my explanation. Lab rat or not, why are you on the run?”

Flora stopped. “Tell you what. You’re holding a name from us, so I’ll return the favor. If and when you cough up the name of the police officer, I’ll tell you my real name.” Her eyes flashed playfully, like she was having fun with their back-and-forth dynamic. “Trust me, that’s all you’ll need to put the pieces together.”

“I don’t normally let people toy with me,” growled Emilena as Flora left, but she still couldn’t help but admire the girl’s chutzpah.

Flora returned to the seedy apartment where both teams were holding out. "I think she got the hint, but she's not particularly open with expressing herself," she reported to Marcus. She gestured to a map of the police department spread on the floor. "They brought her in through this door, meaning she's probably held in the west cells, near the infirmary."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 01, 2016, 04:36:24 PM**

"I didn't order pizza," Soren said as he laid eyes on a young German Shepherd dressed in a deliveryman's outfit and holding a steaming box labeled "Arno River Italian Kitchen".

The deliveryman's tail lowered as he looked at the pizza box. "Could you just pay for it, please? It's coming out of my paycheck."

"Don't give a shit. Bye!" Soren slammed the door in the deliveryman's face. He sighed as he deadbolted the door.

"Who was it?" Anne called from the other room.

"Pizza deliveryman!" He noticed Aaron sitting on the couch, his SMG dangling from a sling and resting on his lap.

The Human wasn't permitted to carry a firearm unless they were actually on a mission so he was armed with a metal towel rack he ripped out of the decrepit bathroom.

Anne finished off her falafel pita and threw the wrapper into the trashcan. The mare sat cross-legged on the grimy carpeted floor as she looked over the map with Flora and Marcus.

"One problem, it's not like we can just drag her out through the front doors of the place." Anne took a sip of her beer. She pointed a finger to the floorplan. "If it is an elevated building, we could have someone fly up under and cut a hole through the floor and get her out that way."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 01, 2016, 10:16:36 PM**

Soren! be nice! Marita said strolling over the door ,. unlocking it and looking out the door. she saw the Pizza guy headed towards the elevator. Marita called out ' Hey! ' and made a '; come here' motion. The delivery boy came back his face looking downcast ' How much is it? Marita asked kindly ' 120 creds ' the German Shepard replied ' Thats before the tip.." Why dont we go with 200 creds?' Marita said handing him a cred card for him to swipe.' thanks mam. i mean it DOES come out of my check..' Whats on it. ' half and half, half pepperoni half everything." we'll take it. whats your name?' Billy Mam' well Billy thank you for the pizza" Marita said, as the swiper flashed green indicating a creds transfer. " thank you for the tip mam. Have a good evening " the pizza boy smiled as he handed Marita the pizza and walked away toward the elevator. Marita went back in and relocked the door. ' she opened the pizza box and let the smell of warm pizza waft over the room. " well guys dinner tonight is pizza. Dig in. and Soren, you need to work on your people skills. Kid was just trying to make a few creds, who cares if you didnt order it, point is, someone did. Might have been Shirley."
marita walked over to the entryway to pther room and stuck her head in ' pizza Girls! better grab a slice before they are all gone" She said cheerfully.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 01, 2016, 10:32:12 PM**

Flora helped herself to a slice but otherwise stayed out of it. She'd done her part for busting out Emilena, now it was someone else's job to risk their lives infiltrating a police station.

By all rights, Lily knew she should be waking up with a splitting headache, but her powers had already healed all the damage by the time she regained consciousness. However the only thing it couldn't heal, her mental confusion and horror, still left her badly disoriented as she tried to get her bearings.

She was in a decent sized basement, strapped naked to a wooden chair bolted to the floor. Her arms were bound to the armrests with heavy leather straps. From the ceiling dangled a bare light bulb. Along the left side of the basement was placed a row of cramped wire cages, the doors firmly shut with padlocks holding them closed. At the far end of the room was some sort of wooden table, metal manacles connected to the four corners by chains. A thick-looking bag had been left on the table's surface, and coiled on the floor next to it was a dirty garden hose, hooked up to a tap in the wall. Water was pooled on the table's surface, and the bag looked damp, as if it had recently been soaked. A car battery with attached nodes sat securely beside the table.

"What the hell?" she breathed, almost passing out again from shock. She wondered if this was all a terrible dream. Jolting her body furiously in an attempt to dislodge the chair, she succeeded only in making several loud thumps against the armrests.

She still couldn’t believe just how psychotic her husband turned out to be. He’d been emotionally and physically torturing her (and, more likely than not, her children) for god knows how long. Everything in this room was designed to cause maximum pain and discomfort without leaving any physical marks. Her head spun as every assumption she’d made about her life before she lost her memory in Lanthae was dashed.

The featureless wooden door on the left wall slid open and Denny entered the room silently. He must have heard the ruckus from shaking her chair.

“*Denny!*” Lily screamed at him in equal parts disbelief and rage. “What the hell is this? What--*Mmmph*!?” Without another word, her husband crossed behind her and wrapped a heavy plastic bag over her head. Tightening it until the cinch dug painfully into her neck, he thrashed her violently until she was passing out from oxygen deprivation. But before unconsciousness could take her, he would spared her a single short breath before doing it again.

After her protests had dissolved into haggard sobs, he suddenly ripped the bag off of her head. Turning on the hose, he shot her directly in the face with a harsh jet of stinging frigid water.

“Denny…!” she whimpered, shivering violently in her restraints.

“I’m reminding you of how things work around her,” he said matter-of-factly. From a dark chest he withdrew a sock containing something round and viciously whipped her across the face. The smell of citrus suddenly blended with the scent of musk and blood in her nose. She remembered that beating someone with oranges wouldn’t leave a bruise.

Denny had a few choice lashes for her chest, legs, and crotch before graduating to a broom with a towel wrapped around the end. “You don’t go outside anymore,” he ordered, broadsiding her in the stomach. “You don’t ask questions. You take care of my kids, and you ask for my permission to do anything.”

“Oh god, I remember!” shrieked Lily, eyes dilating with sudden realization. “I remember this! I remember everything!” Her eyes flooded with hot tears and all the fight went out of her posture. “This all makes sense now!”

Denny smiled. “Good. Glad we’re on the same page.” He watched with satisfaction as Lily broke down in front of him. “Now you’re acting how I remember you, too.” Stepping forward, he pet his wife’s face softly. “There, there,” he consoled. “It’s all right. You were a bad wife and an even worse mother, but there’s still time to redeem yourself.”

Lily blinked. She looked up at Denny, eyes pinched with fear. "R-redeem myself?"

Denny nodded. "It'll take time. But I think you can do it." His hand traveled down her neck. "You can make up for all these months you abandoned your children…" His hand tremored for a second as he shook his head dizzily. "You can...fulfill your duties as my...wife…"

"Denny, what's wrong?" asked Lily, as he dropped down to his knees in front of her.

Denny blinked his eyes in an attempt to regain his focus. His hand fell onto her thigh as his head, suddenly too exhausted to stay vertical, dropped into her lap. It was at this point that he suddenly realized something was very wrong.

"Denny…" Lily's voice had lost all trace of weakness. "That feeling is your red blood cells forgetting to resupply with oxygen. That feeling is your heart shutting down. If you fall asleep, Denny, you're not going to wake up."

Denny's eyes flew open. He tried to speak but his mouth couldn't form the words.

"I don't want to kill you Denny…" Lily assured him. "Untie me, and then we can be happy together. Forever."

Denny's arms suddenly found their energy restored. Urgently he undid the leather straps on Lily's chair. As soon as he was free, Lily stood up, letting her husband crumple to the ground.

"I've been around the city since I left you, Denny…" Lily kneeled over her fallen husband, maintaining a firm grip on his wrist so she could keep draining his energy. "I've met a lot of people. Actually I've met quite a few who shared the same pastimes as yourself."

Denny gaped like a fish as his eyes lost their focus and his limbs started twitching of their own accord.

"As a matter of fact, I specialized in letting them torture me." Her lips were millimeters from his ear. "And you know what I learned from them, Denny? I learned you were a goddamn *amateur*."

Her nails dug into his flesh. Denny cried out in agony as every nerve in his body was filled with unimaginable pain. In seconds his bladder overloaded with urine, burst, and then repaired itself. His airway shriveled up from asthma, his lungs collapsed, and then they restored themselves. His tongue swelled with tumors and his eyes burnt from jaundice and dehydration. Pus leaked from his pores and then was reabsorbed in oily bursts.

Lily kept up Denny's personal cycle of regeneration for hours, until her powers informed her that he was a comatose vegetable. Then she got up and gripped the back of the door. Prying it open, she found her children at the top of the stairs leading down to the basement. Evidently they'd heard Denny's screams.

"Christian…" she consoled, "Aylin...Hannah..." *I could heal them*, Lily thought, taking the frightened children into her arms. *I could restore their minds, cure the years of developmental damage. But what then? I don't have time for them, and their lives would be forever stunted by the memories. No,* she resolved, watching as one by one they dropped lifelessly to the floor around her. *Better to end the pain. They were all going to die someday anyway.*

Not even bothering to find clothes, she opened the front door and walked into the cul-de-sac. It was a moonless night, and nobody was around to see her leave.

Except one. From a crack between the venetian blinds in his room, Ejlert North watched as his family's murderer left the neighborhood the same way she had come.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 02, 2016, 12:05:17 AM**

Aaron nodded at Soren, indicating he did the right thing.

"If it's one thing I learned from staying in shitholes like this, it's that unsolicited deliveries are usually covering up for something," Aaron replied. "So what's the plan?

Soren ignored the odor of pizza. He already had some catfish nuggets he had purchased from a local fast food joint.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 02, 2016, 02:03:19 PM**

"The building isn't elevated," Marcus said, shaking his head. "Can't get in that way."

Slouching back in a rickety wooden chair, Axel craned his neck to look at the map. He was clutching a cheap bottle of beer that he'd managed to buy from the small, questionable bar on the ground floor. It was like drinking dishwater, but at this point he'd take what he could get. "What if we cracked open her cell wall? Get her out then haul ass?" A slice of pizza was offered to him, and Axel swatted it away irritably. "You kidding me? I'm not touching that, we didn't order it."

"Too loud. Draw too much attention. And the walls are probably too thick to do it in any reasonable amount of time." Marcus grunted, running a finger over the section of the map depicting the west cells. "Don't even know which cell she's in. If you're right," he flicked his stare to Flora briefly, "then we can pinpoint it to this general area, but it's a big precinct. Too many cells to take our chances." The doberman frowned. "On top of that, we don't know how much extra surveillance is on her."

"Shit." Axel slumped back and took another swig.

Marcus kept staring at the map, his teeth grinding. There had to be *some* way of getting in and escorting her out under some false pretense... "Could be some way to clear out the west cells. Cause something to make them temporarily transfer the prisoners. Get to her while she's being moved," he muttered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2016, 03:59:25 PM**

"What about a water leak?" suggested Flora. "I remember when one of my...a concert that I was attending...blew a valve and flooded the stadium. Fucked up all the electronics too. Maybe they got a fire sprinkler system or something," she shrugged.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 03, 2016, 06:18:02 PM**

Anne looked around the room. It was then she noticed the fire alarm on the wall. She smiled. "Why not set off the fire alarm directly?" As if anticipating everyone's response, she spoke. "We're not going to start a huge fire in the police station. We can just buy some hotsticks, take out the ignition system, wrap it in some paper and then let the whole thing on fire near a a smoke detector."

The sound of a flushing toilet indicated that Aaron had just used the bathroom. "Any luck or are we just stuck in an infinite loop?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2016, 06:42:15 PM**

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i could hack the system to set off the water sprinklers' Marita offered ' most of those are run by computers , and automatically turn on and off.."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 05, 2016, 07:36:14 AM**

"If she can start the water system without us having to start a fire, we'll do that. Less risks we take, the better." Marcus looked at Marita. "They won't evacuate the area just like that. You need to keep them on, make sure nobody on their end can turn them off. Eventually, they'll have to move them."

He went back to studying the map. "Next question is how do we get in a position where we can get to her. She won't be moved through an area near the public." The cell block on the south-most side of the precinct was the closest to that on the west where Emilena was being kept, the blocks joined by a corridor which essentially ran in an L shape. He peered closer. Along the corridor the prisoners would be lead through was a large electrical maintenance room. *That could be our in.* Marcus looked at the hacker again. "How easily would you be able to gain access to the electrical systems? Disrupt the power around the building? And how soon?" He tapped on the electrical room on the map. "If the problems are persistent enough, it could be possible for us to say we're there to deal with the problem. The prisoners would be led past the maintenance room. Could be our chance to get her."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 05, 2016, 10:31:23 AM**

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quite easily ' Marita said confidently ' it would take me less than 1 minute. Marita loked over the map noticing all the electrical outlet. ' the easiest way would be to create a cascade effect, knock out sections of the buildings power one after the other. this isnt one single connected system, otherwise it would be easy to kill the power to the entire station. its broken up into 5 segments, the 3 floors, the prison cells and maintenance area. yeah the maintenance area has its own separate system, so that they can tap and run power from it if 1 of the others has a problem. as for how long we could control it..well there is a risk that the system could lock me out after a few minutes. so we're looking at a window of 5 minutes, more if I'm lucky. for simplicity's sake, we'll say you have 5 minutes" Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 05, 2016, 09:37:45 PM**

Flora helped herself to another slice of pizza. Axel was correct that it wasn't safe to eat something that seemed to come from nowhere, but she'd already had a piece so there was little reason not to continue.

"So who's going?" asked a purifier, ignoring the pizza. "Small team I assume, sounds a bit more stealthy than our usual M.O."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 06, 2016, 03:50:54 PM**

"Small team," Marcus agreed. "Three or four maximum. Less of us, less attention." He turned, his grizzled face scanning everyone in the room. "Have to be unremarkable. People they won't recognise. Since they won't have any recent records of me, I'll go."

He looked at Marita. "We'll need you here to deal with the computer systems and make sure nothing surprises us." Marcus' eyes flicked to the disheveled rat sitting to his right. "Not you. They'd see you coming a mile away."

Axel shrugged. "Whatever. Works for me." He stood up and lurched over to the sagging bed in the corner of the room, flopping back against the greasy-looking covers with a sigh as the dregs of his beer sloshed around the bottom of the bottle.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 06, 2016, 08:28:58 PM**

Anne finished her bottle of beer and tossed it into the recycling bin. "I'll go."

It was then that Aaron walked into the room. He overheard the whole conversation. The German Shepherd shook his head. "You have any run-ins with the law recently?"

Anne's ears splayed as she wrung her hands. "Well..." Her body began to twitch as withdrawal set in. She quickly grabbed a pill from the blister package sitting on the end table and swallowed it without water.

Aaron shook his head. "You're not coming. Look, how do we know you're not going to blue screen on us? And furthermore, with all the shit you've been up to, the cops'll recognize you by sight."

The other Purifer pointed to Soren who was sitting on the couch. "Go take Inspector Gadget. Far as I could tell, he doesn't have a record."

Aaron rubbed his muzzle with his hand. He could literally smell the couple having sex in the room next door. "Soren's someone we take if we need something found, repaired, taken apart or destroyed. Remember, this is a guy who charged into our base in Lanthae -- alone, mind you -- when his friends were held captive there."

(OOC - "Blue screen" - slang for sudden and erratic behavioral changes or unconsciousness or other adverse effects from drug withdrawal.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 06, 2016, 10:43:38 PM**

"And we might need any of that shit," grunted a Purifier. "We're not exactly going in with all the answers here. I bet there's gonna be a lot of improvising no matter how prepared we try to be."

"Unless you'd rather go yourself, Aaron" suggested another. "Though we might want at least one teammate whom Echo would consider an actual ally. Keep her cooperative."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 08, 2016, 08:50:23 AM**

There was a knock on the door. Soren peered through the peephole and saw that it was a large Anaconda with a cart full of cleaning supplies.

He opened the door just a little bit, the chain keeping the door from opening further. The other half of his body was concealed by the door and the railing he had as a weapon was hidden as well.

"Housekeeping," the Anaconda said.

"Could you come back in a few hours?" Soren said.

The Anaconda said nothing but slithered away. As soon as the janitor was out of sight, he quickly shut and deadbolted the door.

"Who was it?" Anne called from the other room

"Housekeeping!" Soren shouted back. He resumed his position on the couch.

"Good point," Anne said. "Soren's the only person that Emilena trusts. But let's face it; he's hot-headed and impulsive. Granted, he is good at thinking on his feet."

Aaron rubbed his muzzle with a hand. "We'll need that fast thinking in the event the whole operation goes to shit. And with how little we know, it probably will go to shit."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 09, 2016, 04:12:15 PM**

"Alright. Almaya comes." Truth be told, Soren's lone charge into the Purifier's base screamed reckless to Marcus, and that was the kind of trait he'd have preferred to avoid. But they were right - a familiar face was more likely to keep things smoother with Emilena, and Soren was the least likely to draw attention.

He glanced at the cheap, plastic clock hanging on the wall, aware of time slipping away from them. "We need at least one more."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2016, 04:23:02 PM**

we;ll need someone who isnt known to the cops and someone who wont draw attention ' Marie said " i'll go' she volunteered "marita will be here doing her job, and i can keep a low profile. We're going to need someone who doesnt draw attention, and i've got a clean record. Besides clock is ticking..'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 09, 2016, 07:44:27 PM**

Aaron nodded. "All right, we good to go?"

He looked at everyone else.

Anne exited the bathroom. "So what's my role."

Aaron looked at the horn protruding from the mare's forehead. "You stay here and eavesdrop on police chatter so the hacker can work around them."

He then pointed to the two Purifiers. "You two stand guard. Remember, no one but us enters the room. And there must be one person standing guard at all times. Got that?"

The German Shepherd checked to see if his pistol was still inside his chest holster. "Hey Inspector Gadget! Get over here!"

"Coming!" Soren jogged over to where everyone was located.

Aaron nodded. "Good. You're coming with us to rescue Emilena."

Soren said nothing but he inwardly sighed. Rescuing her wasn't something he looked forward to...though getting oversided by the four Purifier operatives in the room for refusing wasn't appealing either.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2016, 07:58:36 PM**

Mari went over to soren and aaron ' so who's going to be the driver she asked' i'll drive if no one objects.
- rose headed over to Flora ' Hey shirley. how are you doing?' she asked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2016, 08:24:30 PM**

There was another knock, and since Soren was no longer the closest to the door Flora went and checked it out by sliding the Judas window open to see a well-dressed young man with combed back hair and a briefcase.

"Hello, I was wondering if you were interested in hearing about our lord and savior Jesus Christ?" he asked.

"Sorry, we worship Satan in this hotel room." she replied. "Wanna buy a pitchfork?"

She received only stunned silence. Considering this enough, she closed the slide and returned to the room. "Hey Rose, if you wanna learn about Jesus, there's a guy here wanting to talk to you," she told the older woman, hoping to dodge the imminent conversation herself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 10, 2016, 03:35:33 PM**

Marcus shook his head at Marie. "You're not driving. Something goes wrong, I want to *know* we can get out of there as soon as possible. I'll take the wheel going there, Aaron drives us back."

Still lying on the bed, Axel the last of his beer and dropped the bottle on the floor. It rolled along the grimy carpet and came to stop against the wall with a *clunk*. "You aren't gonna be able to just walk in like that. If you say you're there to repair stuff, you need to look like..." The rat waved his hand. "... repair guys."

"There's a maintenance storage room downstairs. With any luck, there'll be some overall we can take. If they aren't too distinctive, police at the station shouldn't look too closely," Marcus said without turning.

"We don't have much time. Need to start preparing now." Marcus glanced at Marita. "Try to get into their system now. Disrupt what you can. We leave for the station in the morning."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 10, 2016, 08:32:13 PM**

on it' marita said and began typing away at her computer. should be in in a few minutes.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 11, 2016, 11:11:48 PM**

Aaron nodded. "I'll be back in a moment." He exited the room and made his way into the hallway that stank of cheap air freshener, cleaners, chem-burners, urine and alcohol. He passed by a bellhop moving some luggage into a room.

The German Shepherd took the elevator to the lobby where a Boa Constrictor and his Rat rent boy checking in. He ignored the duo and took a left turn where upon he came across said maintenance storage room. Finding the door unlocked, he opened it and grabbed the jumpsuits that looked like they'd fit.

Aaron's ears pricked up as he detected the scent of of someone approaching. Thinking quickly, he squeezed himself between the wall and the industrial washing machine. He willed his heart to stop beating so quickly but all that was for naught when he heard the person speak. "I know you're in here. Come out before I call the cops."

Defeated, Aaron emerged from his hiding spot and found himself looking at a young Asian man.

"How...How did you know I was in here?" Aaron asked.

"You left the door open and I was able to hear your heartbeat," the man replied.

"But that's impossible for a Human to hear!"

The man pointed to his ear. "Cochlear implant. I was born deaf but with it, I hear perfectly. And I voided the warrantee to give myself super-hearing. But enough of that, tell me what you're going to do with those uniforms you stole or I call the cops."

Aaron's ears pivoted back and forth as he tried to think of a plan. He then hit upon a brilliant idea. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a 1,000 credit chit. "I suppose 1,000 creds won't make this encounter disappear?"

The man looked at it. That was over ten times his hourly wage and simply for ignoring a thief stealing janitorial jumpsuits. He nodded. "You have a deal."

Aaron tossed the man the credit chit and left the room.

The door opened and the two Purifier guards got ready for action but stopped when they saw it was just Aaron.

He threw the jumpsuits on the couch. "Okay, I got the clothing."

(OOC - Chem-burner is slang for a chemically ignited self-lighting cigarette.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 14, 2016, 01:18:34 AM**

Flora parted the fur on the back of her hand and bit her lip when she saw a trace of pink . "Welp, good luck with the rescue all; I'm taking a shower." Departing to the bathroom, she locked the door and then, thinking she should play it safe, wedged the scale between the door and the sink to double-reinforce it. With freaks like these people walking around, she'd prefer to not be rudely interrupted.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 20, 2016, 02:22:58 PM**

The dark, overcast clouds of the early morning had melted away, revealing a clear, icy blue sky above the city. An elderly man, up early for another of his walks which seemed to help ease the pain in his knee, sat hunched over on a bench, his stick-like figure hidden behind a large newspaper. His frail hands slowly turned the page. A *Brennan Synthetics* ad filled one page of the cheap, pulpy paper, telling him to 'Step towards the future'. "*Too old for that shit,*" he thought. Besides, the way things were going for them lately, he wouldn't have to worry about seeing their adverts for much longer. He scanned the other page, and his eyes passed over a piece squashed into a tiny section at the bottom of the page, something about a shootout in one of the poorer parts of the city.

The old man lowered the newspaper and squinted up at the police station squatting across from him, on the other side of the street. "Great work protecting the city." With a sigh, his breath condensing into a small cloud in the chilly air, he began the laborious process of easing himself up. He didn't pay any attention to the plain black vehicle which pulled up onto the sidewalk a little further up the road.

Behind the wheel as the engine idled, Marcus glanced at the clock on the dashboard. *8:15 AM. Making good time.* He adjusted the buttons on his grey jumpsuit then turned to look at Aaron and Marie, similarly dressed. "We're here. Get ready." Marcus lifted his cell phone. "Marita, how's it looking on your end?" he growled into it.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 20, 2016, 04:50:32 PM**

I'm in. just waiting for you to tell me to spring the system.' Marita replied over the phone.' and it will be sprung. you'll have 10 minutes to get Emilena out. I cant promise more time than that
_ ready on my end " marie said Cover story ready for use."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 23, 2016, 05:44:25 PM**

Soren adjusted his stolen jumpsuit. The clothing fit him remarkably well. He sniffed the sleeve and noticed that it smelled freshly laundered. A toolbox with assorted plumbing equipment and tools was next to him. Buried under the pipes, wrenches and screwdrivers was the SMG that he had been loaned.

Aaron turned to Marie. "Plumbers right?"

Soren held up the toolbox. "Got it."

Aaron turned to Marcus. "All right, let's get this shit on the road." He looked at the police station. The station itself was ringed by electrified fences and armed drones flitted through the air, scanning for any escapees. The only way in was through a guard post and a heavy metal gate.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2016, 10:38:27 PM**

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yeah. Plumbers, just here to fix a leak on the second floor.' Marie said, ' we've got the parts and everything.' She said, patting the toolbox she carried ' alright. Lets go fix this "problem' she said getting out the side of the vehicle with a casual air, looking for all the world like an ordinary plumber.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 24, 2016, 06:48:56 PM**

The guard waved them through, motioning to open the metal gate for them. They looked enough like plumbers with the uniforms and the clipboards that he felt no reason to suspect them.

* * *

Back at the hideout, Lily took a deep breath as she observed the room where Axel and the others were hiding out. Gritting her teeth, she marched up to the door and found it locked. She knocked impatiently.

"Chrissake, who is it now?" muttered Flora, who was on the couch playing a first person shooter on her smartphone. "Any reason we picked the most popular hotel room in the city? I'm not answering it this time."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **March 27, 2016, 03:54:44 PM**

As the gate rattled open to let them pass, Marcus felt his attention drawn to the drones hovering ominously above them. If they opened fire, the team would be shredded by the bullets. He shared a brief glance with Aaron. *We can't afford to fuck up.*

They soon drew close to the main entrance, and pushing open the heavy double doors found themselves standing in the main lobby of the station. An anxious looking man sat behind the reception desk spotted them walking in and stood up, waving them over with a pained expression. "You here for the water system?"

Marcus nodded, indicating their uniforms and holding up the large duffle bag he was carrying. "That's us."

"Oh, thank christ." The receptionist sighed, relieved. Marcus noticed that his uniform seemed damp. "It's been acting up for the last... couple of hours now. It's all over the place too. Tried to go for a piss half an hour ago and the sprinklers..." The man shook his head. "Anyway. If you could all step step through the scanner please, one at at time. You'll be led through after. And I'll need that bag." He held his hand out.

""Sure." Handing it over, Marcus approached the tall structure to the right of the desk, shaped vaguely like a doorway, and stepped slowly through, allowing the scan to pass over him and feed to image back to the receptionist's monitor. He couldn't help feel a sense of relief that he'd left his gun back at the motel. The receptionist fed the duffle bag through a similar device, and nodded as the image returned showed only wrenches and other tools. HE motioned to Aaron and Marie. "Alright, come on."

The black sedan slowed as it approached the guard post, the tinted window sliding down as the vehicle stopped beside the heavyset officer. "Identification," he grunted.

A slender hand reached out, flipping open a detective's badge imprinted with the initials H.P.D. "Detective Hengsha, Holmia P.D."

The guard peered at the badge, then leaned over slightly to get a look at who the quiet voice belonged to. He was met with the impassive gaze of a small, thin-faced woman, asian. Her dark eyes stared at him for a second longer, then a warm smile creased her face. "Looks like it's going to be a nice day."

Straightening, the guard waved her through, already counting down the hours until his lunch break.

"Thank you." Rolling up her window, her friendly expression vanished. She pulled the car forward then swung to the left towards the parking on the side of the police station. Pulling into a place, she turned the engine off then slipped a cell phone from her pocket. "I'm through. Felix did good work with the badge."

"Good," came the reply. "You're clear on your task?"

"Yes. Find out what she knows, what she's told others, then deal with her. Echo won't be a problem for us."

"Excellent. Good luck then." The voice paused briefly. "And Junko... be careful."

Junko smiled for a moment, a genuine smile. "I will. Contact you soon." Hanging up, she exhaled briefly, then opened the car door, the tiny vial of ricin sewn into her belt weighing nothing.

Axel groaned, peeling his eyes away from the TV screen where Dr. Roberts was helping a grieving family deal with the loss of a father, or a child, or something. Axel didn't particularly care, he was just looking for a distraction from his current shitty situation. "Why do we even need to open the door. What's the fucking point."

"Maybe it's more free pizza," one of the Purifiers grunted, accompanied by enthusiastic nods by his teammates. He pointed a beefy finger at Axel. "Open it."

"Goddammit." Painstakingly, Axel slowly raised himself up off the couch and approached the door, pulling it open with a sigh. The sigh died in his throat when he saw who was on the other side. The rat blinked, shaking his head. "I thought I told you - I'm *done*. I don't care about your problems."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 29, 2016, 12:00:28 AM**

Soren kept his calm as his toolbox was scanned. He prayed that they didn't notice the SMG he tucked inside. Luckily, the receptionist let him through after he was scanned for explosives.

He let out a breath he didn't know he had been holding as he looked around the interior. Sure enough, there were "Wet Floor" signs seemingly everywhere as janitors mopped up puddles.

Aaron nudged Soren. "We're not going down that way." He then looked at the placards on the concrete wall for directions. A camera overhead kept an eye on them. He shot it a glance out of the corner of his eye but otherwise ignored it. As long as they acted like they knew what they were doing, no one would suspect them anything.

Soren turned to Aaron and hefted his toolbox. "Okay, let's fix the busted-ass sprinklers." It was a coded term to continue their plan and disguise their intentions by sounding like something a group of plumbers would say.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 01, 2016, 12:26:37 PM**

"What on Earth makes you think I'm here for *you*?" snarled Lily. "Get the hell out of my way!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 08, 2016, 01:43:17 PM**

Marie made her way up the steps, carrying her toolbox. Water ran down the steps from above, indicating that the sprinklers had affected the second foor as well, and likely all the floors.' she smiled inwardly ' Marita was very good at hacking, this was going rather well, so far. she paused at the top of the steps, and stepped into a medium-sized ool of water' he pointed to the left ' lets start down here' she said. bring the vacuum' she added ' using one of the agreed codewords.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 10, 2016, 12:03:53 PM**

Soren nodded. "Bring the vacuum" was code for following the speaker. He had pondered how to get Emilena out of there but he figured that Marie had everything under control.

A Python janitor ignored the group as she tried to divert the flow of water coming from up the stairs and into a floor drain.

Aaron's booted feet sloshed through the puddles on the concrete floor. Most of the sprinklers had been shut off by the in-house repair team. "You know, we might have to turn off water to the whole building before we can fix the leak." Again, this was a code phrase that had been agreed on to mean that security systems and guards might have to be taken out after they got Emilena.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 10, 2016, 02:16:38 PM**

Axel scowled at who he took to be Lily's clone, his crooked ear twitching. "You know what? Fuck off," he said and swung the door shut in her face. Muttering under the breath, he skulked back to the couch, throwing an irritated glance over his shoulder to one of the Purifiers. "Your pet's arrived."

Marcus glanced sharply at Aaron and Soren. "Only if we need to." Killing more cops would only bring more trouble down on them, and right now that was the last thing he thought they needed. Following behind Marie as they headed towards the maintenance corridor, he shared the German Shepard's concern about Emilena. If she'd been moved from the cell block already, it could throw the plan out the window. He raised his cell phone. "You manage to track down those spare pipes yet?" he said lowly, the code phrase for *where's Emilena?* - trusting that Marita had managed to access the CCTV feed.

Striding confidently to the front doors of the precinct, Junko pushed the doors open... and paused briefly when she saw the disarray the building was in. The smell of damp filled her nostrils, and as she scanned the room a disgruntled looking officer shambled across the far side of the hall holding a bucket. He stopped in front of a persistent leak and dropped the bucket under it, looking like he was wondering where his life went wrong.

Shaking her head, Junko walked further in, stopping in front of the reception desk. "Detective Hengsha, Holmia P.D." As the receptionist glanced up from his computer, Junko leaned forward amiably, her elbows resting against the corner of the counter. "Looks like it's not such a good morning for you guys over here."

The man blinked. "Yeah, that's... putting it lightly. Can I help you?"

She straightened. "You've recently detained a individual who could be crucial to a case I'm leading. Emilena Echo. I need to speak to her."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 10, 2016, 03:45:41 PM**

spare pipes have been located. they are under the bench' Marita replied ' this was code for ' shes in a cell down to the left'' you guys better move someone just came up the front desk looking for a 'package" Our package in fact. I calculate you guys have 3 minutes max" Marita said.' Bust a pipe"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 10, 2016, 06:36:19 PM**

Lily seethed with anger, but couldn't restrain her surprise. She didn't remember Axel having enough gall to slam a door in her face like that. She furiously slammed her fist into the door so hard the hinges rattled.

Nothing happened so she scoped out the window and saw Flora on the couch. "Hey, let me in!" she snapped.

"Sorry, busy playing with Barbie." Flora didn't take her eyes off her phone game, and had to fight to repress a smile as Lily growled a strangled cry of frustration and disappeared from the window.

Emilena's relatively nonsensical dream was interrupted by a sudden flash of anger and shock. Rolling over with a start, she fell out of her cot for the first time since she was five.

She would have reflected on where the odd rage came from, had a cold dunk into three inches of water not dashed all other thoughts from her mind. As is often the case, by the time she'd staggered to her feet and shimmied her soaked jumpsuit off, she'd lost all memory of her dreams.

What the hell is this? she wondered, looking at the hallway and seeing the water damage was not restricted to her cell. "Tax dollars at work..." she muttered, hiding on her cot for the time being and beginning to wring her jumpsuit dry.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 13, 2016, 12:04:52 AM**

"Let's hope those pipes get here within three minutes or we'll have to come back tomorrow," Aaron said. He sniffed the air, trying to catch Emilena's scent. The humidity made it only slightly more difficult. He pointed down the leftmost fork of a three-split hallway.

"If the package is damaged, do we accept it or do we demand a refund?" Soren asked. He was thankful his boots were non-slip and waterproof as he sloshed through the puddles. He passed by a janitor who breathed a sigh of relief as she vacuumed up the massive puddles.

Both those phrases were coded terms for "We need to find Emilena in three minutes or we have to get out of here." and "If we run into the person looking for Emilena, do we kill them or simply say we don't have Emilena?" respectively.

The duo passed by several empty cells. Apparently the guards had been moving the prisoners to the non-flooded cells.

Anne was sleeping off her stimulant crash in the corner of the grimy motel room. Thanks to her Equine physiology, she was literally asleep on her feet. Even Lily's outburst failed to rouse her.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 15, 2016, 10:21:14 PM**

we accept the damage and fix it as best we can ": Marita replied : this was code for" get Emilena out any way you can." " Incoming eta 90 seconds. 'Better find that leak."
_ Marita sniffed in the air and made a beekine to a cell that was at the top of the steps. she

glared into the cell then made a motion to the other " found defective pipe" she said. ' this was code for ' found her'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 18, 2016, 01:53:07 PM**

Marcus stopped in front of the indicated cell. His features gave no sign of recognition as his stare passed coldly through the bars onto the soaked Emilena within. Shifting his grip on the tool bag, he glanced surreptitiously around. Two guards at the end of the corridor, talking together but every now and then shooting looks in their direction. On the other side of the cell block, another guard was patrolling outside cells containing more prisoners waiting to be moved.

He grunted. "The inner surface of the pipes is oxidising." This was coded slang for '*There are 3 guards in the immediate vicinity who could be a problem if we want to get her out. Also, as we now have a pressing time limit, we need to think fast*'. But how the hell were they going to get her out and make off with her?

He heard footsteps approaching from behind, and Marcus turned to see a new police officer walking in their direction. He waited until the officer drew closer then cleared his throat. "Excuse me sir, we've been brought in to fix the problem with the water pipes, and we need to take a look at the pipe network which runs through this cell. But there's a prisoner..."

The officer shrugged. "You can have all the time you want. Taking her across to the interrogation rooms, you can get inside in a second." He stepped past Marcus, the corner of his mouth creasing as he saw the condition of the cell. "Shit, it's like a swimming pool in there... Come on, someone wants to speak to you."

As the officer spoke, Marcus locked eyes at his teammates. *This could be our chance. Just need to pick the best moment.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 18, 2016, 04:59:09 PM**

Soren locked eyes with Emilena as the guard prepared to unlock the cell. He shifted slightly, the toolbox's weight starting to strain on him. He looked at the inside of the cell, focusing his attention on the concrete wall. "Do you think we can clean the pipes here or do we gotta take 'em back to the shop for cleaning?" This was a code for *"Do we just kill the guards while they move Emilena? Or do we break her out when she's in the interrogation room?*"

Aaron shook his head. "We don't got the tools to properly clean them here. That'll have to wait until we get back to the shop." This was the coded response for "*Too many guards here. We'll break her out at the interrogation room*."

Soren maintained his calm demeanor as he peered down the empty cell block. The time limit hung heavy on his mind. If the person looking for Emilena showed up any time soon, then there was a good chance they'd have to blow their cover...violently.

Aaron looked at the clock on the wall. "Damn it! Those pipes should be here by now!" This was the coded response for "*We're running really short on time now!*."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2016, 06:07:04 PM**

Emilena glanced up, sighed and slipped her jumpsuit back on. "Why'd I even bother drying the damn thing out..." Sloshing her way to the door, she held her hands through the bars and allowed herself to be handcuffed. Then she stepped aside as the guard unlocked the celldoor open and began leading her down the corridor.

It was then that she noticed Marcus' team. Her pupils dilated and she almost broke pace. She spared a glance back at her cell, where a pocket behind the toilet stored an assortment of crudely-fashioned shivs. *The ONE time I don't think to bring one...I'm going to look unprepared in front of everyone*, she griped wistfully to herself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 21, 2016, 03:24:24 PM**

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marie walked behind her ostensibly cleaning up the puddles of water with her vacuum. she gave brief glances to the others, that said ' ' when she gets to the interrogation room ' get her out. just try abd make sure we dont get recorded on camera>' we need a check on cartridges' he said into her talkie ' which was code for " can you kill the video cameras in the interrogation room? ' Cartridges are full' Marita replied " This meant " i'm on it.."

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 25, 2016, 11:18:05 AM**

"This way." The officer assigned to show Junko the way to the interrogation room indicated a door to his left, and as she approached he turned the handle, pushing it open.

She nodded her thanks as she followed him through. "The layout of this building's pretty confusing. You must need a map to help you get around." Stepping into the room, she took in the details of her surroundings within a couple of seconds. Stark white walls, metal table with a loop on one side to fix the prisoner's handcuffs to, steel chairs. A two way mirror on the side opposite to the door. A security camera fitted to the top right corner of the room, observing everything. Junko had no doubt they'd be watched - even with her identification, it wasn't as if they'd just leave her to talk to one of the most important prisoners of recent times without a clue of what was happening. But that didn't matter. She'd used ricin before. By the time it exerted its effect, she'd be long gone.

The officer chuckled. "Nah, you get used to it. She should be here in a few minutes, someone got sent to fetch her." He paused briefly on his way out of the room. "You know, you were pretty lucky. With the flooding, most of her block's being transferred. Trying to find her could have been a nightmare."

"Sounds like I got here just in time," Junko laughed softly. Behind the mask of her smile, her mind was working. *She was going to be transferred...*

Marcus watched Emilena being led down the corridor, reaching into his dufflebag and rummaging randomly until they'd turned the corner. He stopped and leaned closer in to the others. "Can't let them reach it. It'll be impossible to get her out," he murmured, urgency creeping into his voice. They were almost out of time - they had to just go for it, and pray they got lucky.

He shifted the weight of the bag onto his left shoulder, keeping his voice quiet. "We follow them. Time it right and get rid of the guard. Marita, turn off all the cameras in this section. If it's just a few minutes, they might assume its the water interfering with the electronics."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2016, 11:09:36 PM**

' 4 of your pipes are bent' Marita said. This meant " you guys have 4 minutes to get her and get out' ' marita typed in a few commands and one by one, the security cameras blinked out.'darkness has sprung, now get to it..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 25, 2016, 11:47:15 PM**

Soren dropped his toolbox and rummaged around for the SMG he had packed away and stashed it inside the rather spacious pocket of his jumpsuit. Of course, he knew not to use it unless things really went to shit.

Aaron growled as the two guards escorted Emilena towards the interrogation room. He turned to Soren. "Okay, we're going to clean those pipes." This phrase meant *We'll dispose of the guards.*.

Soren nodded as he jogged after Aaron. Soon, the burly German Shepherd caught up to the duo.

"Excuse me," Aaron said. "But we have traced one of the leaks to this room and it is due to a large water main that is in danger of cracking. We need to enter to repair it."

"Are you fucking kidding me!?" one of the guards growled. The Kea clicked his beak kn exasperation.

"Hey, we just do what the boss says," Soren said with a shrug.

The Kea bent over the keypad as he began to swipe his ID card. Aaron and Soren looked at each other and nodded.

The next few moments were a blur of violence as the Human slammed his toolbox into the back of the Kea's head, causing him to fall foward. He then dropped his toolbox and grabbed the unfortunate Avian by his crest of feathers and proceeded to slam him into the keycard reader over and over.

At the same time, Aaron lunged at the other guard and proceeded to attack him with the pipe he had in his tool box. His attack was so ferocious it caught the guard by surprise.

When all was said and done, the two guards lay in bloody heaps with feathers and blood spatter decorating the hallways.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 26, 2016, 11:57:15 AM**

Emilena had been thrown into the corner when the guards were suddenly assaulted, and unsteadily got to her feet. "I know a thank you is kinda underwhelming at this point, but...thanks." She dropped to her knees and rummaged through the avian's uniform until she located the keys to her handcuffs and freed herself. She also relieved the guard of his nightstick and taser. "Should have predicted the flooding wasn't an accident; you all turned this place into New Orleans."

She prepared to follow whoever took charge and started executing the next step of the escape.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 28, 2016, 12:46:07 PM**

Marcus set the bag down, shooting quick glances up and down the corridor as he unzipped it. No alarm, no pounding of feet to signal incoming guards... so far, so good. Sifting through the tools, Marcus pulled out a creased jumpsuit of an identical style to the ones everyone else was wearing.

He roughly held it out to Emilena, along with a grey baseball cap. "Put these on. Not perfect, but best we've got. You two," he growled, looking at Marie and Soren and poiniting to a storage cubpoard just a short distance up. "Hide the bodies. Marita, need you to turn on the sprinkler system in this corridor in a few minutes. Got some blood that needs cleaning."

Marcus turned to Aaron. "Back through the front, or try to find a back exit?"

Alone in the interrogation room, waiting for the guards to bring Emilena, Junko kept replaying the guards words in her head. *Flooding... transferred...* What were the chances that just a short while after Emilena was arrested, there would be a flood so severe that it would need her block, in particular, to be transferred?

Trying to find her would be a nightmare... The guard was taking a long time to bring her. Junko's gut tightened. Something was wrong. She could feel it. *The guard said she hadn't been transferred yet - I can't wait here.* Junko stood up slowly, keeping her features composed.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 28, 2016, 01:57:19 PM**

Emilena decided to handle the bloody bodies before changing clothes. "Bodies won't be a problem...hopefully the flooding hides the blood well enough." Using the guard's keys, she unlocked the nearest jail cell and wrapped the bodies in the cot blanket, then stuffed them in the far corner. "Let's move," she agreed, slipping into the new jumpsuit and donning the baseball cap.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 28, 2016, 08:11:56 PM**

' got it. turning them on now ' marita said.' go out the front door ' act as casual as possible. go now. ' package carrier is starting to smell.'

Lets go switch out our wrenchs ' Marie said ' Translation " lets get the hell outta here."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 03, 2016, 02:09:50 PM**

Soren and Aaron were both dampened by the sprinklers going off. Luckily, the blood from their clothing and equipment easily came off under the spray of water.

Aaron shook the water off his clothing and head. Soren wiped some water from his eyes.

The two casually strode through the now empty cell blocks and out the front door. Strangely, no one seemed to pay any attention to the fact that five plumbers had exited...despite only four plumbers arriving for repairs.

All in all, it seemed the whole plan was going to go off without a hitch. Emilena's presence was quickly explained by Soren as her not being part of the crew he was with.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 03, 2016, 03:25:09 PM**

Marie Casually climbed into the waiting van.' Alright Marita restore things to normal. make it look as if we fixed it.' He said into the phone
_ Done' Marita said' Cameras are back online too, so they'll think it was due to the water that power was knocked out. Get back here pronto..' Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 04, 2016, 01:43:26 PM**

"So 7 o'clock? Tonight?"

Junko nodded, her fingertips lightly brushing the receptionist's hand as she straightened up from the front desk. "Outside Carlson Theatre. See you then." She looked at him warmly before turning away and heading for the door. *Men. Pathetic.*

On leaving the interrogation room, Junko had headed straight for the entrance, gambling that if Emilena *was* being rescued they'd try the easy but risky route of going straight out the front door. As she'd emerged into the hall, Junko was rewarded with the sight of some familiar faces entering from a corridor on the other side of the room. She'd studied them enough over the past few weeks - Soren Almaya, Aaron Geasbrecht, Marcus Hayton... and the lady of the hour herself. Emilena Echo. The baseball cap had been a nice idea, but when someone was looking specifically for her, the disguise was next to useless.

As she'd glanced at them, she noticed they were all wearing some kind of janitor uniform. *Cute. But there's no way the receptionist won't notice the extra pair of hands.* As the group started forwards, Junko had moved quickly, making straight for the desk, managing to distract the receptionist the quickest way she knew. *Give them the possibility of a quick fuck, and they're all yours.*

Now, as she walked out the front doors moments after them, Junko spotted the group climbing into a van just up the road. She raised her cell phone. "It's me. No, I'm fine. But the plan's been changed. We could have a lead on all of them."

Climbing into the driver's seat, Marcus shot a look out the window towards the station. No sign of alarm, no officers running to apprehend them... It looked like they'd actually succeeded. After taking just a short second to steady his heart rate, the doberman turned the key, the engine rumbling to life.

"Rest while you can," he said over his shoulder to Emilena as he pulled out, slotting the van into the morning traffic which had started to accumulate. "When we get back, you're going to to tell us everything you read in that file. Marita..." He paused, his voice begrudging. "Good work."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 04, 2016, 02:57:29 PM**

Emilena nodded and laid her head on the side of the van. She wasn't particularly tired, despite a sleepless night in the jail thinking of her future behind bars, but she also appreciated that for one brief car ride she had insurance that nobody would try and murder her in her sleep. That wasn't an opportunity to squander.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 04, 2016, 08:49:28 PM**

Soren buckled himself in. He smiled. One of his escapades had actually gone right for once and not become a total clusterfuck.

Aaron buckled himself in the front passenger seat. He turned around. "Nice going guys! Our operation went off without a hitch."

The Human cracked his knuckles. "Yeah. I had to admit, when the secretary asked why we had four coming in and five coming out, I nearly shit myself. For a moment, I wasn't sure if she'd buy my excuse."

"Yeah. Just don't get too cocky." The German Shepherd looked at the rearview mirror. Nothing abnormal, just the normal flow of morning traffic with commuters heading to work.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 08, 2016, 04:15:06 AM**

The return journey took a couple of hours, taking longer coming back than it had going - a result of both the packed morning traffic and the numerous detours Marcus took to try and throw off anyone following them. He glanced frequently in the rear view mirror, but couldn't pick out any suspicious vehicles. By the time he was satisfied they were in the clear, it was approaching midday.

"We'll need to get rid of this vehicle as soon as we can," Marcus said as he took a right onto the block which housed the motel, tapping the steering wheel with his claw. "They'll be looking for it." He pulled into the motel's parking area, the tyres crunching over weeds which had managed to poke their way through the tarmac.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 11, 2016, 10:51:10 AM**

thank you Marcus. just keep an eye out for anyone who might be tailing you. there was someone else looking for Emilena-I overhead someone inquiring about her on the security systems, claimed to be a police officer from a different city. whoever they are , we're very lucky to gotten Echo first.' arita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 12, 2016, 01:27:35 PM**

Emilena opened her eyes wearily as they pulled up somewhere. Looked to be a seedy motel, somehow the nicest place she'll get to reside since god knows how long. Only half committing to being awake, she followed the team to the hotel room, resolving to continue her nap inside.

But when they reached the door to the room and met Lily standing there, arms crossed and expression furious, Emilena realized she had something more important to do.

"Hey. I need to talk to you in private." She led Lily around the corner to a reclusive catwalk. "Are you gonna try pulling anything on Axel?"

"I wasnt, but after what he just did to me I'm going to kill him," Lily replied bluntly.

Emilena sighed. "You know what I'm gonna say about that."

"And you know how little I care about what you have to say about that," Lily shot back.

"Why are you even on this team?" Emilena asked exasperatedly. "I gave you a chance to get off the grid. You can't possibly care what blackmail the Purifiers have cooked up."

"I want the location of their base." Lily's eyes flashed. "They can't hide from me forever. I'm removing them from the picture."

Emilena raised her eyebrows but decided not to nitpick the plan; the less she knew the better. "I know a way you could triangulate the location of their HQ."

Lily cocked an eyebrow. "How?"

"They kidnapped me in an outfit I mugged from a civilian. In the pocket was the poor sap's cell phone. Even if they've wiped and destroyed the phone by now, the service provider will have record of its past GPS coordinates."

Lily narrowed her eyes. "What was the number?"

"I only made a few calls, I'd need to get to one of the sources to reverse lookup." Emilena bit her lip. "But I'll only do that if you promise to leave Axel alone."

"That's too restrictive," Lily protested. "Here's my version." Her eyes drilled into Emilena's. "If you get me the Purifier coordinates, I WON'T kill Axel during this mission. I might even forget about him afterwards, I'll have a bigger fish to fry." She smiled wickedly.

Emilena sighed again. "If that's the best I'm gonna get, good enough. Now if you'll excuse me, there's someone else demanding information that only I know." Without further ado she left for the hotel room.

Flora looked up in surprise when the vixen entered. "Holy crap, they actually did it! Emi's back!'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 12, 2016, 09:14:46 PM**

When Aaron and Soren returned, Anne had woken up from her slumber. Her ears twitched as she munched on a cheap bean burger she had gotten from a nearby take-out joint.

The mare looked over the group. "Just so you know, I picked up some radio chatter. Someone's looking for Emilena."

"A little late for that," Aaron growled as he helped himself to a bottle of water from the minifridge.

Anne snorted and blew some air through her nostrils. "No, I mean they're still looking for her."

Soren stripped out of his wet jumpsuit and tossed it in the corner of the room. He then flopped onto the couch with a sigh as he ran a hand down his face. "Oh great, now the fucking cops are onto us!"

Anne rubbed her mane and pawed the ground with a hoof. "Well, not yet. But someone else is...ans they're using a different frequency than the cops."

Aaron hurled his empty bottle into the trash. "We'll deal with that later. Right now, Marcus wants us to ditch the vehicle."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 15, 2016, 09:48:49 AM**

Marcus grunted. "Nothing we can stop to do anything about now... but that information won't hurt to know," he said to Anne. "Keep listening, see if you hear anything else." Fishing the van's key's out from his jacket pocket, he tossed them across the room to one of the Purifiers sitting at the small, rickety table. "Take the vehicle, leave it a good distance away from here. Make sure you aren't followed. And Josh... keep under the speed limit. You don't want to be noticed."

Axel, slumped over on the couch, moved his feet out of the way so Soren could sit down. "Good to see you in one piece." Frowning, he pinched a corner of Soren's damp shirt. "Did it rain?" Axel saw Emilena walk in, and he halfheartedly raised a hand in greeting. "Good to see you too. You must be thrilled to be back," he said dryly. "I'd offer you a beer, but all we have left is water that tastes like piss."

"Quiet." Marcus looked at Emilena, then pointed to the table. "Sit. Talk. Tell us everything you read in that file."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 15, 2016, 11:16:36 PM**

Emilena nodded and stepped forward. "All right, I don't know what page you Purifiers are on, so I'm going to start from the beginning."

She unrolled a spread of brown paper towels on the coffee table and sketched out notes as she spoke. "Two weeks ago, the Gearheads all die. You get the normal rash of witnesses, investigations...but by 72 hours, every single one of those witnesses had signed away their silence." She looked up. "That doesn't happen. Too many people see a police procedural as their day in the limelight. Witnesses who won't shut up and camera-chasing false positives should be the norm."

She scribbled down some figures. "I'm not talking about the rubbernecks from the crash sites. I mean the people who *actually* know something, either due to being a coroner, Augmentician or related to Brennan Cybernetics." She sat back. "In a breach of police policy, the witness names weren't even recorded, at least not in the official archives. But the head of the investigation was. Officer Nash Black, he suspended the investigation almost immediately, citing the unwillingness of any key witnesses to comply. Which is way too convenient. Trust me, it's a cover-up and he's in on it."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 18, 2016, 09:31:23 PM**

"Oh it rained...inside the police station," Soren replied to Axel. He took a seat next to his friend and grabbed a now warm can of soda that he opened and drank.

Anne was sitting at the small computer desk in the corner and transcribing what she was picking up from the airwaves. The only sign of activity was the movements of her ears and occasional scribbles on a notepad.

Soren then got up from the sofa and headed to where Marcus and Emilena were talking. He had overheard them mention a name and hinted at said person being involved in a cover-up.

"Why don't we go pay this guy a 'friendly visit'?" Soren said as he approached the two.

Aaron shook his head. "Why don't we turn ourselves into the cops? Pissing off the cops *always* leads to a world of shit unless you've got enough creds to buy them off. We'll have to go through legal channels first." He then turned to Marita.

"Marita, use the Internet and the phone directory to find out as much as you can about this 'Nash Black' character. News reports, address phone number, anything," the German Shepherd said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 19, 2016, 06:45:03 PM**

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nash black.. Nash black.. i'll see what i can find..' Marita said puling up her computer and began typing away..' If its a coverup, i'm likely not going to find much..people like that tend to cover their tracks, especially cops, who have access to info, most normal folks don't get.... hmm. Searching ..' her claws flew over the keys and finally she got some popups Ah.. Found some stuff.. Hes marred, wifes name is Circe, she teaches preschool. Two Sons, Amos and Andrew both in high school, Amos is freshman Andrew a sophomore. Been in the force 10 years. Lives in the Hoodington area- thats a middle class area. address is 62 North Tree Lane, 3 story house, looks to be in the 3 million credit range, door doesnt open unless he enters a password, which he changes every days.' Marita said." Host barbecues every 4th , has nearly every other officer in his department over. police record shows no citations, no court cases against him. Clean record, as far as i can tell.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 28, 2016, 12:06:48 PM**

"In other words, he's difficult to get to." Marcus rubbed his jaw. "Need to find out what he knows... Who bought him off. What happened to the witnesses. But with that much security, getting to him'll be difficult. And it'd take a lot of time to learn his day to day habits and snatch him that way."

"If getting to him is hard, why don't we bring him to us?" Axel said over his shoulder, still facing the flickering image on the TV. "You said Black has a wife right? Kids? We get our hands on one of them and say they die if he tries anything, could be an easy way to get him to cooperate."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 28, 2016, 02:39:33 PM**

Flora was not a hacker, but she was more than capable of looking up Friendsbook. And as she idly checked out the profiles for Nash and his incredibly upper-class family, her heart skipped a beat when she got to Amos Black and her own alluring face beckoned her to the page.

The kid was a total fanboy. He had reposts from all over the paparazzi curcuit buried amongst traditional high school bullcrap posts.She had to mute her phone before *Date this,* an embarrassingly edgy single from her early years, started playing.

"Ummmm..." she started to say, then hesitated. This was a downright golden opportunity to get this Nash Black guy. His kid would jump at a chance to meet DJ Xyler, and then they'd have their hostage and could start negotiating. "Emilena, Marita, and...Soren. Could I talk to you three in private?" She wasn't sure why she included Soren; she'd just noticed he was something of a straightshooter and the others have repeatedly referred to him as a good trustable guy.

(Ooc: To save a post from each of us, I'm going to have Flora address whoever follows her into the bathroom. If for some reason your character does not want to follow, just note so in your next post.)

Flora gulped as she addressed those who followed her to the bathroom. "Okay, there's something y'all don't know about me." Not counting Rose, but no reason to call her out in front of Soren and Emi. "Look at this kid's profile. Look at the slut he's using for his background. Now look at me."

Emilena took the phone, squinted at the seductive fuscia dancer, and recognized the aquamarine eyes with surprise. "You're some sort of entertainer?"

"Yeah, that's me. Or was me, now Im undercover because of death threats. From radical anti-Augment fanatics." Flora gulped. "The Purifiers weren't specifically associated with the ones that tried to kill me, but I don't know how hot I am with revealing to the others how much money I'm worth. But as you can see, I've got a solid gold opportunity here with Nash's youngest kid." She made eye contact with each of them. "You all seem good at figuring solutions out. Should we capitalize on this, and is there some way to do it without blowing my cover to everyone else?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 28, 2016, 03:13:59 PM**

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marita looked at the friends book page ' definitely, we need to capitalize in this ' we have an in with the kid, that gets us into the house ' you do a performance,with us as security. you perform, a couple songs, get everyone else outside. we search the house for 10 minutes or so, see what we can dig up. you've done private performances before havent you?' Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 28, 2016, 05:21:39 PM**

Soren looked at Amos Black's profile and then looked at Flora. The woman in front of him and the nearly nude dancer in the profile were a dead match.

He made sure the bathroom door was securely shut. He even contemplated running the shower but decided against it as that was sure to attract attention. "It's our best bet," he said. "That said...if we take his kid hostage, I have a feeling that Mr. Black might decide to round up his buddies and then we'll have a *real* problem. But I suspect he has a...shall we say 'personal interest' in the strip clubs and nightlife of Seryet City? What rich asshole doesn't?"

The Human then cracked his knuckles. "We can have you or Anne seduce him, then we drug him, haul him off and have our way with him."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 28, 2016, 05:46:50 PM**

Emilena was still flipping through the phone at all the pictures of Flora. "This is seriously you?" she said incredulously.

"Stop looking at those!" Flora yanked the phone back. "The paparazzi make everything seem bad. Those are all out of context."

Emilena listened to Soren suggest seduction. She glanced at Flora. "Are you willing to seduce a police officer? It's pretty dangerous." Flora bit her lip. "And I'm worried about the private concert idea," she continued. "How are we supposed to to pitch that without revealing Shirley's identity to the Purifiers?"

"We could market it as an impersonator's concert. Like Elvis Impersonators, not like undercover. The Purifiers will probably buy it, it's more believable than us having the actual DJ Xyler on our team."

"I'm not sure that happens..." Flora admitted, racking her brains. "Usually the fans ask me for a private concert, not the other way around."

"Well, if those photos are any indication, nobody will have any trouble believing you just want a quick shag with a fan," Emilena noted bluntly, and Flora shot her a dirty look. "Maybe we should just focus on the kid."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 28, 2016, 07:00:33 PM**

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well we could pretend its a contest.' easy to dream up a contest for a private concert with the celebrity of your choice. put the promo in a few fb pages, have the kid enter. post a short video of a drawing of name - amos black- and then you have the kid pick what act he wants to come to this house and perform. if hes the fanatic we think he is. he';d ask for xyler." marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 28, 2016, 07:59:12 PM**

"How would I get to my gear?" Flora asked. "All my equipment and tapes are in my van, and god knows where that thing went after my last concert."

"A more concentrated focus on young Nash would be faster," Emilena noted. "Shirley should just contact this kid and test the waters. I think we're overestimating the level of guile needed to get a horny high schooler to trust his celebrity crush."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 07, 2016, 02:45:16 PM**

It was almost scary how easily Amos believed her. Flora had run through multiple simulations in her head of evidence she could bring forth, telltale hints she'd need to drop to gain his trust...none of it was necessary. Within a day she'd received an emoticon-laden message of fawning adoration, and from there it was almost too easy to 'befriend' him. Her years of sweet-talking ad executives and concert managers before making it big had over-prepared her for this.

Feeling bold, she skipped the step where she invited Amos out for a latte and cut straight to offering a secret meeting with him in his bedroom, a classic teenage tryst. Their little secret, no need for mom and dad to know. Eventually, the plan was laid; tomorrow night, Amos would sneak her into the house, unknowingly giving the rest of the team an opportunity to infiltrate the Black residence.

The night of the caper, Flora observed the team selected to go on this mission. "You all ready?" she muttered, glancing down the street at their target location. The team was currently hiding in an SUV parked a block down.

"As we'll ever be," Emilena said quietly, checking the headpiece behind Flora's ear. "Make sure that line stays open; we need to hear how Amos lets you into the house." Unlike Flora's punk dress, the rest of them were in black catsuits and balaclavas. "And remember, we're dealing with a teenager. If push comes to shove, it might be up to you to find us a way in."

Flora nodded, gulped, and made her way down the street to Amos' house.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 13, 2016, 04:07:56 PM**

Back at the motel, Marcus stared at his cell phone, the device lying on the stained coffee table. The ticking of the clock on the wall behind him sounded as loud as hammers striking an anvil, his fingers tapping the table in time to its mechanism.

Once the plan had been suggested to impersonate Xyler, some form of entertainer that Marcus had never had any reason to pay attention to, they'd decided that a small team would be best for the job. Now they just needed to wait for them to report back - a clue, a hint, *something* that could give them an idea of where to catch Nash Black, alone and vulnerable. Marcus tapped his claws against the wood again, waiting for the call that he prayed would come.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 13, 2016, 09:00:19 PM**

Soren chafed uncomfortably in the black catsuit and balaclava. The outfit had been designed to defeat full-spectrum infrared sensors...which had the unfortunate side effect of making them rather sweaty and hot.

He carefully watched the darkened street and house, making sure that a sudden appearance of either cops or curious bystanders wouldn't ruin their plan.

Back at the motel, Anne and Aaron had decided to sleep in shifts. The German Shepherd was asleep on the couch while Anne had kept watch by the door.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 14, 2016, 02:52:50 AM**

Flora forced herself to stop looking around shiftily as she marched up to Amos Black's house. At least she didn't have to worry about her heartbeat going into overdrive; that's normal for a midnight fling with someone she'd never met in person.

Black's house wasn't bad. Two floors, giant lawn with a fountain, brown picket fence...it looked a little like it was built by a borderline middle-upper-class family overcompensating, but there have been worse crimes committed in architecture. She took a few deep breaths to calm her nerves as she came to a halt in front of the door. Time to get composed. It's game time.

Code: on

```
DJ Xyler: Hey there cutie. I'm outside. Let me in?
Amos Famos: omg sorrrry i didnt realize xD
```

The minutes passed. Several times Flora almost texted him, but she couldn't figure out what to say, so she just waited, worrying what the holdup was.

Code: on

```
Amos Famos: wanna no who my crush is? <3
DJ Xyler: Sure, let me know once we're in your room together
Amos Famos: i made a video
Amos Famos: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ
DJ Xyler: Let's watch it once we're in your room. Quietly though.
Amos Famos: lol you just got rickrolled!!!
Amos Famos: :D
Amos Famos: ::D
Amos Famos: 8:::D
Amos Famos: lol I'm so weird
DJ Xyler: Can you please come let me in?
```

There was a click and someone peered at her through a slit in the door. Amos was a mousy little kid with bright red hair, and he was practically wetting himself with excitement. "H-hi there! Hi! I can't believe it's really you!" he squealed, bobbing as he spoke. "It's really you!"

Flora plastered a smile on her face. "Hi Amos! Keep your voice down!" she whispered, glancing around the parlor. "Did you disable the security system? I don't want to get in trouble."

Amos nodded excitedly and pointed to a touchpad that was blinking with a single red light. "Daddy turned it off tonight, he's out late. Mommy and Andy are asleep, but we should still keep quiet." He shifted his feet. "Can I...can I hug you?"

Flora acquiescently wrapped her arms around him. "What's your dad doing tonight? If you don't mind me asking." In all honesty, the revelation that Nash himself was out of the house made her feel 300% more comfortable with this plan.

"I dunno," Amos admitted. "Drinking, I think. Could I kiss you?"

Flora felt herself blush, despite herself. "Let's get up to your room," she grinned, scratching behind her ear and surreptitiously cutting the feed. Her teammates didn't need to listen in on what was gonna happen next.

Emilena nodded and sent Marcus a quick message: *Security's down. Moving in.* "Sounds like Nash is out among the town," she muttered to Soren. "Let's see if we can figure out where he is, get a coordinated strike going tonight."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 14, 2016, 03:44:28 PM**

Soren nodded. "Okay, let's move!"

He was the first to move, opening the door and carefully moving down the street. Thankfully, the night air was cool, clean and crisp, or he would have been broiled inside his catsuit.

As usual at this time, the deserted street was illuminated by just a few LED streetlamps. Since it was a relatively upper-class neighborhood, there was an obvious lack of trash, bums and other city detritus. Not to mention there were no cars parked on the street either.

The walk to the Black household was short and direct. The gate had been left open thanks to Amos disabling the security system. The Human walked through the gate and into the foyer of the house. The lights were off but the moonlight filtering in through the massive bay window provided enough light to see the foyer's layout.

Stairs leading to the second floor set in the middle of the foyer, two doors to the left and right. And a hallway in the back that led to what looked like dining room.

He pressed a concealed button near his neck, turning on his throat mic. "Shit!" he muttered. "This house is fucking huge! Where do we start?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 16, 2016, 12:41:26 PM**

"Spread out, search for an office or something," Emilena glanced at the spiral staircase. "Starting with the first floor. Sounds like bedrooms are on second floor, ideally we stay as far from them as possible."

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Despite her libido, Flora was having second thoughts even as Amos excitely sneaked them into his room. Sure, she's been completely sexually stymied since her last tragic concert and had been seriously considering risking a brothel, but this was a high-schooler. Couldn't be sixteen. And not an intellectually-enticing specimen either, if the text conversations were anything to go by.

But still, she'd probably be dead any day now, and then she and God can debate about the age of consent. She glanced at the freckled youth, who'd taken out his iPod and was excitedly putting on his favorite song, *Suck it* from her first album. "I could never tell anybody this, cause they'd think I'm gay...but I really like your older stuff," he admitted. "The super explicit stuff."

Flora nodded. "Yeah, the type you can't do after you go mainstream." *Or after becoming a legitimate artist with taste.* She had to fight from cringing as she listened to her prepubescent voice screaming about oral sex. "Toeing the line sells way better than crossing it, keeps the parents happy."

"Yeah...but what about your early fans?" he protested softly. "Don't you have an obligation to us too? If you don't mind me saying. A lot of us on the fansites really miss how you used to--"

Flora quickly interrupted him with a deep kiss. She was absolutely not interested in hearing it. "Hey, speaking of obliging," she broke the kiss after he became far too engrossed to keep talking. "I'm here to give you something better than music. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm getting the distinct vibe that you're a virgin. True?" He blushed beet red. "No shame, it happens. And it ends tonight." She climbed onto the bed in front of him. "But I need to know how far I can go. Now, you probably know that I'm packing my own heat, and you just told me you're not gay. So...does that mean I have to keep my skirt on? Cause I'm not gonna lie, I'm horny as a rabbit and I brought condoms for two."

Amos gulped. Flora politely gave him his time; nothing good ever came from forcing a sex partner into something they weren't comfortable with, especially of this nature. "Well...I am completely straight, and I don't like dicks..." he stammered, staring unashamedly at her chest, "...but if it's you, it's okay."

Flora smiled and slowly started unbuttoning her dress. "Good enough for me."

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Unfortunately the first floor rooms were entirely hosting places like lounges and kitchens. Nash's office turned out to be a hybrid bedroom, and Circe Black was sleeping soundly in their bed a few feet from the desk. Emilena narrowed her eyes. "I'll handle it..." Creeping into the room, she gently covered the woman's mouth with chloroform until her sleeping grew far deeper than naturally possible. "All right," she announced, snapping her fingers roughly in Circe's face and getting no response. "Computer's all yours. I'm investigating the wardrobe." When she was a police investigator, she used to find loads of clues in the pockets of her suspect's discarded clothing.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 16, 2016, 02:19:23 PM**

Soren entered the office. He sniffed as the sweet-chemical odor of chloroform wafted up from the sleeping form of Circe Black.

The computer was right next to the bed and a chair was tucked in for use. Not wanting to risk leaving evidence, he opted to stand up and use the computer instead.

He silently cheered at the fact that Black had been careless with his password: a long, seemingly random string of alphanumeric characters. He had simply wrote it down on a piece of paper taped to the desk. Apparently, he was overconfident that no one would breach his house's security.

Carefully typing the password in, he was rewarded with the computer booting up. He immediately opened explorer and was rewarded with a hard drive full of information. He looked at the sleeping form of Circe and decided to check out the folder labeled "coupons and rewards". Almost immediately, he was rewarded with an utterly staggering amount of coupons and rewards for assorted businesses. But one of them caught his eye: Silver Fire Club. He opened a coupon from the club that advertised a free drink and half-off cocktails if the holder brought it in on today's date.

He jotted down the club's name and address on a scrap of paper he filched from the recycling bin and waited for Emilena to finish up.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 16, 2016, 03:55:28 PM**

After scouring his uniforms and laundry hamper, Emilena came up with only a few crumpled receipts, such as grocery lists from wholesale food centers. Other than ample evidence that they'd bought heavily into the recent 'electrolyte gummy bears' craze, she found no information except that which reinforced their social status. She returned to Soren. "Find anything good?"

She checked his findings about the Silver Fire Club. "Hmmm. Wait a minute, that rings a bell." She checked the laundry receipts again. "Hey yeah, he visited there same time last week..."

She sent Marcus a text. *Looks like Nash is at Silver Fire Club right now. You should send someone over. Maybe a couple someones.* "Looks like that's good as we're getting." Emilena checked the clock; hers and Soren's investigation had still taken several hours due to how careful they were playing it. "Guess we learned *something*. Worst case scenario, we showed that we can behave without Purifier supervision. Let's hightail it."

On the way down to the first floor, she suddenly became aware of noise in the kitchen. Somebody was preparing food. Holding up her cybernetic hand for silence, she crept softly up to the kitchen door.

Spotting a clothes iron on a nearby cabinet, she brandished it and waited for her chance.

The sink turned on, and Emilena took that opportunity. Springing through, she slapped her hand over the mouth of... "Shirley?" She lowered the iron but kept her grip pressed tightly around Flora's snout to stifle her frightened squeal. "You're *snacking*?"

"I had the munchies!" Flora snapped, reflexively angry due to being assaulted. "Christ, its just cold ramen!"

"Keep your voice down! Is Amos awake?" Emilena whispered harshly.

"He's out like a light." Flora shifted her feet, trying to get her heartbeat to settle down. "To be honest, I thought you'd ditched me. Couldn't find you anywhere."

"Yeah, if you'd kept your earpiece on, you'd have known where to go! Let's move. You can eat later." Emilena led the way back to Soren after pouring Flora's ramen down the garbage disposal.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 16, 2016, 04:59:44 PM**

Marcus snatched up his cell phone as soon as the beep indicated a text had come through. He read the message then snapped the phone shut, standing suddenly, his chair clattering backwards.

Axel jumped at the sudden noise and looked over. "They have something?" he asked, scratching the top of his head with cracked nails. "Did they get him?"

"No." Marcus shook his head. "They don't have Black... but we could have his location. The Silver Fire Club."

Axel blinked, then snorted. "The Silver Fire Club? Figures that such a straight-lace family guy'd go somewhere like that."

"You've been there? Where is it?"

The rat pulled something out of his hair, squinted at it, then flicked it away with a grimace. "Do I *look* like someone who has time to go clubbing?" Sneering, he wiped his fingers on his T-shirt. "I've heard about it though. It's meant to get pretty, ah... crazy in there. I think it's about... 30, 40 minutes from here."

"Good." Marcus nodded. "We need to move. If we're lucky we can get him before he leaves. You," he pointed a finger at Axel, "You're coming."

"What? Why the hell do you need me?"

"You know the direction. You're up too Aaron," he continued, looking at the German Shepard. "The rest of you, stay here. We'll be in contact." Snatching his jacket off the back of the chair, Marcus started to make for the door, tapping a reply to Emilena. *Good work. We're en route.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 20, 2016, 08:23:34 PM**

Aaron grabbed both his pistol and Soren's SMG. He watched as Anne continued listening to the airwaves and transcribing down anything of interest between bites of potato chips she had purchased from a vending machine.

He shut the door behind him and headed for the stairs, seeing as he was carrying two guns. The elevator was not a good option...lest he be caught.

When Emilena raised her hand for silence, the Human immediately stopped. He strained his ears and heard Flora and Emilena arguing.

Soren then swore profusely under his breath. He was covered in sweat from the insulated catsuit and balaclava he had worn, Flora had potentially fucked the whole mission and to top it off, he had to take a piss...badly.

When Flora and Emilena arrived, he shot a glare at the Folf. "We done? Now let's get out of here before Amos wakes up...and before these uniforms steam us alive."

He led the way to the foyer and out the front door. Thankfully, the air outside was much cooler than the air inside the house.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 22, 2016, 08:48:28 PM**

"We've got the address to the pub, right?" Emilena muttered under her breath as they darted back to the car. "If my memory of this area serves correctly, Marcus will probably beat us there, but we'll want to reinforce just in case. This will be our only real shot to get Black."

She leaped in the back; she knew Soren preferred to drive. For some reason, she was feeling a bit warmer towards the augmentician, possibly just because of the severe drop in trustworthiness of their mutual acquaintances, but also by this point they'd undergone a lot of situations together, and he'd proven himself a surprisingly capable survivor. She'd definitely been underestimating him in Lanthae.

"Wait, we're going to a bar?" Flora grumbled. "Fuck, do they card? They better still sell food to patrons under 21..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 23, 2016, 07:01:49 PM**

Soren zipped up his pants as he finished relieving himself in on the rear tire of their SUV.

He climbed into the driver's seat, stripped out of his catsuit but kept the balaclava on. "I've got the address." He held up the scrap of paper.

He turned to Flora and shook his head with a sigh. The vehicle's electric motor started with a hum. He looked at the vehicle's console...no GPS unit.

"Shit," he muttered as he got out his smartphone and punched in the address. He placed the phone in the center console and tapped the screen to have it start reading out directions.

"All right, we're ready." He pulled out of the development and headed down the street that would lead into one of Seryet City's main roads.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 24, 2016, 12:10:15 PM**

Marita was tapped into the communications and smirked " Yes Shirley they do sell food to folks under 21, you just can't drink there. Nice Work you guys. Typing in Silver fire Club now.. hmm, looks like tonights special is double end night. Which means the performer performs Two kinds of sexual acts on the customer, usually oral and anal. Looks like Cash is a kinkster under his uniform if he's into that sort of thing. And Shirley, Nice Work. this was a dangerous mission, and you performed very well.Ok, so it didn't exactly come off picture perfect, but hey it happens."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 25, 2016, 04:42:25 PM**

As soon as Aaron climbed into the car, Marcus pressed his foot down on the gas. With a brief squeal of the tyres, the vehicle pulled away, rumbling down the motel's driveway and onto the main road. Slumped in the backseat, his face intermittently illuminated by the glow of streetlights and the occasional passing car, Axel's expression left no mystery as to his opinion on his involvement in this scheme. Being forced into a situation where he could get hurt was never going to rank highly on his list of favourite activities.

"Which way?" Marcus demanded, gripping the wheel tightly.

"Ah..." Axel waited until a street sign sped past the window then chewed his lip as he tried to visualise the quickest route to the club. "Take the next left. No, right!"

Snarling his impatience, Marcus swung a hard right and yanked his phone out of his jacket pocket, tapping a text to Emilena. *On way, there in half hour.*

25 minutes later, Axel heard - and felt - the heavy bass of club music, a low rumble that did nothing to help the headache working its way through his skull. "Alright, next left and we're there." The car slowed and came to a stop in the dark, avoiding the streetlights. A short distance up the road, the Silver Fire Club announced its presence like a sledgehammer to the face, the club's name in bright, blinking neon lights. A heavily muscled bouncer stood outside the tacky-looking gold coloured door, looking suitably pissed off. Axel noted with relief that the line to get in was almost non-existent. *Must be a slow night.* At least that could work in their favour. "All right," he sighed, looking between the two Purifiers up front. "What now?"

Marcus glanced at a gloomy alley hugging the side of the club. With the level of noise emanating from the building, it was unlikely anyone would hear a commotion. If they could just lure Black into it... "Two options. Either we wait for him to come out, which could take too long, or might not even happen if he isn't there. Or we go in and get him."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2016, 06:27:06 PM**

Eventually Soren and Emi's car peeled into the Silve Fire Club parking lot. Emilena was the first out the door. "Is he in there?" she muttered under her breath as soon as she'd caught up to Marcus and Axel. "We gonna wait till he comes out, or what?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2016, 09:15:26 PM**

Aaron wrinkled his muzzle as he smelled the alcoholic stench of someone who had far too much to drink pass by the alleyway where he and the rest of the group were planning.

"Tonight's half-off cocktail night," Soren said. "I saw the coupon on his computer. Chances are he'll be drunk enough we can just grab him and go."

Aaron cleared his throat and spat onto the grimy concrete of the alley. "One problem, you're assuming he'll drink enough to bluescreen."

The Human dismissively waved a hand. "We'll make him do it." He turned to Emilena and Flora. "What do you two know about seduction and peer pressure?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2016, 10:41:14 PM**

"I'm a certified police inspector, I've been fully educated in psychology and the art of persuasion," Emilena replied. "Before the Accelerated Growth procedure I worked as a child actress for LPD pedophile stings."

"I mean, I literally just seduced this guy's kid earlier tonight," shrugged Flora. "So I've got feminine wiles. No certificate like Emilena apparently has, though." She flashed a look at the former police officer. Kinda amazing to believe the woman standing next to her is barely eight years old biologically.

(OOC: To show I didn't just make that part of Emilena's backstory up (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341&view=findpost&p=22055122))

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 26, 2016, 03:49:02 AM**

Marcus' eyes flicked between Emilena and Flora. "You go in," he grunted, inclining his head in Emilena's direction, figuring the fact that she had more experience made her the better choice. "Someone else should go with you, in case you need backup. Too large a group could draw attention. Can you just pay your way in, or is a membership needed?" he asked over his shoulder to Axel.

"Nah, I don't think you need one." Axel craned his neck to look at the small queue of patrons lining up outside the club to get in. "I'm 99%..." He trailed off as he saw, one by one, the patrons each producing a silver card. As each was shown to him, the bouncer held it against a scanner then handed it back after a few seconds, stepping aside to let them pass. "Shit. Scratch that, I guess you do."

Swearing under his breath, Marcus stared at the club. That ruled out the easiest possibility of just walking through the front door... but there had to be another way in. Just as he was trying to wrack his brains for a solution, a side door leading into the alleyway he'd noticed before opened, spilling light into the gloom, the club's music kicking up a notch in volume. Two figures wandered out; a woman in a close-cut, revealing outfit and a gangling man in a dark waistcoat and bow-tie. They seemed to share a joke, both smirking, before they both lit up a cigarette, wandering further into the alley.

"Looks like you have your in, Echo". Marcus glanced in the rearview mirror at the rat in the backseat. "And you look about the size of the man she was with."

Axel looked pained. "Goddammit."

Marcus met Emilena's eyes. "The only way we're going to get Black is if we get him to leave willingly. If he raises the alarm, that's it. Get him drunk. Say you'll sleep with him, whatever you have to do to get him out. Whent, you can make it look more authentic. Once he's out of the building, we'll take him."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2016, 12:38:46 PM**

Emilena let out a strangled groan. "For god's sake, why does this always boil down to me?" she grumbled. "Make Shirley do it."

"I, uh, wouldn't be able to rock that outfit," Flora stared shamelessly at the woman's derriere, covered only in silk hotpants, as it rounded the alleyway corner. "I'd have...a bit of a bulge in some unfortunate places."

Emilena prepared her chloroform. "Well, *honey*, let's get this show on the road..." she hissed at Axel through gritted teeth.

The couple were chatting amiably, but they shut up immediately when Emilena marched brazenly towards them. "Good afternoon. Candace McCutcheon, Seryet PD." She flashed her old police badge. "My apologies, but I need your outfits, this is a matter of national security."

"What? Preposterous!" stammered the man, but Emilena moved to block the exit out of the alleyway. She drew her sidearm but kept it pointed at the ground, safety off.

"Call this number, you'll be compensated and these clothes will be returned by tomorrow," she handed them her old business card. The phones for the Lanthae PD were defunct by now, but hopefully they won't find that out in time. "You can have our outer wear in return, get you home looking decent." If only Axel's wasn't so filthy...

Ten minutes later, two furious citizens were both leaving the premises, and Emilena was handing Axel her firearm. "I don't exactly have space for my inventory in this..." she hesitated to call it a real outfit, "...so you're going to need to pack mule. If you don't know how to smuggle a gun through a security patdown, abandon it before we go in."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2016, 12:43:49 PM**

(Edit: oops, double-posted)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 27, 2016, 01:19:12 PM**

Axel took the gun, looking at it dubiously as he plucked at his own tight-fitting clothes. "Yeah, sure. I *love* hiding guns up my ass to get through security." He glanced around, caught sight of a dumpster steaming away a little distance up from where they were and jogged over. Reaching it, he bent down and reached under, stashing the weapon under its base. "Pick it back up when we leave," he said as he made his way back. Pausing, Axel brushed back his hair out of his eyes, then licked his finger and rubbed a smudge of dirt off his cheek. "Alright, let's get this over with."

The security guard held up his hand in a *wait* gesture as they approached. Axel chewed his cheek nervously - the guy looked like he could snap him in half like a toothpick. "You new here?" the guard rumbled, his bristly crew cut highlighting his thick bull-neck.

Axel nodded earnestly. "First day. This place is crazy, huh?"

The guard didn't reply, eyeing him up with the air of a rhinoceros deciding whether it was worth its time to charge. After a moment, he stepped forward and started patting Axel down, the rat gasping a little at the force of each impact. " Alright, get back to work," he grunted eventually, apparently satisfied.

Nodding his thanks, Axel stepped past and pushed open the side door leading into the club - and almost immediately the volume of the music inside hit him like a truck. Wincing, his twisted ear flattening itself against his head, the rat made his way further in, stopping to the side to wait for Emilena. As he waited, the rat took in his surroundings. Directly in front of him was a large dance floor, strobe lighting making a migraine inducing mess of the figures writhing against each other. On the far end of the room a long bar stretched across, several bartenders dressed in similar attire to the one Axel had acquired attending to a mass of club-goers swarming for drinks. On the left hand side of the room, the rat could see a staircase snaking its way upwards, to the left and out of sight. The smell of sweat and alcohol permeated the air. Axel bit his lip as he tried to scan the faces around the club. *How the fuck are we gonna find him?*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2016, 01:49:56 PM**

Based on the outfits of the workers in the building, Emilena noted Axel was wearing a waiter's uniform, while she was a stripper. Emilena would normally be annoyed but this actually presented a pretty easy opportunity for them.

Casing the room, Emilena didn't see anyone who matched Black's image; all the photos in the house showed a heavyset man with a jet black handlebar moustache. She kept her eyes on the various clientele, waiting for one to shell out for the VIP service and give her a chance to spot the ettiquette for entering the back rooms. She got her wish, but not in the way she hoped.

"Hey! Foxy!" A relatively handsome cat whistled suggestively at her. "What's your name, darling?"

Emilena bowed seductively and swooped into his lap. "StarPuppy," she crooned, wrapping her arms around his neck. "Is there anything I can help you with?"

"Damn girl, did you just get on shift or something?" The cat flirted, keeping his hands to himself as per the club's policy. "Cause I been looking for a ho with small tits since I came in here. It's my thing."

"Well *lucky for you...* " Emilena giggled through gritted teeth. "They're all yours if you wanna see them...standard rates apply."

"Naw baby, I wanna go all the way," he grinned. "The whole enchilada, if you know what I mean. I got the coupon for the special."

"Mmm, well just follow me then..." Getting gingerly off his lap, Emilena flashed a look at Axel as she led her way to the stairs. The banister spiraled into darkness; the bed-sized network of cubicles relying on each stripper's mental map for navigation, meaning Emilena walked into more than one solid black wall. "Sorry, I'm a bit tipsy tonight," she whispered to the cat, as she threw caution to the wind and opened a random cubicle. To her immense relief, it was unoccupied.

Leading the cat to the bed, she laid him down and then climbed on top of him suggestively. Only when he was good and pinned did she work the cloroform rag into her routine, and good thing because it took far longer to knock him out than it should have.

"Okay, good news and bad news," she muttered to Axel when she left the room. "I didn't see Black in the club, so he's probably up here. But even if we locate his cubicle, my chloroform rag is spent. It's basically up to us to talk him out."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 02, 2016, 05:32:03 PM**

Axel chewed at his lip, his eyes worried. "Okay. Alright, we just... ah..." Looking around, he could see how hopeless it'd be to simply try doors at random - the network of corridors around them seemed to disappear in the gloom, and it was only by squinting that he could just about make out the numbers painted on the doors. *This is impossible...*

The sound of a door suddenly opening behind him made Axel start, and with a small gasp he turned. A petite woman emerged from the darkness, adjusting her dress. The rat almost stepped out of her way - then stopped as an idea lodged in his brain. "Which cubicle has Mr. Black booked for tonight?" he demanded, trying his hardest to sound official.

The woman slowed. "What? Why?"

"Manager wants to let him use another girl, on the house." As he spoke, Axel shifted his position, obscuring the woman's sight of Emilena's face, just in case she could see in the dark better than either of them could.

"Again? Sheesh." Axel thought he saw her shake her head. "Number 45. And you'd better hurry sweetie, you know he gets... mad if we're late."

"Thanks." Waiting a few moments to let the woman walk ahead, Axel turned back to Emilena's vague, shadow-enveloped figure. "Alright, half way there. But once we find him, I've got no idea how to get him out..." He looked at the closest door, 32, then picked a direction at random and started to walk. 31, 30... *Shit.* He turned back, moving slowly so he and Emilena wouldn't lose each other. The door numbers started to increase, and he felt his heart beat faster as they approached Black's cubicle. Finally, they came to a stop beneath 45. "You ready?" Once Axel got the go ahead from Emilena, he took a deep breath then rapped on the door, metallic knuckles clunking on the thick plastic surface. "Sir? Mr. Black? The manager wanted to show how much we appreciate your custom by offering you a, uh... token of our appreciation. I've brought you another girl, no charge."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 03, 2016, 12:10:38 AM**

As the cubicle door opened, the hallway was briefly illuminated with faint purple light from a tasteful lamp on the bedside chest of drawers. Nash Black, a heavyset man with a thick mustache who was flattening someone under the covers, let loose a brilliant stream of profanities. "Goddamn rat, I'm busy! Don't fucking interrupt me while I'm plowing a whore! Chrissake, goddamn idiot rodents...well, where's the broad, huh? Lemme see her!"

Emilena sidled into the room, hoping Black was also a small tit guy.

"Get that tramp out of my sight," Black sneered. "She looks like a goddamn hobo. And her hair looks like shit. Christ I'm getting soft just looking at her. Got any others?"

"Hey, I'm free remember?" Emilena growled. "What's the matter what I look like?"

The other stripper, a lithe doe, traced Black's cheek. "Baby, trust me, she's good stuff," she cooed, covering for her fellow worker. "She, uh, makes up in skill what she lacks in looks. She's a legend. Give her a try."

Black slapped her. "Didn't ask you," he spat. Angrily he pushed the doe aside and gave Emilena a better look. "Alright vixen. Best striptease you got. Get those rags off, let's see what you're packing."

Emilena balled her fists. Several strained seconds passed... "No."

Black started. A vein on his forehead bulged. "The hell you just say?"

Emilena felt a wicked smile play across her lips. "That's not my style. People hire me for a more...abusive experience." Pushing the doe aside gently, she pinned Black to the bed. "I know your type. So commanding, king of everything, bossing the world around...like you come here for more of that." Blocking his open palm swing, she slapped him in the face. "They didn't send me...I *requested* you. Because I saw a little man with a swelled head who needed to be taught his place." She glanced at Axel, nodding for him to give them some privacy.

Black's eyes were wide open and furious, and the doe was practically hyperventilating with terror, glancing at the exit. But Emilena commandingly let her hair down and brushed it in Black's face. "Suck it," she ordered. "Suck my hair that you insulted."

Amazingly, Black complied. "Gawd!" he gasped. "When's the last time you washed this?"

She sniggered with a air of self-assured control. "Didn't say you could stop. Tell me, what do you think about my hair now? Is it beautiful?" She bared her claws and rested them dangerously on his chest.

A whole mixture of emotions was playing across Black's face. Entirely willingly, he visibly relaxed and surrendered to her authority. "It's the most beautiful hair. Never should have criticized it."

"You're damn right." She agressively pulled her dress down and flashed her breasts. "Say you're sorry. *Grovel* you worm, or you don't get to suck on these."

"I'm...sorry..." Black shuddered as Emilena forced him to remain on his back. "I'm sorry!"

"'I'm sorry *mistress*!" Emilena ordered. "Say it!"

"I'm sorry mistress!"

Emilena smiled again and slowly peeled her single glove off, flexing her Augmented fingers. "You haven't been a good boy at all, so all you're getting is a handjob. And I grip *hard* so brace yourself. To be honest, I bet you're not man enough for this."

Ten minutes later, Black was tender putty, shivering pitifully and occasionally grunting in pain as she toyed with him endlessly. "Aw, what's the matter?" Emilena taunted cruelly. "Can't get off?" Black whimpered submissively. "Well, apologize to my friend here, and if she thinks you're sincere, maybe she'll help out."

Black regarded the doe. "I'm sorry Natalya."

The doe smiled. "Apology accepted." Climbing back on the bed, she took a more active role in lovemaking than Emilena, and within minutes Black was sighing loudly in post-orgasm bliss. "Told you she was good," Natalya giggled in his ear.

Black stumbled drunkenly off the bed. "Christ, That was...what was your name?" he stammered to Emilena. "I'm requesting you in the future. And, uh, here," he shoved a 900 credit tip in her hand.

Emilena fixed her dress smugly. "Candace," she replied with a twinkle in her eye, switching to a more friendly attitude to show the dominatrix personality was a for-profit act. "See? I always know what a client *really* needs. Shall I escort you to your car, sir?"

Nash bowed respectfully. "Candace, this was the best night I've ever had," he admitted in awe, after cleaning up and leading her on his arm towards the club exit.

Emilena smiled as he led her into the parking lot. "Oh Black," she cooed in his ear, "the night's not over yet..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 03, 2016, 10:44:31 PM**

Aaron watched the crowd of revelers in the Silver Fire Club's parking lot. He winced as he heard the sound of retching and then the splashing of someone vomiting nearby. The smile caused him to wrinkle his nose and hope that the drunkard wouldn't see his group. Footsteps heading away from him soon allayed that fear.

"Come on, what the fuck's taking so long?" he muttered. He lowered the binoculars from his eyes. No sign of Emilena, Axel or--wait, someone was coming out.

He raised his binoculars up and spotted the distinct form of Emilena escorting a rather large and *very* drunk man. "That's Emilena!" he muttered. "And I think it might be him."

Soren rolled his back and shoulder muscles in anticipation of a brawl. "Well, let's grab him!"

Aaron growled softly as he laid a hand on the Human's shoulder. The German Shepherd shook his head. "Not yet. We don't want to cause a shitshow in the parking lot." Despite those words, the eagerness of Soren to attack had rubbed off on him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 04, 2016, 03:11:24 PM**

Marcus grunted in agreement with Aaron. "We don't want to draw attention to us. Doesn't look like we'll need to wait long, in any case." He watched as Emilena started to guide Black across the parking lot, making for a secluded corner away from prying eyes. Out of the corner of his vision, Marcus saw Axel emerge from the club, looking even more flustered than usual. The rat glanced around, spotted Emilena as she started to disappear across the lot and followed, nonchalantly putting his hands in his pockets.

The engine rumbled to life as Marcus twisted the key in the ignition. Pushing lightly on the accelerator, the vehicle started to creep forwards.

Axel slowed his pace as he neared Emilena, Black slumping across her and more or less forcing her to drag him. He shot a quick look over his shoulder, but couldn't see anyone following, or looking as though they suspected anything. Failing to feel reassured, he turned his attention to Black's state. The guy was several drinks past the point of being a wreck. "How did you know *that'd* be his thing?" he asked in a low voice, the question gnawing at the back of his mind. "I mean, he doesn't exactly seem like someone who doesn't like calling the shots..."

Just as he finished speaking, Axel recognised the dark vehicle in the distance heading for them, and he lightly turned Emilena's shoulder, steering her towards it. "Here's our ride."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 04, 2016, 03:25:36 PM**

It's a good thing Black was so inebriated by this point, because Emilena was acting far too chipper for her alias. She was just ecstatic at how well her gambit had paid off. She'd recognized a psychological urge that had gone completely untapped for him, one that's actually rather common among males who have always held absolute power in their professions and lives. Black was always in command, whether police chief at work, domineering husband at home, and likely any other social situations. That sort of personality is very likely to yearn the experience to be powerless and controlled, exclusively in a safe and private session.

"It's actually pretty common for men in positions of power to enjoy an aggressive dominatrix," Emilena muttered back, noticing that the SUV was pulling up and Black was far too drunk to really comprehend what she was saying anyway. "Hard for the downtrodden like us to understand, but constantly being in control of everyone is stressful. People crave what they can't have, even the simplicity of being bossed around." She glanced at Axel. "You lived with Lily, so you should understand that feeling at least a little."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 04, 2016, 06:18:54 PM**

As the SUV approached Emilena and Axel, Soren and Aaron got out.

"Grab him. I'll stand watch." Aaron got out from the SUV and looked around. They were in a section rather far from the rest of the club but that didn't mean that he could slack off. He looked around and sniffed. All he could smell was alcohol, sexual arousal, vomit and food. He could also smell a massive variety of people but none of the smells seemed to be getting closer.

Soren nodded and jumped out from the front passenger seat. He approached Emilena and lifted up Black's feet.

"I do hope the guy's totally bluescreened," Soren muttered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2016, 03:13:54 PM**

Marita dialed Soren's Cell " Soren. you guys grabbed the prize yet?' Marita asked using code ." By the way I used that password you sent me, and its coming up with some good stuff. Guys been spending a LOT of time and money with the " ladies of the evening. total so far is just under 10 million creds. Guy also got tested for syphilis, and it came back positive. He got it about 3-4 years ago. Thats the disease that killed Al Capone, and led to Hitler going psycho, well MORE psycho. So far , he seems to have contained it, but hes a risk of spreading it to his partners, and I doubt too many know he has it. theres receipts for sex toys, including ball gags, and 2 or 3 tests for paternity, but so far he hasn't fathered any kids outta wedlock. yet. I'll keep digging." Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 05, 2016, 03:34:28 PM**

Soren had just finished stowing Black in the rear of the SUV when his phone vibrated. He swiped across the screen and found the call came from Marita.

The Human smiled as he put the phone to his ear. Texting Marita that password definitely paid off. It was a textbook window-break hack. "We got the prize," he said. "Marita, make sure you grab copies or screenshots of all the crap he's got in his computer. Also, tell Marie, Rose and Anne to get ready for our prize. We'll meet you back at the usual spot." He then hung up.

Aaron had climbed back in the SUV. "All right, we all ready to go?" he asked. Luckily, no one had noticed anything or if they did, they didn't care.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 05, 2016, 04:09:55 PM**

"Let's book it," Emilena agreed, cramming herself into the backseat after retrieving her pistol from where Axel had stashed it.

"Hey, did you put a condom on him?" Flora asked her as they peeled out of the parking lot. "He's tested positive for syphilis."

"Ooh. Poor Natalya..." That reminded Emilena to put her glove back on. "Unless a cybernetic hand can catch viruses, I think I'm clear. He didn't get a...typical session from me."

Flora was distracted when her stomach growled with a deep echo, forcing her to suppress a grimace. She'd never gotten the chance to grab any food at the club. *There better be somewhere open around the hotel...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2016, 04:10:02 PM**

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well ahead of you. info and screenshots are safely stored in a file. i'll let the girls know to be ready for you . " Marita texted Soren back
marie says she;s ready for the interrogation."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 05, 2016, 05:56:25 PM**

Soren shot back a single text: "*Good*".

Aaron dialed Marcus. "Yeah. We got 'em. We're heading back first. Inspector Gadget got the gals back at the hotel ready. We'll meet you there."

He hung up as Soren started pulling out of the parking lot. By now, the debaunchery was starting to wrap up and some Seryet PD officers started arriving. Soren rolled his eyes as he saw a drunken Iguana get tossed into a police cruiser. There was a very good chance he'd find himself completely naked and broke in Seryet Park tomorrow morning.

Aaron jabbed a thumb in the backseat where Black was out cold. "Someone make sure he's still alive and out cold."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 07, 2016, 09:53:35 PM**

Flora placed her finger on his neck. "I don't feel a pulse!" she shouted in alarm, before Emilena slapped her out of the way.

"He's fine," Emilena rolled her eyes. "Let's get him inside, make sure he's nice and comfortable when he sobers up. They were pulling into the parking lot of the motel.

"Should we let Marita know our eta?" Flora asked, trying to distract from her failed attempt to take a pulse. She'd probably leave questions to the professionals from now on...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 12, 2016, 09:31:56 PM**

Anthony "Tony" Stracci Jr. was out running a bit of a test. Sure he knew his old comrades were meeting up at a motel now thanks to his contacts in town, but he had an ulterior motive as well. While he was a legitimate business ferret following the death of his father, he had at least saved his father's massive collection of vintage automobiles, being the one reminder from his old life he'd taken with him.

So as he headed for said hotel, Tony had decided to take out and test one of his favorite cars from his youth: the 1956 Daimler DE 36 drophead coupe. He'd recently had to restore it, which hadn't been cheap, but had been totally worth it in his opinion. The Daimler was the car of royalty and not many had been built... only eight by his father's count, and his father had secured it from an auction years ago.

The car wasn't perhaps the smoothest driver with its fluid flywheel transmission, but it was a massive boat, and for some reason had always been one of Tony's favorites growing up, perhaps because it was so elegant and majestic looking. So he found himself behind the steering wheel, testing out the new transmission he'd installed and the upgraded radio. The big silver and maroon car cruised through the streets to the strains of Brian Wilson's "Night Time" playing through its speaker, the ferret tapping his hand on the big wheel as he slid the big silver shifter lever up to fourth gear, then waited as he accelerated, pushing in the clutch so that the car would shift for him. He preferred the Cord's semi-automatic to the Daimler's... but such was life.

Seeing the motel approaching on his right, Tony preselected second gear, waited until he was getting close to the turn, then pressed in the clutch to allow the big car to downshift. He flipped a small knob on the steering wheel to the right, and out popped an old style turn signal hand from the side of the car, complete with blinking orange light. Making it look easy, the ferret turned the big car into the parking lot, downshifting to first and then bringing the Daimler to a halt in a parking spot, not really fitting perfectly in but the mustelid clearly didn't care.

Shutting off the engine, he noticed another vehicle pulling in, and sure enough, there was Emilena and someone he didn't exactly recognize, but figured it wouldn't be long before he'd be introduced. Getting out the right-hand side door, he walked around the back of the car and smiled slightly. "Well, well... look who it is! I guess it's a good thing I arrived at the same time as you... you'd easily provide protection and cover for any situation. How are you, Emilena?" he asked now, extending his paw. The ferret wasn't nattily attired, but resembled more a middle class working ferret, keeping his traditional tweed cap on and wearing a matching tweed coat with blue pants.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 12, 2016, 11:14:48 PM**

Marcus said nothing as he pulled in after Soren and the others did.

He turned to Axel and jabbed a thumb at him as he shut off the motor. "All right, you. Go inside and get the things ready inside our room. I'll help the others with our guest."

The Doberman opened the door for Axel to get out.

The Rat did soand rubbed his temples as he headed for the motel's dingy lobby. He desperately wished for some more alcohol to kill the headache that he could feel coming on.

Marcus then approached the other SUV. He looked over and saw Soren and Aaron struggling to get the massive form of Nash Black out of the back of the SUV...and a Ferret he didn't recognize. "Aaron, Soren. Get our 'guest' inside. Emilena and I are going to meet this new guy."

Soren nodded and obeyed, not wanting to get on the bad side of the burly Doberman. The Human grunted as he slung Nash's left arm over his shoulder while Aaron took the right arm.

The duo then half-carried, half-dragged him into the motel's lobby.

"Right," Marcus said. "Emilena and I will meet you inside later."

He watched as the two headed through the lobby doors. He approached Emilena and the guest, making sure to keep a hand by his sawed-off shotgun under his jacket.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 13, 2016, 05:48:37 PM**

Marita opened the door to the room just as the sounds of Black being dragged up reacherd a crescendo. She walked out as Soren and Aaron, both sweating heavily, reached the floor ' Hey Guys. Everything's All set for our VIP. Man, hes a big dude, No wonder you guys look zapped. Marita pulled out a computer file " all of Mr Black ' dirty Laundry. Has enough if it to cover a New York city Clothesline.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 13, 2016, 06:23:04 PM**

Axel waved at the duo as he sipped the beer he had bought from a nearby 24-hour conveinence store. "Right, let's get this shit over with." He tapped his cybernetic hand on the dingy loveseat's arm.

Soren collapsed on the sofa and wiped his forehead. "Hauling this guy's fat ass took a lot out of me."

Aaron didn't seem that tired. Despite appearances, he was panting fairly heavily with his tongue out of his mouth. He quickly helped himself to a glass of water from the tap. "Right, first things first. We need to tie him up."

Soren looked around the hotel room. The TV was set inside an entertainment cabinet that appeared to be bolted to the wall. The lamps could be unplugged but he wasn't sure if the cords were long enough to tie someone up with. "Shit," he muttered. "Don't tell me we gotta make a latenight shopping run."

Axel piped up. "Have you tried seeing what's in our SUVs? There's gotta be some shit we can use."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 14, 2016, 03:10:41 AM**

Emilena couldn't keep the shock from registering on her face when Tony Stracci of all people walked up to her.

"Who's this?" Flora asked tentatively, registering Emilena's concerning reaction.

"He's...uh..." Emilena drew a credit chit out of her pocket. "Go get some chicken fries or something. You said you were hungry."

Flora wasted no time in heading for a 24/7 diner, and only once she was out of earshot did Emilena reply to Tony. "How did you get involved in all this?" She glanced at Marcus, who was approaching with his shotgun. "*Are* you involved? You should get the hell out of here if you have the choice," she hissed under her breath. "We work for your old friends now. And we're sticking our noses in things that will get us all killed." The Purifiers would likely remember the ferret, who turned coat after Soren's team kidnapped him during the Lanthae incident.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 14, 2016, 06:16:46 PM**

"Ah... well not yet but I'm going to be." the ferret said in response. He waved at Marcus here, recognizing him from before. "Hey Marcus... been a long time." He said, flicking a toothpick in his mouth. "Yeah that's... precisely why I'm here. Figured you could use my help since I... used to work for them and all. And get killed?" he shrugged nonchalantly here.

"What do I have to live for?" he asked now. "Anyway still have a few contacts here and there... including in the Purifiers... they let me know what was going on. I uh... heard about it, felt guilty for not helping, have nothing else to do with my time, and uh... well I'd like to see..." he trailed off here, not finishing the sentence. "Anyway it's par for the course. I have no intention of driving back to where I came from, so you may as well take me." He stated.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 15, 2016, 02:52:07 AM**

Emilena glanced at Marcus. "Well, it's up to them of course," she replied to Tony. "They call the shots, the rest of us are here for...god I'm not even sure. So far my most valuable asset to the team has been impersonating various females."

She eyes Marcus' readied shotgun. "That being said, if Tony wants to risk his head, I wouldn't be against his help." Every additional non-Purifier on the team only increases their bargaining power.

Lily glared as Axel returned to the room but otherwise said nothing as her teammates returned to the hotel room.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 16, 2016, 02:19:55 PM**

Marcus scowled. "Yeah. I remember you. You went along with us and then fucked us later." His teeth were bared but his shotgun was kept out of sight.

He then sighed and visibly relaxed. The streetlights cast a pale white light over the grimy parking lot of the hotel. Indeed, they were the only ones present. Except for someone wandering near the perimeter of the lot.

Marcus then rubbed his forehead. "As much as I don't entirely trust you, I don't have much of a choice."

Internally, he pondered using the former mafioso for the more dangerous and unsavory tasks.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 16, 2016, 10:03:59 PM**

"Heh well... I didn't really 'fuck you' per se... you guys won, remember?" Tony replied here, rolling his eyes at Marcus as he flexed his wrist in the palm of his other paw. "Switched sides maybe... the losing side..." He stated. "Still all right... glad to be aboard... seems I've come full circle then." he stated.

He glanced back at his car, decided to leave it for now (it did at least have modern safety features on it), and shrugged, then headed for the motel entrance. "So what's the deal? What are we doing next?" he asked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 16, 2016, 10:12:29 PM**

It was then Soren exited the hotel lobby. He paused midway as he saw the Ferret. He seemed familiar but couldn't quite recall where he saw him.

But all that was immediately erased when he saw the antique car. He only knew one person wealthy and ostentatious enough to flaunt a vehicle like that: Tony Stracci.

He took a chance. "Fucking hell, Tony. Last place I'd ever expect to see you!"

Marcus then turned to the Human. "Now's not the time for chatting. You get anything useful?"

"Naw," Soren said. "He's still out and we need to tie him up."

"Goddamnit," the Doberman muttered. "You couldn't have done that before!?" He turned to Soren. "There SUV should have some charge transfer cables. Use those."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 17, 2016, 02:41:22 AM**

Emilena was surprised Marcus acquiesced so quickly, but wasn't about to miss a chance to consolidate another ally. "I'm willing to fill Tony in on the details if nobody else wants to," she said. "I don't much fancy interrogating Black, I'm probably following Flora's lead and grabbing dinner. You wanna come with," she flashed a reserved glance at Tony. "Maybe we could grab takeout for everyone." *And answer each other's questions in relative privacy...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 18, 2016, 10:04:37 PM**

Tony looked over at Soren, recognizing him instantly, a smile brought to his features now. "Well, well... Soren! Yeah... that's me heheh. I know right? Well I'm here to help... for whatever it's worth." he shrugged here, but Marcus cut the reunion off, and Emilena shifted her attention back to the ferret, so he gave her his.

"Sounds like a good idea to me." he nodded here. "I'll buy." He hooked his thumb over his shoulder to his car. "Want to take my car?" he smirked. "If we're going to a drive-through, you could order, I could pay, and we... catch up." he said here, giving her a somewhat knowing look.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 18, 2016, 10:12:30 PM**

Marcus looked at Emilena and Tony with a scowl and pricked ears. He had overheard everything they had said but decided not to say anything. Dealing with Black was a more pressing issue that whatever grudges those two had.

Soren returned with the heavy cable draped across his shoulders. In his right arm was an emergency power supply for electric vehicles.

He turned to Tony and Emilena. "Hey, could you two fetch me some 'supplies' while your at it?"

Marcus placed a massive hand on Soren's shoulder. "Quit fucking around and just what you're told," he growled. He then turned to the Ferret and Fox. "No detours other than take out. We don't have much time as it is!" He looked up into the dark sky. By now, the barest traces of sunrise were peeking up through the smoggy haze around Seryet City.

Anne yawned as her ears twitched. She had a cup of steaming hot coffee at hand as she listened to the airwaves for anything interesting.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 21, 2016, 04:12:39 AM**

"Sounds good to me," Emile a replied nonchalantly, glancing at his vintage vehicle. "So long as you don't mind everyone at the burger joint thinking you're driving around a stripper."

Once they were safely away on their journey, Emilena glanced at Tony. "So what have you been up to since they blew up Lanthae?" she asked. "Most of the people you remember are...different. I'll fill you in, but it would be nice to know where you stand nowadays. You certainly don't look like a young naive daddy's boy anymore, if you'll pardon my bluntness."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 21, 2016, 09:58:45 PM**

Marita watched as Black was thrown onto the coach. " we'll Need ski masks to huide our faces" She said to Soren ' We're blackmailing the guy, not killing him for gawds sakes. Do you want the entire police force breathing down our necks. We'll need sedatives,. Memory wiping stuff.. truth serum and cloroform. Quite a few things come to think of it.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 22, 2016, 10:47:52 PM**

"Fine by me." Tony said, moving around to the right side of the car (it being of British make) which left Emilena on the left side. The car was so wide there was plenty of room between them in the middle seat. Pushing the starter button on the dash, he listened as the straight-eight engine came to life, then slid the silver preselector lever down into reverse to back the car out of the spot. Shifting into first, he took the big Daimler back out onto the road and began heading for the nearest fast food joint, which fortunately was only about two miles up the road.

Preselecting second, he waited until he was ready then pushed in the clutch to shift as Emilena began speaking to him. "Yeah well... I've inherited my father's... businesses... but kind of disbanded the family so to speak. Well... I actually gave it to my underboss to run... took my dad's cars and a good chunk of his money, moved over here, started up my own business... legit... and have been doing that. It's... partly successful, though I'm still growing it." he explained, shifting the car into third and then fourth. "Computer hardware isn't... really a bad business to run after all." He stated.

"My old man passed away... and since I had no interest in taking over the 'family', I gave it over to our underboss and just moved on from it all. Hell the cars were the only thing I really cared about anyway." he said, patting the enormous maroon steering wheel of the Daimler. "So what's up with you guys?" he asked, briefly looking over to her. "What's changed? Who's around and who's not? Ah yeah... speaking of the cars... actually this car I picked you up in when we first met." He added, grinning. "Took it down to the end of the driveway, got you and then drove back, remember?" he asked, chuckling now as the wind whipped his fur.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 25, 2016, 12:56:15 AM**

Emilena's face softened when she heard what Tony had been up to. "That's...actually really honorable," she told him. "It must have taken a lot of courage to disband your father's legacy and seek out an honest living. I can't imagine it was either easy or profitable. But going honest is its own reward."

She blushed the faintest shade and looked away. "Sorry, forgive me. I get romantic about notions of justice. I was a cop once, after all. Despite my current reputation as a deranged criminal." She took a deep breath. "Honestly, none of us have fared as well as you have. Axel's a drunken paranoid hermit, I can't get a real sentence out of him. Marita and Rose have lost all comprehension of the real world, when I hear them talk I honestly think they've gone senile. Soren's fared all right I guess, and Lily..." She bit her lip. "You won't recognize her. We may have saved her from the parasite, but she never regained her humanity."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 25, 2016, 09:06:44 PM**

Soren scowled. "For fuck's sake, I'm not going to kill him. I'm not *that* sadistic!"

He used the heavy cables to tie the unconscious Nash to the couch. Unfortunately, he was only able to tie down the man's ample chest with the cable. Soren looked around the room for something to use as binding material. And then noticed his target was still wearing his clothes.

"Marita, Rose, give me a hand and strip this guy to his underwear. We're going to use his clothes to tie him up."

Anne's ears pricked up as she heard a mention of the supplies the group needed. "Leave the drugs and shit to me. I'll go message a friend of mine." She turned to Axel. "Hey, can I use your computer?"

"Sure, go ahead." Axel waved a hand dismissively as he drank yet another bottle of beer.

Anne sat down at the table and opened an encrypted web chat. She punched in her dealer's number into browser and waited for him to pick up.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 25, 2016, 09:27:30 PM**

As Tony drove, he listened to Emilena actually... show him some respect. He blinked here, looking over at her. "Huh... yeah... I guess it does. I mean... I didn't... want to carry on the family business so I... set out on my own... and sure it's... you know... OK I guess... it's not a massive success or anything but... I'm doing OK." he stated now.

"The Great Filling Station Holdup" by Jimmy Buffett came on now on Tony's mix, and he smiled as he'd remembered his dad actually singing this to the strains of his guitar back when he was just a kid. Smiling slightly, he then heard exactly what the party had become and he was... shocked to say the least. "I... holy crap... it's... it's THAT' bad?" he asked incredulously. "Lily is... she's... oh my god..." Tony breathed, exhaling sharply. "Holy crap... that sounds... I just... wasn't expecting that. But I guess... Axel WOULD be that way if Lily never recovered and just... well shit!" he said, temporarily losing his confidence for a moment as he turned a small knob on the steering wheel to pop out the turn-signal arm from the side of his car. Axel... his closest friend from that... that was... a blow.

As he turned into the drive-thru, the ferret listened to the song, then smiled again as he seemed to recover. "Heh... well then, in the words of Jimmy Buffett: 'We're wanted men! We'll strike again! But first let's have a beer!'" he sang, grinning at her as he pulled up to the order speaker. She was on the left so she could order for them. "Just get me a chili burger." he whispered to her, keeping his head down and turning the music lower. "And maybe a beer." He smirked now.

The order-taker whistled through the speaker. "Damn! That's one nice car! So what'll it be?" he asked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2016, 01:13:39 AM**

"Damn straight it's nice! I bet you'll never see another one of these as long as you live!" Emilena was possibly overplaying her cards trying to sound rich, especially to a unsuspecting fast food worker. "Ummm, let's go with 4 of the dollar menu slider combos, extra fries and hold the drinks. A chili burger combo with a beer. And...how about a large water. Bottled, I'm not interested in spilling something in this car."

The intercom read their order back to them and then directed them to the next window, where Emilena got a sideways look due to her risque outfit. Once they had the food, they began the drive back to the hotel. "Be really gentle when talking to Axel," Emilena reinforced her prior warning. "Otherwise you shouldn't have trouble reconnecting with the others." Realizing they were about to run out of private conversation time, she added one last topic of interest. "Pardon me for again questioning your explanation for coming here, but is that *really* all there is to your story?" she asked pointedly. "Because if you've got some ulterior motive, I'd love to help with it. Fuck the purifiers."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **July 30, 2016, 10:47:28 PM**

The voice on the other end paused, then acknowledged the order as Tony tried not to laugh. "Holy shit... that's actually pretty damn good. More than I'd say but you're right... he never will!" He agreed. "Here." He dug in his pocket and handed her the correct change. "I'll buy." he offered.

He pulled up to the window, and the server whistled at the car, then they were off and rolling, driving back to the motel. As they moved, Tony waited, hearing Emilena out. He purposely drove past the hotel, took the turning down the next block, and began circling around to buy them some more time.

He looked over at her pointedly now, giving her a serious stare. "Revenge." he said simply. "Help you guys out... take revenge... any goddamn way I can." he told her. "We're on the losing side... but until that fucker Rhaegson is dead... I won't stop. But that DOESN'T come before helping you out." he said now. "I won't jeopardize your lives to fulfill it. I'll assist you and wait for an opportunity." he stated, taking the final turn as the motel came in sight again and he began to pull into the parking lot. "I hope that's enough."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 03, 2016, 11:33:05 AM**

Rose And Marita Helped Strip Black to huis underwear and bound him with his shirt and pants. Marie came in carrying pillow cases with holes cut into them.' Couldnt find any ski masks, so this will have to do' She said, handing them out. Marita put one on over her ghead, the holes wre big enough so she could see out of it, and she tucked the rest of the case into her drss. so she looked like a ghost in a cartoon. MArita Say down in a chair across from Black " alright ' Give him the smelling salts so we can start questioning him ' She Said to soren.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 03, 2016, 04:19:16 PM**

"Works for me." Emilena lowered her voice as they pulled into the parking lot. "When the time comes for your strike, let me know. I'm ready to put it all on the line to knock Rhaegson down a peg."

She walked into the hotel room with the food. "What have we learned?" she asked Axel, who was closest to the door.

"Haven't started yet," he said dully, continuing to stare disinterestedly out the window.

"What the hell have you all been doing this whole time?" she exclaimed in exasperation. Grabbing the smelling salts from the table, she wafted them under their captive's nose. "Come on. I know we have all night, but we're running on borrowed time here, until somebody realizes he's missing."

Flora yawned and stared tiredly at her fried chicken and gravy. At first the all-you-can-eat special at the diner seemed like a no-brainer, but she hadn't even completed her first portion before her stomach was protesting the truckloads of grease and starch she was ingesting. The bottomless-refill strawberry lemonades likely weren't helping.

But then her stomach did a completely unrelated flipflop when Lily came sidling through the door, spotted her in the corner booth, and sat down in front of her. "Hey, um, excuse me?" Flora raised her voice, looking around urgently for a waitress. "Can someone eject this person? They're disrupting my eating experience!"

"Relax, I'm not Lily," the newcomer assured under her voice, and something about her demeanor convinced Flora. "I'm a friend of hers, and I'm worried about her, but I'm in far better control of myself."

Flora nodded nervously. "So, uh, what do you want then?"

The woman who wasn't Lily sighed. "Lily used to be such a loving woman. You'd have never had a more loyal and kindhearted person on your team. But she's possessed by something. And I need help to fix her."

"If it's money you want, I'm not interested," Flora pointed out quickly. She'd seen too many panhandlers to deal with one right now.

"Don't worry," her dinner partner assured. "I have all the resources already. If my plan works, I'll be taking Lily with me. Your reward will be never having to deal with her again..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 04, 2016, 12:21:36 AM**

"Hey," Soren said as he finished binding Black. "We don't want to wake him up and have him try to attack us or run." He gestured to the torn-up clothing and electrical cable that bound him to the couch.

He tossed a pillowcase-mask to Emilena before he donned it. Truth be told, he look absolutely ridiculous in the thing but it was necessary.

Anne then entered the hotel room. She had beat up plastic bag in her hand. "Sorry I'm late," she said, shutting the door behind her. "But it took my source a little longer than usual to get the goods."

"Better living through chemistry," Soren said with a grin. "What you got in there?"

"Well, ain't no such thing as a truth serum but we've got everything else we need." Anne's ears twitched as she heard Emilena break the smelling salt capsule.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 04, 2016, 08:54:53 AM**

Tony nodded, parked his massive car, and then shut it off. Exiting now, he activated the security features and headed for the motel. Once inside, he could see most gathered around the prisoner, and went to the room's sole table, opening up his bag and eagerly digging into his chili burger.

He popped the lid off his beer and began sipping that as well, looking to Emilena as she began rousing the prisoner. "This should be good... knowing you, he's not gonna last." Tony stated here, noticing Anne as she came in. "Hey Anne..." he waved slightly, swallowing his food. "Good to see you again."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2016, 12:33:24 PM**

Well, Well. Tony Stracci. We meet again. Still adding to your collection of vintage cars/ Marita said, looking at him through the holes in her mask. "or are you on some other kick now/ well, we'll caltch up after we deal with Sleepy Syphilis here. we've , shall we say a few question for him to answer.' she turned as the captive began to stir ' Rise and Shine Big Spender Its time for 20 questions, and you're going to give 20 answers.. and they'd better be good " Marita said in a low, threatening voice.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 06, 2016, 08:54:31 PM**

Anne opted to stay out of sight since the pillowcase mask didn't really fit her. Her ears pricked up at Tony's voice and she went up to him and shook his hand. "Hey, how's things going now?"

Soren pulled up a chair and sat on it, casually leaning against it. In all, he projected more of an informal air. "Well, Mr. Black," he said. "I see you certainly had fun tonight. But I have a question, does it strike you as hypocritical to spend millions of creds on prostitutes -- and I ain't talking just about the legal, taxed kind -- but then spend your time enforcing anti-prostitution laws?"

He then leaned in closer to the bound man. "Or are you getting paid *not* to enforce laws?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2016, 09:37:05 PM**

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20 questions huh? Well I hate to disappoint you, but the only answers you'll be getting from are 20 variations on the words - FUCk YOU' Black spat at Marita, as he now realized he was tied up. He heard Soren comment and turned to face him " What i spend my money is my own damn business and no one elses. Doesnt matter if its a billion creds, its my money..' Being a cop doesnt pay nearly that much, even if you spend 50 years behind the badge " Marita said. " even if you saved every cred. No, your money, comes from other sources.. most likely of questionable or illicit means. Taking cash from those girls at the clubs?I do hope you havent infected any of them..' infected?- Blacks mouth fell open then his eyes narrowed " Yes Mr Black , you have syphilis, and have had it for several years. you are either in the latent stage or the tertiary stage, i would say latent because you still are exhibiting infectious symptoms. Does your wife know? " How the hell did you find out ..' Black hissed " Never mind how i found out ' Marita said ' Answer the question: does she know?' No " Black said sullenly " Nor it is her business.. ' Actually no, it very much is her business.; Marita said coldly " You could have infected her, and many many other females with it.. because you had it, didn't get yourself treated, and wanted to have lots of freaky time, without any consequences. For you that is. a far cry from the public image of the valiant, and honorable Officer Black. And your credit records record at least 8 sexual encounters with other men, including a 5600000 cred   charged to Mr Mulvi at the Club Pres Drecard-- high high end stuff, if you are into strapping young men with firm butts and large endowments, French kissing, licking guy ass and giving blowjobs. So here's the deal Mr Black. you tell us everything we want to know ' Marita said moving a file between her fingers. "Or this little file here gets released publicly, and you'll make the 10 o' clock news tomorrow night for all the wrong reasons. There's enough stuff in here to put you away in prison for the rest of your life.. which wont be very long after your wife gets done tanning your hide and emptying out your creds billfold'
 Black sputtered , his face a violent reddish hue, his eyes smoldering with a mixture of anger and fear. What the HELL do you want?' He hissed.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2016, 09:38:45 PM**

Emilena lay on the bed, not interested in the interrogation. She'd done her part, and she had already gotten to know Black better than any self-respecting woman should have to. The guys can take it from here.

Flora stepped gingerly into the hotel. *Damn, wish Amos had taken after his dad...* she nodded approvingly of the stripped police chief's physique. "Erm, Axel?" she asked delicately. "Could I talk to you for a moment?" Axel rolled his eyes and didn't immediately answer. "It's that or babysit Columbo & friends. And I brought you a beer," Flora shook a bottle of expensive Amaretto. "But it's coming outside with me..."

Axel sighed and followed the folf outside. Lily narrowed her eyes.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 06, 2016, 10:03:41 PM**

Tony rose here, and warmly shook Anne's hand. "Hey! It's good to see you! And yeah things are... OK... I'm a legitimate businessman now and about the only thing I kept from my old life after my old man passed away were his cars... I couldn't part with those!" He grinned now.

"How have you been keeping?" he inquired of the pony. "You look pretty good actually." he confirmed. "Oh and... we brought you all food." he said, motioning with his paw down to the takeout order bag on the table.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2016, 10:21:47 PM**

Lily pushed past Tony, barely even registering his presence. She had more important things to worry about.

She saw Flora's and Axel's silhouettes recede from the outside of the hotel. It was none of her business, but something was warning her that Flora's actions were off. And what would she want with Axel?

"Lily..." Emilena called out sternly as she turned the doorknob. Lily flashed an angry at the vixen. "Is that any way to treat an old friend? How about say hello to Tony, and leave those two alone?"

Lily balled her fists, remembering she promised Emilena she wouldn't bother Axel, but not caring now that he was keeping secrets. "Hello *Tony*," she spat, slamming the door behind her and marching into the street. Emilena sighed and gave Tony a knowing look.

Meanwhile, in the back room Black wasn't having any of Marita's threats. "You think you can scare me?" he sneered. "I'm *rich*. I can handle any scandal, bring it on. Fuck my wife, I'll just get another. You better let me go, or things will *not* end well for you." He spat in her face. "I've crushed criminal scum scarier than you. I have druglords and cartels that bend over backwards to please me because *I'm the only reason they're allowed to live* and they know it." His eyes bore into hers, and he smiled fearlessly.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2016, 10:47:23 PM**

The 'I 've got chunks of punks like you in my stool' defense huh/ Marita said. Mr black, simply put no amount of money can buy you out of the trouble we can cause you. And you know how easy RICO allows for crimes to pile up, along with fines and consecutive terms. then there's obstruction of justice, witness tampering, destruction of evidence, and so on. Money Laundering, in your case.. Why else is the contraband locker in your station empt? Anyway Once you have to pay lawyers fees, and court fines, you won't BE rich. Not to mention all the lawsuits from any infected women and men coming out of the woodwork, once your STD becomes public knowledge. So .. I'd suggest your cooperate.. unless you want you face on every tv screen in town in the next 6 hours.' Marita said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 07, 2016, 07:25:55 PM**

Soren looked utterly unimpressed. "You *really* think your creds can help you out?"

He leaned in close to Black's face. "I know quite a few people who've been burned by you and would like to have your balls mounted as a trophy." Black didn't know it, but Soren's threat was only half-true. He *personally* didn't know anyone who was willing to hunt him down but he was certain that Anne had quite enough underworld contacts to make it the case.

Black chuckled. "You, deal with the shitstains of society? The contract killers, organized crime enforcers and worse? Don't make me laugh! You didn't even have the balls to go and kidnap me yourself!"

Soren also held up his smartphone with the Black household's address and the deactivation code for his alarm and showed it to Black. "Also, take a good look at this. Recognize that? If you don't want your house's address, alarm code and GPS coordinates uploaded to the Internet and plastered all over Seryet's TV screens where everyone and anyone can find them, you'll cooperate with us."

The Human leaned back in his chair and sipped his glass of water. "Make your choice."

Anne nickered as she opened the bag to reveal a veggie burger. "Thanks! Truth be told, I've been doing some black market electronics trading since Lanthae."

She took a bite of the burger. "But anyways, I've been just fine." She turned to the closed door. "Soren and the gals are having a chat with our 'guest'. Might be a while before they get done."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2016, 07:55:54 PM**

Lily followed the duo as closely as she dared. Flora and Axel were ambling into the alleyway across the street. Lily waited impatiently for the crosswalk light to change, then pursed her lips and raced across the street when it was clearly abandoned this late at night.

Finally she was getting in range to hear what was being said. "...I am just so sick of this shit..." Axel griped. "The fuck this even has to do with me?"

"I don't know, but just do it and then we can both put it behind us," Flora urged.

"Doesn't even make sense though," he protested. "What would that do?"

"I don't know and I don't care," Flora countered. "Why do you care?"

Axel grumbled. "...fine." He threw his hands in the air. "And when pray tell is this going down?"

"Right now." Lily heard her own voice behind her. Whirling around, she felt something stab into her sternum, punching through the bone and directly into her heart. She had only a moment to glimpse a mirror image of herself holding a massive syringe before the tranquilizer hit her like a load of bricks. "Quickly!" her doppelganger snapped, supporting Lily's full weight before she fell over. "Axel! Her body will metabolize it in seconds!"

Axel hesitated. "What the hell is she doing here?" he stammered in alarm.

"She followed you. And she's going to kill all of us if you don't act now!"

Flora was backing up to the far end of the alley. Axel bit his lip and balled his fists at nothing in particular, but finally marched forward and pressed his hands against Lily's temples. Lily felt shocked when he pressed his forehead against hers. She could hear his thoughts, something she hadn't heard since Lanthae.

You're not the real Lily, he thought to her. *Do the right thing and just die.*

Black stewed in his chair. "So you wanted to know what I spend my money on, huh? Well, clearly you know. So I don't know why you're wasting your time. What are you, lobbyists for a secret prostitution super pac?" He glanced at Rose. "Or maybe you're all just hookers. Wouldn't surprise me. Either way, if you're looking for money, maybe we can talk. I might even let you set the price if sugar tits over there wants to get 'friendly.'"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 07, 2016, 08:16:17 PM**

Soren fumed at the implication he was a prostitute but he tried to keep his face neutral. But the clenched fists gave his mood away. He crossed his arms. "Did yu just try to bribe us to set you free?" He snorted. "You're a fucking riot, you know that?"

The Human pointed to the smartphone in hand. "We want information. Starting with the rather interesting breach in police protocol we've uncovered: no witness names being recorded. I'm friends with a Seryet Norton and they tell me that is not how things are done."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2016, 08:18:08 PM**

Black grinned. "Maybe we can strike a deal. I'll tell you everything I know but only if the bitch with the big tits sucks me off." He nodded his head at Rose. "She looks like she's got a good mouth. She does that, I'll sing like a canary."

Flora stepped forward tentatively as she regarded the crumpled figure. "Is...is she dead?"

"I don't even get why that worked," Axel muttered folding his arms and glancing at the liquor store across the street.

The alternate Lily, who called herself 'Rose', picked up Lily's body and slung it over her shoulder. "You two share a bond, and always will," she replied to Axel. "It's not love, its not kindred spirit, it's just a byproduct of what happens when a psionic consciousness sacrifices its former body to inhabit a new one. For the few moments in Lanthae where Lily lacked a self, before her mind located her new body, she needed something to keep her existent. A totem to cling to. As I predicted, she picked you."

Axel grunted. "M-hm. So what now? You kill us for knowing too much?"

"Oh no, I keep my promises." Rose began carrying her quarry out of the alleyway. "You two are free to go. Heck, I didn't even offer you money, but you earned three month's salary." She withdrew a credit chip and tossed it on the ground behind her before disappearing around the corner.

Flora exhaled in relief. "Oh thank god. I feel, like, I'm at least 15% more likely to survive this crap without her here." She glanced at Axel, who was staring silently at the spot where Lily used to be. "So, um, you want that credit chip? I'm doing okay. You can have all of it."

Axel sighed and lit a cigarette, then silently walked over to the liquor store.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 07, 2016, 08:46:08 PM**

On two conditions ' Rose said ' first , you wear a condom to protect me from contracting what you have." " alright' Black nodded ' he turned to Soren " you.. go fetch me a condom.." he turned to Rose " what is the other Condition? Let me guess.. creds., how much you want. 100 grand? " 100 grand.. add some more zeroes to that pal " Rose said " fine 1 million creds, I'll line item it. Come on, big boobs, I'm paying you real good cash, and letting you lot live. By rights I should plug the lot of you for this,' Black said, gritting his teeth.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 08, 2016, 07:18:19 PM**

"Oh! Electronics?" Tony asked Anne now. "That's ironically what I trade in! Well... not black market but you know! The legal stuff! Mostly computer hardware! I have my own company now! Kind of based on the old NeXT except it actually does something." Tony chuckled here.

"So yeah..." he glanced at the door now. "That's..." He pricked his ears to try and hear. "Wait... what are they... actually DOING in there?" he asked now, his eyes going wide as he heard some... strange words being uttered.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 12, 2016, 04:31:09 AM**

Emilena yawned. She was extremely tired, but she wanted a few more allies present before she nodded off for the night. With Axel, Lily, and Flora gone the Purifiers had them tied in numbers...

...wait, no, there's Flora. The youth came creeping back through the front door, looking a little troubled. Emilena wondered what had happened between her and Axel but it wasn't really her business. She hoped the rat was still alive and Lily hadn't broken her promise. *Something to worry about tomorrow...* she thought sleepily, before finally drifting into a dreamless slumber.

In the interrogation room, a nameless Purifier threw Rose a condom from his wallet, curious to see where she was going with this.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 12, 2016, 05:27:35 PM**

Anne shrugged as she nibbled on some fries. Her ears pivoted towards the door. She scrunched her muzzle in thought. "I thought they were running an interrogation?"

She then shrugged. "Eh, not our business."

The Shetland Pony sat down on the couch and picked her nails. "Well, most of the electronics I dealt with were not exactly illegal but I didn't acquire them legally. That and the transactions didn't include taxes."

Soren sighed as he put his smartphone away. He scowled as he laid eyes on the group. "I'm going to get something to eat."

He opened the door and closed it before he took off his pillowcase mask. The faint scent of food greeted him as did the sight of Anne and Tony on the sofa.

The Human said nothing as he exited the hotel room.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 13, 2016, 02:43:30 PM**

((all right I'm just gonna move this plot along. I think I got down what we need next.))

Outside, a rather dark looking Lykan HyperSport pulled into the parking lot, the engine shutting off and the diamond studded lights flicking off as the door hissed and smoothly slid upward, a rather bulky looking doberman stepped out, his short cropped black fur blowing ever so slightly in the wind. Narrowing his eyes, he began bounding up the steps to the room, stomping as he threw open the door, causing Tony to jump. "Holy shit! Buller?" he asked in surprise.

Buller was one of the Purifiers' most terrifying interrogators, and was known for having a trigger temper and reacting most brutally to things that weren't going his way. NO doubt SOMEONE in their organization had called him in.

Throwing open the door where Black was being "interrogated", the doberman snarled. "What the fuck is the matter with you pussies?" he snapped angrily at everyone in the room, but his gaze was mostly directly to Aaron and Marcus. "What are you teaching him? Ballet dancing?" He strode forward, shoving anyone who dared get in his way aside, and then violently gripped Black's mouth.

"TELL US WHAT THE FUCK WE WANT TO KNOW! YOU HEAR ME? I'LL RIP YOUR FUCKING JAW OFF AND THEN DEVOUR YOUR FUCKING FACE!" He roared, snapping his jaws right in Black's vision as he put his paws in Black's mouth and began straining his muscles, pulling in opposite directions. A sickening crunch could be heard as Black's jaw began to shatter, splitting open as he tore his mouth asunder.

Black's pleas and thrashing caused Buller to stop, releasing him. "WELL?" he asked.

"I... I..." Black stammered. "It's Methuen! He's an employee at Advanced Marlbrax Robotics! I... I meet him at 4 PM every Thursday in Dobson's Alley! You want answers... he's your guy!" he insisted. Spitting in his face, Buller turned to the room and pointed at the now bloodied mouth of Black.

"See? THAT'S how you fucking do it!" he said, stomping over to the corner, folding his arms across his chest and suddenly becoming an immovable statue.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 13, 2016, 03:59:07 PM**

Rose took one look at the bloodied and messed up face of black, and turned green.' excuse me ' she said hurriedly and made her way to the bathroom.

_
Metheun, huh" i'll run down whatever info i can dig up on this guy marita said ' wjat dio we do with Black, now that his face has been smashed in?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 13, 2016, 06:37:31 PM**

Marcus scowled. "Congratu-fucking-lations! We were planning on blackmailing him and leaving him intact so we could make a clean getaway!" He then pointed to the mutilated face of Black. "But now, once the cops find this, they'll be on our asses. And I've seen enough on the streets to know that cop-killers usually *don't* make it to trial."

He shook his head. "Aaron go take Inspector Gadget and our newest 'recruit' and overside this guy's carcass." He then pointed to Marie. "You're helping me clean this shit up."

It was then Soren entered the room with his takeout in hand. "Hey, what have we...DEAR FUCKING SHIT ON A STICK! WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU GUYS DO TO HIM!?" he exclaimed as he laid eyes on the bloodied couch, as well as some blood spatter on the walls. And Black's mutilated and dead form on the couch. He fought down a wave of nausea as he laid eyes on the gory scene.

He rubbed his forehead. "Damn it..."

It was then Aaron placed a muscular hand on the Human's shoulder. "You, me and the Ferret out have overside duty. Go get him and something to carry this fatass."

Soren entered the room where Anne and Tony were chatting. He cleared his throat.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 13, 2016, 06:55:22 PM**

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great. Black is dead, and now we have to dispose of his giant butt' Marita said, scowling as she looked at the cops dead body. " First things first guys ' Gloves. Cant afford to leave any fingerprints, DNA etc that could link us to him. Thanks to the ' light touch' of Mr Buller here, We now have 350 pounds of dead cop on our hands.' Go get gloves on.,we dispose of the body, we release some of his dirty laundry, and we pin it on some dude whose girlfriend contracted an STD from him, who took it out on his face. the whole defending ' the Mrs' honor' from a crooked cop on the take kinda deal." She went over began typing into her computer.

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marie went over and began going through the supplies Anne had brought and come out with some fabric cleaner ' Hopeful;ly this stuff removes blood stains " she sighed, and went over to the wall where the blood had spattered from Blacks broken jaw and cracked neck.

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Rose came out from a bathroom, llooking shaken and pale, she had clearly been throwing up.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 13, 2016, 07:31:29 PM**

Flora and the others in the main room were still staring at the entrance to the interrogation room, the door of which was still hanging open from when Buller had swung it open. "Who...who's the new guy?" Flora asked nervously.

"I don't know, but I hope he sticks around," Emilena remarked, not even bothered at having been woken up. "Sounds like he gets stuff done."

Axel opened the door to the hotel and sipped his new IPA. He looked around, decided he didn't care what was troubling everyone, and silently resumed sitting on the couch staring out the window.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 20, 2016, 12:44:32 PM**

Rose entered the other room and sat down on the sofa ' black is dead' she said to the others.' so we're cleaning up the room, and dumping his body somewhere inconspicuous..so.. we have to leave here.. well pretty darn quick..

_
marita entered the room ' ok, i've released some of Black's dirty laundry and his reputation will soon be shot.. the cops will be going through every corner of his office, for stuff they've been turning a blind eye to. Created an alias of guy named tyrete- girlfriend got infected by black and was rendered infertile because of it. guys had a grudge for a of a long time.. finally snapped.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 24, 2016, 06:17:19 PM**

Marcus shrugged. "That'll do. Yeah, we just ruined some guy's life but tough shit."

Aaron returned with a shower curtain and a set of gloves. He threw a set to Soren and Tony. "Here, put these on and help me wrap this guy up!"

Soren donned the gloves and unrolled the shower curtain onto the floor. He then pointed to the bloody couch. "Okay, what do we do with this then?"

The Doberman grabbed the fabric cleaner, gloves and some rags. "You worry about getting rid of this guy's carcass!"

Soren nodded as he helped Aaron lift Black's body onto the plastic shower curtain. He went and grabbed some towels from the bathroom to keep the blood from leaking out of the shower curtain.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 26, 2016, 08:18:50 AM**

Emilena assisted in disposing of Black's body and Flora helped sterilize and clean the apartment, though not without a disgusted look on her face. The fact that she'd slept with this corpse's son a few hours ago did not help her countenance.

"All right, looks like we have a direction," Emilena mentioned after cleanup was done. "We want to visit Black's contact at 4pm on Thursday? We might not even want to reveal ourselves, let's just tail him and see where he goes."

(ooc do we wanna time skip?)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 30, 2016, 10:05:12 PM**

The next two days were a nerve-wracking ordeal with every knock on the door a potential threat But, soon Thursday arrived.

It was early afternoon in the dingy hotel room. Soren and the others were gathered around the disgustingly beat up computer table.

"We got all the intel we need, so how do you guys want to do this?" Soren said as he read over the paper containing the information he had gathered about Dobson's Alley. Thanks to both Axel's knowledge and Marcus's recon missions, he had learned that Dobson's Alley was a rather low-class gay bar in the Oilworks District -- a former heavy industrial zone that had been renovated into an...interesting commercial area/red-light district.

"Why don't we rubber-hose him like we did Black?" Aaron said as he looked at Buller.

"You fucking kidding me!?" Soren slammed his fist on the table. "That guy-" he pointed a finger at the burly Doberman "-left the biggest mess I've seen outside of a Lanthae crime scene!"

Anne sipped from her glass of beer. "I'm not so sure on grabbing him. I mean, what if someone sees us and calls the cops?"

"Okay. You got any ideas?"

Anne nodded. "We follow him...If he has some leads or other stuff. We grab him and do a field interrogation."

Soren rubbed his forehead. "Fine by me."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 31, 2016, 12:29:31 AM**

"I'm with Anne," Emilena chimed in. "He'll tell us way more by simply walking home than we'd ever get breaking his kneecaps. Plus that way we can avoid leaving yet another obvious clue regarding the direction of our investigation. Any competent detective would already be suspicious that Black was just removed from the picture; if his contact dies shortly afterward their employer will likely be able to connect the dots."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 31, 2016, 07:22:39 PM**

Well the good news is the cops are going thorough every Black trip to strip clubs, considering that he went at least 100 times, they'll be busy digging into that for weeks" Marita said' His body hasnt been found yet, although I'd wager it will be found in another day or so.. So the sooner we tail his contact, and get further into.. whatever he was up to, the better. This isnt an Agatha Christie Book. Nope, far bloodier.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 04, 2016, 10:07:24 AM**

Marcus nodded. "Okay, we need the least threatening ones to go and follow him."

"I'll go," Anne said, her ears pricking up. "I've had some experience with the red-light district."

"It's a gay bar. A mare showing up in there might attract some attention." Soren said.

Aaron rubbed his chin as he threw his cup away in the trash. "True...Axel would blend in the best. But we can't send him in alone in case things become a total shitshow."

The German Shepherd then turned to Rose and Flora. "We'll need you too as hidden contacts in case Axel gets screwed or something."

Marcus let out a breath and examined the notes Soren had taken. "Okay, sounds well and good but one problem, shakedowns by the Seryet PD are kind of a notorious hazard there."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 04, 2016, 08:45:28 PM**

"I think I can handle that," nodded Flora, but inwardly she felt her heart drop at the listed roster. If she was stuck on the same team as Rose, especially when their only other teammates were the apathetic Axel and Anne, she'd need to lay down some more defined boundaries. Tapping Rose on the shoulder, she motioned for a more private part of the apartment.

"Okay, look, I need to make something clear if I'm going on a recon mission with you." She gulped and kept a comfortable bubble of personal space between them. "I am not romantically interested in you, and I really don't want any more romantic or sexual advances on me." She took a deep breath. "I take consent very seriously, and regardless of my sexual history before meeting you, it's my right to tell you and your girlfriends 'No'. Okay?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 04, 2016, 09:26:16 PM**

Anne cracked her back as she sipped from her cup of water. "So what's our loadout for this mission."

"Anne can follow Axel into the gay bar." Marcus looked over the Shetland Pony. Sure, she had a visible bust but it wasn't something that couldn't be hidden.

Said mare laid her ears back. "You shittin' me? Crossdressing?"

"You rather Axel get fucked, maybe literally?" Aaron cut in as he checked his pistol.

Soren looked over the intel he had gathered once more. His smartphone had a map of the area around Dobson's Alley. Red dots on the map marked where potential eyes could be located. He rubbed his chin.

Rose and Flora could be stationed at the intersection to the left of Dobson's Alley. Right where Dekard Avenue and Jenson Street met. But then that left the other intersection where Dekard Avenue met Sarif Street. Of course, he could place two others there but then there was the possibility that they could all come back to their "base of operations" with a nasty surprise awaiting them.

He decided to swallow any animosity he had towards Emilena. "Emilena," he said, his voice hard. "We're having some trouble planning this operation out."

The Human showed her the marked-up map of area around Dobson's Alley.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 04, 2016, 09:58:16 PM**

Rose looked at Flora very closely, before sighing ' First off a kiss is NOT sexual. You're experienced enough to know that Flora. Second, this is business, not pleasure. We are on a recon mission, not going out to get drinks hang out and have fun. I respect your right to tell me no, and any of the girls . But know this Flora If I was romantically interested in you, We would have already had sex by now. You need not worry about that though, You're more like a little sister to me, than a potential lover. " Rose said "

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 04, 2016, 11:33:34 PM**

Flora bristled. "Great. I heard something in there about you not being interested in me and that's just great." It sounded vaguely like a rape threat, Rose claiming that her own interest was the only factor that decided whether they had sex, but Flora heard enough other stuff that implied she was at least safe until they weren't on 'business.' "Feel free to tell your girlfriends I'm not interested in them either. And that includes kissing regardless of how you define it."

Walking back to the main group, she piped up. "You know, if Anne's really not interested in cross-dressing, I could go with Axel instead. My boobs are smaller."

"Yeah, but you're curvier. Also kinda young, they'd probably card you," Emilena pointed out. She glanced at Soren's plan. "You got this pretty well figured out. We just need someone with more of an overlook of the whole area. That would ideally be you or Aaron, on a rooftop calling the shots. We should really cover Sarif as well, god knows manpower is the one thing we have in spades. We'd also need vehicles on standby in case the target is driving." She pursed her lips. "If only we'd thought to grab some of Kojurro's magic bugs before we'd killed him..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 10, 2016, 10:41:05 AM**

"We'll be on the rooftops," Aaron said. "We've both got compnoculars."

Marcus looked over the map. "We need some more men, I'll go ring up Rhaegson and the base and get some."

Soren held up his hands. "Let's not get get reinforcements just yet." He pointed to the intersection of Sarif and Dekard. "Right here, we can probably station Marie and Marita."

He then turned to Anne. "Look, if we hide your boobs, you're the most masculine looking of the females in this group."

The Human looked over the mare. She had on a baggy t-shirt and jeans. "Besides, some larger clothing could do the trick."

Anne snorted. "Fine! But you owe me for making me hide my boobs!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2016, 05:05:46 PM**

Emilena yawned. "Sounds like a plan. Now, if y'all would excuse me, it's been a rough night and I don't plan on sleeping all day tomorrow." Not that there was much of a choice; the morning sun was already peeking over the horizon.

(OOC: Are we gonna do a time skip to this future stakeout?)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 28, 2016, 08:11:17 PM**

(Sure I'm Fine) with the Time Skip.
_ Riose, Marita and NMarie went to bed, All 3 of them exhausted from the days events.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 29, 2016, 02:43:10 PM**

(OOC - I'm fine with it. But let's wait until bushwacked comes back to really move things along.)

The planning phase all done, Soren headed to the bathroom to quickly shower and get some sleep before the operation heated up. He fell asleep in the armchair in the corner of the room.

Aaron took the corner of the room. He was already asleep, head slumped over with his SMG in his lap.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2016, 06:18:12 PM**

Flora stayed up surfing the web on her phone for a few hours after everyone else had gone to sleep. Normally, the internet was a welcome respite from the stress of her normal life, but her troubles had grown so much greater than anything she had to deal with as a pop star that her favorite social media forums and newly forwarded articles all just felt pointless. What the point of it all? She didn't feel like a part of the real world. Her existence was this dreary dangerous hotel room, and when she left it she would probably die. More than anything, her thoughts dulled themselves into a blank state of numb meditation, trying to keep her consciousness apart from any actual thoughts.

By the time the morning sun was peeking through the blinds of the hotel room window, Flora had passed out from pure fatigue, an uncalculated gambit to fall asleep from pure exhaustion to limit her chances of having any dreams.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 07, 2016, 04:01:52 PM**

Axel's head was thumping when he stirred awake, his brain feeling about three times too big for his skull. For a moment he lay still, flat against the couch with his eyes closed and a spring poking up through the thin fabric and digging into his back. When he'd mustered up the courage Axel sat up slowly, flinching slightly as he opened his eyes - but the burst of pain he'd expected from the sunlight never came. Instead the room was dark, and the light that came trickling though the window opposite the couch was dim. Confused, Axel checked the clock on the wall and blinked when he saw the time.

7:40 PM. He twisted, swinging his legs off the couch and planting his feet on the carpet with a groan. *Crap... slept the whole day through...* Not that it had been the first time. Stretching his arms, he rubbed a knuckle against his temple groggily then groaned again as he remembered the plan. Paying a visit to a gay club wasn't exactly something he was looking forward to. *Shit, it's not like I'm looking forward to anything we're doing.* At least he'd have Anne for some kind of protection.

"You're up."

Axel jumped, his eyes widening in shock. "*Jesus!*" His head turned in the direction the voice came from and after a second he made out a figure hunched over in the darkness next to the window. "What the hell?! Were you watching me sleep?!"

Marcus glared back at him, stone-faced. "Don't flatter yourself. It's time to get ready." Stepping forward, the doberman walked across the room and nudged Soren with the toe of his shoe. "Get up."

Glancing around, Axel saw that most of the others were asleep as well. *Must have been a long night...* Flora's slumped form caught his eye. Axel was used to feeling bad, but she looked *terrible*. Pushing himself up, he made his way over to her, figuring that since she was going to be on the team for this mission, he might as well try to get on her good side. Axel nudged her shoulder gently. "Hey... you alright?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 09, 2016, 02:11:54 PM**

Flora was already awake. She wasn't sure if she'd even slept, honestly. If she had, her dreams were so laser-focused on the dangers and stress currently besieging her waking life that she could hardly distinguish the blood-covered hotel room of her dreams from the one she's currently lying in.

She sighed. "Uh...I'm afraid to say no because someone will probably decide I'm a liability and off me." She stared at her phone, which she hadn't charged and was down to 5%. "Last night was...well, probably the least pleasant night I've ever had, and I once came down from a salvia trip in the back of a police car."

She tried to sit up and hissed; the couch was extremely lumpy and she now had a terrible kink in her back. "How did I even get wrapped up in all this?" she groaned, rubbing her bloodshot eyes. "I don't know who the hell any of you are except the rapist lesbian housewives."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 09, 2016, 05:53:49 PM**

Soren got up with a start the moment Marcus's shoe touched him. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes and headed to the bathroom to clean up.

Aaron had went out to get everyone something quick to eat. He returned with a bag full of catfish and vegetable burgers. A cardboard box containing some steaming hot coffee was also with him.

He placed the items on the table. "All right, food's here. Let's eat, get out energy up and get going before our target escapes."

Soren returned from the bathroom and hastily unwrapped a catfish burger and poured himself some hot coffee. The burger was excessively greasy and tasted a bit dried out but he was hungry. The steaming hot brew helped banish his sleepiness.

Anne chose to wash down her 2,3 zotphenylamine capsules with some hot coffee. She nickered as the pills began to take effect on her. She was clad in the same dirty t-shirt and jeans she had worn for the past few days. It was then Anne looked at the clock: 7:50 PM. "Shit!" she exclaimed. "We're almost four hours late!"

"Motherfucker!" Soren slammed his fist into the table, making the papers jump. "He might already have left!"

Aaron had already finished his meal and thre his coffee cup away. The mare did have a point. He rubbed his muzzle. "Hopefully he's dumb enough to still be hanging around there. But Soren's right, we need to get moving."

He holstered his pistol and threw a light windbreaker over it.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 12, 2016, 10:48:47 PM**

I take great offense Flora at the implication we are rapists.' Marita said " You wouldn't have been sent to us if they was any question that we could not control ourselves around girls.So drop it. I'm expecting a call from Bailey in a few minutes for his latest check in. while isnt quite the scenario we intended, it is what it is.

_
 well, guys ' marie said as she brought in the paper and showed the Headline " Augment Deaths now Over 600! " things are getting worse and worse. Theres still no clue as to what exactly is causing these deaths.. and they're finding dozens more dead every day. At this rate it'll be over 1000 dead by next week"
- roses phone rang and it was Bailey "hello Rose. i hope Nothing bad has happened to Flora in the past week? because there are Scandal sheet gossip about someone matching her description, holding a private concert for a high school kid.. any concert she puts on, i get paid,. managers stuff , you see.. "

_
 well you'll need to talk to Flora about how much she took in from that' Rose " Fine. but remember rose. You and your girlfriends are getting paid MILLIONS of xcreds to protect that kid. shes a freaking

superstar, worth more dead than you or your girlfriends alive, and not even close. I am, literally trusting you with the future ogf my record company. anything real serious happens to that kid, your lifespans will be measured in minutes, if not seconds. Capiche, Rose "No need to threaten Nigel. You Know me.' Rose Said ": just make sure you live up to the faith I've placed in you Rose. Put Flora on "

_
Flora? Call for you its your agent' Rose said and offered Flora her phone.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2016, 04:59:51 AM**

"One of you stuck your tongue down my throat while I was locked in the back of your car, and the other two insisted that wasn't rape, so I don't care what your definition is!" Flora shot back as she took the phone.

"Nigel!" she switched to a panicked, distraught tone and went somewhere private so she could talk freely. "You have to get me out of here, the dykes have me trapped in a hotel room with *actual Purifiers!* The violent, dangerous sort! Last night they kidnapped the Chief of Police and bludgeoned him to death while I was watching! I had to help clean up the blood! The day before that, they brought me along to rob a general store and got in a shootout with the cops!" Her voice broke. "Please Nigel, I'm in so much danger and I'm going to get killed any day now. If you care about me at all, get me out of here and take me somewhere actually safe!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 14, 2016, 03:41:52 PM**

Marcus looked up and narrowed his eyes as he saw Flora leave the room, talking into a cell phone. He couldn't hear what she was saying, but she seemed emotional. Moving across the room, he grabbed a Purifier who'd been getting ready by the shoulder and pointed in the direction she'd left. "Who the fuck gave her a cell phone?" he snarled. "Who's she talking to? Get it off her and break it."

The purifier nodded and moved quickly, shoving past Axel as the rat made his way over to join Anne as she gulped down coffee. "So... you'll have my back right? You know, in case anyone tries to... start something?" He tried a bite of one of the burgers Soren. It was greasy, bland and smelled questionable - but it was at least semi-eatable, which was more than he could say for the food he'd been eating the last couple of months.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 14, 2016, 08:48:32 PM**

Flora, there is no other place i could put you at this point that would be safer. Now quit rambling about cop shootouts mob hits and infiltrating cults. I don't want to hear it, keep your head low, and listen to what Rose and the others tell you. I put them in charge of you for a very good reason, you're not old enough to take care of yourself yet, legally you are still a minor. Behave yourself, and soon you'll be back touring iin front of screaming girls and making me millions of creds. Bailey, Out' the call was disconnected.

_
Thats MY phone, and she was talking to her manager, who set her up with us. we have to check in with him every so often as part of the deeal. " Rose said shortly to Marcus ' you smash my phone and you're buying me a new one. Baileys not one to blab, i know this from personal experience.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 14, 2016, 09:04:26 PM**

Anne nodded as she continued sipping her coffee. "No worries." She slapped Axel on the back. "Right, let me..." It was then she smiled and held a finger up the air. "Forget cross-dressing. I'll pull off the drag queen look."

She ran a hand through her mane and tail. They were long and blonde as was appropriate to her being a Shetland pony. Although they were knotted and a bit raggedy from not having properly cleaned herself in a week or so. And her chestnut coat wasn't in any better shape.

Soren snorted as he looked upon the mare. "Homeless drag queen look doesn't quite fit you." He threw the wrapper of his burger in the trash.

Anne pinned her ears back and flipped him the finger. She turned to Rose and Flora. "Right, pass me some nail polish."

She headed into the bathroom and soon the sound of running water was heard.

Aaron growled under his breath. "Fucking kidding me!? She chooses to shower *now*!?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2016, 10:11:22 PM**

Flora could hardly believe it when Bailey coolly dismissed her concerns and then hung up on her. She was losing so much respect for the man who she'd considered her closest friend, a sharp-as-nails businessman who'd always had her back. Suddenly she yelped as the Purifier kicked the door to the backroom open. "Who the fuck you talking to?" he growled threateningly, rounding on her and yanking the phone from her grasp.

"I--nobody!" she stammered, then recoiled as he slapped her viciously across the face, sending her slamming into the wall.

"Bullshit!" he roared, glancing at the phone, smashing it into the ground and stamping on it with his foot. "You think this is a fucking summer camp!?" He drew his pistol and pointed it at the sobbing teenager. "If you're a police plant I swear to god I'll plant a bullet right between your eyes!"

Flora was curled into a ball crying in terror and experiencing violent flashbacks of the last time someone had pointed a gun at her point blank. The Purifier stomped out of the room and back to Marcus. "Name on the phone was Nigel Bailey," he reported. "We better look him up, she wouldn't give me a straight answer. I think she's working with the cops."

The ruckus finally woke Emilena, but not to the extent that she registered what was going on. Groggily she blinked several times and made to go back to sleep, but her body wasn't having it. She didn't feel even half recovered from the horrible night she'd had before, but time was still of the essence, and she needed to wake up quickly before the others were out the door.

Crossing to the bathroom, she picked the lock and let herself in. Completely ignoring Anne in the shower, she used the toilet and washed her face and pits in the sink. No need to waste time on an entire shower when speed was of the essence.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 15, 2016, 04:03:18 AM**

"Don't care about your *experience*," Marcus said roughly. "Don't care about your deal. You try to contact someone on the outside again without our permission again, and I kill her, you and your two fuck buddies. *Understood*?"

He turned as the Purifier reported who had been on the other side of the call. "Nigel Bailey..." He searched up the name on his own cell phone. *Her manager? So she wasn't contacting the police...* Marcus frowned. Should he arrange to have him killed? He had no idea what Flora might have told him... *No, right now it'd be too much of a distraction. It's better to keep watch for anything unusual first. We'll be changing location soon anyhow.* Marcus looked up at the clock. "5 minutes before we move out!" he barked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 15, 2016, 06:44:19 AM**

Rose was about to reply indignantly to Marcus' threat, But Marita cut her off " Go Get ready Rose. we have more pressing matters to deal with right now. Go get Flora and get her ready. Remember we're posing as tramps for this stakeout." marita said. i'll buy you a new phone later. Go,girl"
Rose walked to the next room, where she found Flora curled up into the fetal position and crying openly. " come on Flora, we need to go" she said stepping forward then noticing her smashed phone lying on the ground..Rose picked up the phone, then flipped it over
the underside which contained the SIM card, looked intact.. the phone screenface and the siding had taken the brunt of the damage, as pieces iof the siding and screen were missing. rose slid off the battery cover, pulled out the battery, and found the sim's card behind it was.. somehow, intact. she pulled that out as well and put both of them into her pocket then tossed the phone into the garbage. she then turned to Flora " Flora? We gotta go. its stakeout time.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 15, 2016, 11:20:15 AM**

Anne got out of the shower and strode into the room. She had a red cocktail dress on and her mane and tail were amazingly shiny.

Soren's jaw dropped. "Holy shit!"

Aaron nodded approvingly. "You look hot like that!"

"Quite a step up from the 'Seryet Bum' look you always have. Hell, I can't tell you're overclocking right now."

Anne pinned her ears back but she chuckled at the jab. "Amazing what you can get at a thrift store."

She then cracked her knuckles. "Right, let's get moving."

Soren stuck the compnoculars into the pocket of his windbreaker. Aaron checked his pistol and reholstered it. He slid a holster with a pistol in it to Soren, who tucked it into his windbreaker.

"Everyone else, will be issued their weapons when we drop you off." The German Shepherd then strode over to the front door and began unlocking it.

(OOC - Overclocking - under the influence of performance enhancing drugs.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 15, 2016, 07:15:37 PM**

Flora glared at the unsympathetic Great Dane as she left the room. *If I survive this, I hope I never have to see your dopey slobbermouthed face again*, she snarled silently, getting to her feet.

She couldn't let them get to her. They could punch her, molest her, beat her down physically and emotionally, but if she caved they'd only do it more. *Maybe if I'm lucky, I'll die before I break and not during,* she thought grimly to herself as she returned to the main room, returning a suspicious glance in her direction from the Purifier who interrogated her.

Emilena exited the bathroom ready to go. "It looks like we might be slightly behind schedule already, so is there any chance we could speed things up?" she asked. "We miss this chance, word of Black's death will have spread too far and we don't get another."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 17, 2016, 05:17:28 PM**

A short while later, Marcus rolled the SUV to a stop on a dimly lit sidewalk. Up ahead, he could see the entrance to the strip club. Dobson's Alley was almost indistinguishable from the other old industrial-style buildings that formed the Oilworks District. The only thing that made it stand out were the occasional patrons heading in through a heavy-looking metal sliding door into a passageway that glowed pink, and the garish neon letters that spelled out the club's name. Someone had stolen the 'b' so it now read 'Do son's alley'. Marcus could see various rough-looking individuals, both male and female, hanging around. Occasionally, a car would stop alongside one and after a few words were exchanged they would get in, the vehicle driving off into the evening. Marcus' jaw tightened. He could feel the filth seeping into his pores. The Purifier sitting in the passenger seat next to him seemed equally uncomfortable.

In the back seat, Axel stared at his phone's screen, trying to memorise the face staring back at him. *Raymond Metheun...* With a name and place of work finding him hadn't been too much trouble. He was a human, but with his pinched in face and small beady eyes, Metheun looked even more rat-like than Axel. "So we can't let him see us, right?" he asked, snapping the phone shut and slipping it back into his pocket, hoping he'd be able to pick out the guy's face in a crowd.

"Yeah. Just want to see where he goes," Marcus confirmed, keeping his eyes on the strip club's entrance. "Don't act suspicious and he shouldn't notice."

Axel nodded and looked over at Anne, sitting next to him. "Alright... let's get this over with." Reluctantly, he started to open his door.

Marcus tapped a button on his cell and raised it to his ear. "Aaron, we're ready. You in position yet?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 21, 2016, 10:33:22 PM**

Rose came out, dressed up to look like a Showgirl who had seen better days. The makeup under her eyes, imitated bags to show either lack of sleep or drug use, or some combo of the two. She walked down the street apoparently paying little attention to to the other seedy persons hanging around the club "How much you want for a quick shag ' Coughed a tough-looking Irish setter with bloodshot eyes, whoi had been hanging around near the enterance and made her was up towards Rose " Pay you 100 creds for it" Another coughing fit seized her and blood gurgled over lips and down her chin " sorry " Da,mn Ice patches never come without side effects."
("ICE" Is slang for a certain kind of drug treatment patch, which has a number of side effects, including bloody mucus and spittum.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 22, 2016, 12:06:20 AM**

Anne fluttered her eyelashes at the burly Percheron stallion bouncer. He wrinkled his muzzle at her attempt at flirting.

"Save it for the ones inside, sweet cheeks," he said as he let the duo inside the club.

The interior of Dobson's Alley hinted at its former industrial past. Exposed pipes and structural members lined the walls and ceilings. Armored industrial lights similar to what illuminated construction sites dangled from cables.

The tables and chairs looked someone had cobbled them together from detritus from a demolition site.

On a stage that looked like a torn up piece of sidewalk, Sea Otter dressed in a sailor's uniform and a tall Human wearing a sealskin trench coat were busy operating the DJ station. A dark, heady electronic track warbled out from the speakers surrounding the stage.

Anne sniffed the air. The scent of alcohol and greasy bar food mingled with the scent of cologne.

"Roger that." Aaron's voice came through Marcus's cell phone. If Marcus had looked up into the clear night sky, he would have seen the burly German Shepherd on the opposite side of the street, carefully hidden behind an LED sign that advertised "exotic dancers".

Soren was on the roof of D'Arco, a grimy industrial building that had been renovated as a brothel. He was crouched behind one of the large air conditioning units. His SMG dangled from a shoulder sling.

He spied Rose talking to a Irish Setter bitch who was clearly intoxicated. Previously, he had seen Anne and Axel enter Dobson's Alley.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 22, 2016, 02:55:24 PM**

"Things are looking okay," Emilena murmured to Soren. She was prone on the roof, using a pair of meter-long micronoculars* to spy on the proceedings while her whole person was hidden behind the lip of the roof. "Where's Flora and Rose? Thought they were supposed to be scoping the alleyway itself."

Further down the street, Flora was standing in the wrong part of the street. "Don't come near me," she growled at Rose, arms folded. She had no interest in walking into an alleyway with a sexual predator.

*(*Similar to binoculars, but the business end tapers into a thin articulated telescopic lens, allowing the absolute minimum profile exposed to the area being observed)*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 23, 2016, 09:47:09 PM**

Sorry, Love, but i've already got a hook up for tonight' Rose said ' as a frsh coughing fit forced the setter to her knees as she coughed up blood onto gthe ground. Rose backed awayway slowly then headed over towards Flora " Remember, We're on a stakeout. and I'm supposede to be watching over you anyway, thats what Bailey is paying us for.. the ground.. She walked a little further then saw a couple tough looking guys approach out of the darkness. Both her mastiffs, with prominwnt scowls on thier faces ' hmm.. lookee here. a couple a fine ladies..' said the smaller one '' you girls interested in a good time/ He leered at Flora.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 24, 2016, 05:23:31 PM**

Axel winced as the pounding music hammered against his eardrums. The gay club was fuller than he would have thought from the outside and the sickly pink overhead lighting, combined with the occasional strobe effect, make it hard to pick out any specific faces in the crowd.

He squinted for a few moments then gave up, shaking his head irritably. "This is impossible. How the hell are we supposed to find anyone? Look at this!" He had to lean in close to Anne for her to hear him above the music. To the side, Axel caught sight of the bar and felt a familiar pang at the back of his throat. *Fuck it, while we're here...* He nudged Anne. "Getting a drink. Want something?" he asked, sidestepping an asian woman and stopping at the counter.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 24, 2016, 07:40:30 PM**

Soren saw two thugs approaching Flora. The directional microphone in his compnoculars let him hear what was being said from the two thugs. Seeing as they were garden variety sexual predators, he continued looking around. He discreetly radioed Rose. "Rose! What the fuck are you doing!? You're supposed to be on watch! Get Flora and go back to your post!"

Aaron looked around with his own compnoculars. He watched as Marcus stood on the street corner and an intoxicated man stumbled past him. He looked around. No sign of their target.

Anne blew some air through her nostrils. "Just get me a Screaming Orgasm," she said offhandedly as she looked around for their target. Not only was the smoky atmosphere and obnoxious lighting making it hard to make out faces, the gyrations of the patrons on the dance floor made it hard to single a person out.

Not to mention, her horn was giving her a mild headache from the DJ station's electronic interference. Even worse was she could hear assorted lewd thoughts from the unsecured electronic communications implants that it seemed a surprisingly large amount of patrons had.

She considered shutting her implant off but she knew that if Axel was in trouble, he wouldn't be able to signal her using his phone.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 24, 2016, 08:42:59 PM**

I'm going over to get her Soren! keep your wig on! Girl hasnt exactly been friendly to me lately, you know.' ROse Replied.. as she headed over the thugs ' sorry bOys, but my.. sister and I Are just here to dance, not cavort." Listen Sweet Stuff, We're here to have a good time too.. We came to score some off a chick, and your.. eh heh. sister.. will do just fine..
_ OH CRAP" Rose's widened' run Flora! She shouted. Go In the Club! She barked.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2016, 05:56:17 PM**

Flora said nothing, merely waited for Rose to tell them off. The older woman had said repeatedly that she'd take care of things, so presumably she'd be able to handle this.

Then Rose completely freaked out, startling both Flora and the men accosting them. Taking the cue, Flora bolted for the club, drawing as much attention to herself as possible from the other pedestrians in the area.

Emilena drew her silenced sidearm. "Crap, there's no way I'd land a shot from up here..." she muttered after weighing her options. "Not to mebtion we're supposed to be goddamn stealthy. Those jokers are going to blow our cover out of the water..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 01, 2016, 03:56:39 PM**

Marcus swore under his breath as Rose's sudden outburst visibly drew the eyes of several bystanders. "Fuck... Echo, don't shoot. It'd just attract more attention," he hissed, his stomach knotting.

Axel leaned on the bar counter, the itch at the back of his throat becoming more insistent now that a drink was so close at hand. "One vodka lemonade..." He trailed off as the bartender, a bored looking alsatian held up a hand. *Hang on.* The bartender finished wiping off a glass then moved closer to Axel. "Yeah?"

"Double tequila," the rat said, raising his voice. "And, ah, a Screaming Orgasm." The bartender nodded, turning around and reaching for one of the bottles fixed on the wall behind him.

"I bet you've given a few of *them*..." The scratchy voice came from directly next to Axel.

"Huh?" Axel turned his head, fixing his eyes on the patron stting next to him.

"I said, you're probably no stranger to giving a screaming orgasm or two, hmn?"

"Ah... I think you..." Axel's voice caught in his throat as the man speaking turned to face him. Eyes pinched close together, scrunched up face... *Fucking hell... it's Metheun...* The man's small eyes were fixed on him intently. Axel felt a chill run along his spine.

Metheun's eye's fixed on something over Axel's shoulder, as someone burst into the club with a clatter. Axel just about heard the noise over the club's music, but he was too preoccupied with trying to alert Anne. The rat tried to catch her eye discretely, without alerting Metheun, but with the strobe lighting he couldn't tell if he was successful. "I..."

"Sorry, one moment." Metheun held up a finger, bringing up his cell phone and speaking into it for a few seconds. After he'd finished speaking a few quiet words, he hung up and turned his attention back to Axel. "So. I haven't seen you here before. New in town?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 01, 2016, 09:51:44 PM**

"The fuck!?" Soren said a little too loudly as he saw the whole scene. By now, a bunch of bystanders were watching the whole debacle unfold. He rubbed his forehead with a hand. He sorely regretted bringing Flora along. First, there was her eating ramen at Black's house (from what Emilena had told him) and now this.

Of course, Rose wasn't helping matters either.

Aaron watched the whole debacle. He smiled. Perhaps there was a way to salvage this. "Marcus," he radioed. "Perhaps attention is what we want. If those two cause a shitshow, everyone will be paying attention to them. And then we can grab the target."

It was something he learned from his years as a construction worker in the roughest parts of Lanthae. A fight or a gory accident always attracted attention. Hell, it was a common scam he had participated in once: fake an accident or a fight on the construction site and someone pretending to be a bystander would lift information from whatever unsecured electronic device was around them.

Unfortunately, for Axel, Anne was busy scanning the dance floor for the target. The hammering industrial rock made it hard for her to concentrate and the dancing lights and lasers blurred everyone's faces.

"Axel," she said. "Where are you?" she asked. Two factors nagged her: one, Axel might be in danger. Two: she wanted her cocktail.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 02, 2016, 10:20:50 AM**

Rose noticed a number of people were coming out of the club to see what the commotion was.. She saw the two guys who had botheed her turn and run back down the alley, Then she felt a strong grip on the back on her neck. She turned her head and a huge boxer, clearly one of the clubs bouncers, glared at her ' you! stop your screaming! we dont want the cops nosing around here any more than they already do. Now, get inside! he said turning and cafrrying rose into the club.' The bouncer threw Rose down none to gently into an open booth, the loud music making a constant barrage on Roses ears " stay there until wecalm the street down after your little outburst.>"
Marita called Soren's Phone " Hey Soren> i'm hooked into the strib clubs security cameras. Our target is inside, currently sitting near the bar. Sorry about rose, the bouncer just dragged her inside, likely thinks

shes drunk or stoned. OR both. It could all be an act on the old girls part too, she did do amateur theaters in college. So I see three options for us nicking him out of there- Indecent Proposal. Tuck and Curl. And Dine and Dash. Which one sounds best to you?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2016, 10:18:16 PM**

Flora looked around, now completely alone in the middle of a crowd of drunk strangers. Luckily, this was an environment she was far more comfortable with, and she quickly settled into the role of a disinterested socialite, one too self-absorbed to bother talking to.

Emilena sighed. "Well, I don't hear screams, so maybe things simmered down. I just hope Axel and the pony are getting their job done."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 07, 2016, 07:48:29 PM**

Soren pondered the information. He had already been alerted to the codes.

"Indecent Proposal" referred to seducing Methuen.

"Tuck and Curl" referred to getting Methuen drunk or intoxicated and then "escorting" him home.

"Dine and Dash" referred to causing a spectacle and then grabbing Metheun and running for it.

Soren held a hand to his chin. Anne and Axel couldn't seduce anything to save their lives. Granted, it was the most effective way but he had to hope that Metheun was freeware and came here for a quick fuck in addition to meeting his contact. And that didn't seem like the case.

That ruled out "Indecent Proposal".

"Tuck and Curl" sounded like a decent option given Anne's ridiculous alcohol and drug tolerance. But there was a very good chance that Metheun was savvy enough to not be drugged and then taken for a ride.

He watched the bouncers outside Dobson's Alley try to disperse the large crowd that had gathered outside the gay bar. He adjusted his compnoculars and noticed the two shady characters who had went after Rose and Flora fighting with each other. Through his directional microphone, he noticed the fight had begun over who got to screw whom. He chuckled.

He held the phone to his mouth. "Gotcha. Dine and dash sounds like the best choice. I mean, those two thugs are already fighting each other over who gets to fuck Flora and Rose."

He then decided to relay the info to Axel and Anne. He tapped out a quick message on his smartphone: *Look near the bar*. The meaning was implied.

Anne was too busy looking for the target to notice her phone ring. That and the music drowned it out.

It was then she got bumped by a lean Vulpine. The Vulpine's arms shimmered softly with blue lights that seemed to dance in time to the music. She took a drag from her electronic cigarette and batted her eyelashes at the mare.

"So hot stuff," she said in a silky-smooth contralto. "You look like a fine young filly. Would you be interested in tonight's circuit jerk in D'Arco?"

"Sorry, I got plans for tonight." She walked back to the bar, trying to find Axel.

(OOC - "freeware" - a promiscuous man or woman.)
(OOC - "circuit jerk" - an orgy with Augment participants.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 07, 2016, 09:57:23 PM**

Rose is altready inside, the bouncer already tossed her ion there... Someone needs to get Flora inside pronto, Otherwise Bailey wil quite literally have my head for allowing her to get boned by some alley thug" Marita sighed ' i should have volunteered for this mission instead of Rose, but well Whats done is done. We wont be wining any " Stealth awards' for this, but the point is to get the job done.. WE Need that info he;s got and time is off the essence. We Need to know what Black was up to.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2016, 11:41:48 PM**

Flora was still socializing when a nondescript man bumped into her, excused himself and retreated from the bar counter. At the time, Flora was more concerned with spilling the beer that a gentleman had bought for her.

But seconds later, Flora's eyes were opened. She realized that Rose and Marita were actually the ones protecting her, and she was being foolish by resisting them.

She ran back to Rose and exclaimed "I'm sorry for how I behaved! I should have trusted you all along! I...I think I love you, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you and Marita!" Flinging her arms around the Great Dane, she felt happy tears spill down her face.

It was a surprising turn of events, but stranger things have happened.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **November 09, 2016, 01:32:36 PM**

"Ah... yeah. No, I mean, I'm not new in town, I just haven't been here before. In this club, I mean." Axel gulped, trying to slow his pounding heart. *Shitshitshit he wasn't meant to see us...* The base of the club's music continued to pound away.

The bartender plonked two glasses on the counter. "Double tequila and a screaming orgasm." Axel could just about make out what he said over the noise.

"Thanks..." He fished out the credits and slid them across, then reached for the glasses. Axel's mouth went dry when Metheun's hand snaked out and placed itself on the metal of his augmented arm.

"That orgasm for me?" Metheun grinned, his teeth flashing predatorily in the strobe lighting.

"No, it's for..." Axel spotted Anne closing in on the bar and raised his arm, trying to catch her attention. "It's for my friend. Here she is!" He stood up and grabbed her arm, a little rougher than he'd intended. "Hey! Lost you there for a moment, ha ha ha... Here, here's your drink!"

Metheun watched them, his grin becoming broader. "I was just getting to know your friend here... any more of you waiting to jump out?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 09, 2016, 03:52:10 PM**

Anne scowled as she accepted her drink from Axel. She took a tentative sip and let the mellow flavors of coffee and coconut milk combined with the bite of vodka wash over her tongue. She looked over Metheun and sent a signal to Soren with her horn.

"I'd appreciate it if you kept your hands off my boyfriend," she said coldly. She hoped her act as Axel's girlfriend...and her imposing frame would intimidate Methuen. Granted, Anne stood a mere 5'4" but being a Shetland Pony, she had a muscular and stocky body that could be compared to a concrete block.

Or that Metheun would pick a fight with her and then Axel or someone outside could jump him.

Soren's phone buzzed. He looked at the screen and smiled as he got the message from Anne's horn.

It simply read "*Found em*."

He silently cheered as he radioed Marcus, Aaron and Emilena. "They found him. Now all we need to do is go in and grab him!"

Aaron's voice came over the radio. "Not so fast! If we're going to grab him, we need a distraction."

Soren cut the transmission and sighed. "Rose!" he radioed. "You and Flora do something to start a distraction! I don't give a shit what it is. Start a fire for all I care!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2016, 08:26:47 PM**

Flora was still tearing up and hugging Rose, blubbering about romance. The folf was acting completely abnormal, and only two persons knew why.

Watching her from a shadowy corner table, a neurocotics dealer nodded approvingly. "See? Told you they work," he muttered under his breath to his client. "Just stick 'em with the patch and they'll be on your dick just like that."

His customer, a businessman nodded curtly. "How do I know they'll pick me as the object for their affections?" he asked, watching as Flora tried to stick her hand up Rose's shirt.

"Just make 'em hate you or fear you first. This flavor turns negative emotions into positive, so the stronger their opinions on you originally, the better." The dealer grinned.

"And is it reversible?" The businessman narrowed his eyes.

The dealer shook his head. "It fucks with the brain chemistry. You'll just have to break her heart."

"Fair enough. I can't believe you're making me pay for the patch you planted on the demonstration..." the businessman muttered, handing over a thick briefcase of credits and receiving a small wallet of skin patches in return. "Each is the price of a luxury car and you wasted one on some random bitch..."

"You're the one who wanted assurance they work," chuckled the neurocotics dealer, glancing mirthfully at Flora in her infatuated state.

(OOC: Neurocotics (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341&view=findpost&p=22040476) are the same illegal drug that Emilena was afflicted with during her untimely encounter in a bar)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 12, 2016, 10:24:09 PM**

Well, Since this is a gay bar. Making out is expected, so that wont draw a crowd.. Ditto, for stripping to our skivvies ' rose replied. " we Could start a fuight. Walk up to some rabndom people and insult them. Or.. Given that Flora is all over me at that moment.. HMM.. Ok.. I've got it..' She said Taking Flora by the arm and heading over the the Club DJ ' mR DJ?' She asked the Dalmatian who had earings in both ears, and was spinning records at a very very fast pacde ' Rose Whispered the Dogs Ear, and he turned to her and Nodded " 20000 creds for the best dance Couple/ sure I can make that Happen..Just given me some time before I can find a mike to get it over the loudspeaker.. You're paying for this? ' no, contestant have to pay to compete.. say 200 creds per person 400 per couple.. whatever amount is in the poty at the end.. winner gets all" Alright.. We take 10% of it..the DJ said.."I'll make up the rules..

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 02, 2016, 02:28:45 PM**

"Your boyfriend?" Metheun cocked an eyebrow and leaned back in his seat, eyeing Anne critically up and down. "Well, well. Colour me surprised." He smiled and winked at her. "Don't worry. I'll keep my hands off your... boyfriend. Word of advice - you might want to consider a change of venue, love."

Axel shrugged, taking a gulp of his drink. "We're trying something new."

"I'm sure." Sipping his own drink, Metheun pulled his phone out of his pocket, read something on it then snapped it shut again. "If you two will excuse me, I'm off to visit the men's room." He smiled at Anne. "Keep my seat warm for me."

As the man pushed himself off his stool and started to thread his way through the crowd, Axel leaned in close to Anne. "Creepy bastard." He downed the last of the cocktail and plonked the glass on the counter. "So how're we doing this? What's the..." He glanced over his shoulder in the direction Metheun had headed, and trailed off. Neon lighting on the wall clearly pointed out the direction of the toilets - and Metheun was heading in the opposite direction. Axel stared as the man slinked through the club, looking furtively around, then pushed through a door marked 'Employees only'.

The rat turned quickly back to Anne, his ear twitching. "Fuck, I think he's making a run for it!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 03, 2016, 11:43:42 PM**

Anne swore under her breath as she sent a message to Soren. She looked around and noticed that the dance contest was well underway. Intoxicated patrons pushed and shoved as they fought to be the first to swipe their credit chits on the reader that was attached to the stand or actually throw the chits at the group.

She nodded. "Fuck me," she muttered. Her ear then twitched slightly as she grabbed Axel and bolted after Metheun.

"Hey man, what about my tip?" the bartender shouted over the raucous industrial rock.

"When I get my wallet back!" Anne shouted back. Of course, she had no intention of tipping him...or ever coming back to Dobson's Alley.

The man sighed as he went back to making drinks. Well, there went the money he needed for his electric bill. Granted, pressuring someone who didn't tip was considered a foolhardy act in this rough neighborhood.

Soren got the message on his phone. He sighed as he radioed Emilena, Marcus, Aaron and Rose. "He's making a run for it!"

Unfortunately, as he and Emilena were atop D'Arco directly opposite of Dobson's Alley, he was in no position to chase down Metheun. But the others were on the buildings next to them. And Rose, Axel and Anne were inside Dobson's Alley."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 04, 2016, 11:51:36 PM**

"What a great idea Rose!" Flora exclaimed. "Making people pay to join a dance-off! I'm sure they'll do it just because you're so beautiful!"

The man who'd bought Flora's drink grumbled in annoyance at discovering she was apparently very taken. A hopeful woman wearing an infinity heart necklace* sidled forward but Flora snarled at her until she quickly backed off.

Emilena grumbled. "Crap. We need a better vantage point. You and I are now on watch duty for the others." Glancing at the direction the alley behind Dobson's Alley led, she took a sprinting leap and hit the roof of neighboring building hard. "Oof!" she rolled out the shock, then glanced back at Soren. "You coming, smart guy, or you need to fashion yourself some titanium ankles first?"

*a symbol commonly used by polyamorists in the Seryet hookup culture

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 06, 2016, 07:30:24 PM**

I Hear yoiu" Rose said " we're headed after him.. just need . to.. make .. it .. through about 100 dancing couples.. Didnt really think that idea through entirely" Rose muttered as she r tried to work her way through the throng of dancing couples, while trying to hang on to Floras arm.. " The Alley that leads away from the club splits in 3 directions " Marita radioed in.. If He gets to the alley, we may lose him entirely.. and then, well we'd be bonmed something foierce. Better Hurry Rose.." Riose duckjed and dodged, the pulsing lihghts and throbbing music was giving her a headache.. He also needed to adjust to Floras very sufdden abrupt 180 switch on her feelings. to go from claiming rape based on a few tongue rubs, to wanting a nice countryside villa, wa a big about face. Not that rose was complaining mind you.._
She finally reachede the emplyees room, which Methuen has used just a couple minutes before. " Is he out of the building yet guys?' she radioed.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 07, 2016, 12:06:22 PM**

"Come on, he went this way..." Axel urged Anne, pushing his way through the crowd. When he reached the door Metheun has disappeared through, he felt someone knock into him. "Sorry..." When he glanced at who it was, he blinked in recognition. "Rose!" He looked at who she was pulling behind her. "Flora. Metheun went this way, if we hurry we can still-"

A hefty-looking panda suddenly stepped in front of them, blocking the door. "Help you?" he rumbled.

Axel stopped in his tracks. "Uh, we, uh... we're new here. Just getting familiar with our new workplace."

The panda eyed them impassively. "No, you aren't."

"Alright, we arent, but... ah... the guy who just came through here stole my wallet. I didn't want to make a fuss but-"

"Seriously?" The panda scowled. "How stupid do you think I am? Em-ploy-ees ONLY," he said, enunciating the sentence for Axel's benefit.

Axel trailed off and blinked at him. The guy looked like he could walk through a concrete wall, no way were they going to get through him. "Fuck..." Reluctantly he turned from the door and looked at his teammates. "We're gonna need to find a way around..."

Listening over the radio, Marcus growled impatiently. "There's an alley off the side of the club, it should lead around to where he left." He flicked a switch on his radio. "Martin, split your team up and cover the alleyways leading off, our target might be taking any one of them. Contact me if you see Metheun."

A voice crackled over the device. "Got it."

Marcus hooked the radio onto his belt and looked across to Raoul, the Purifier sitting in the passenger seat beside him. "Let's get going." Slamming the vehicle's doors behind them, the pair ran towards the alley. As he approached, Marcus reached into his jacket and pushed the safety off his pistol.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 07, 2016, 12:25:36 PM**

We'll have to get out another way.. Lok for an exit sign that leads out in that direction, code says that Exit sihgns have to visible and well lit " rose paused taking a look at the panda bouncer, , who looked like he could easily tear a webster dictionary in half, cover and all. "We'll be headed out , sir " Rose called back to him, as she turned and looked for another way out.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 10, 2016, 05:33:54 PM**

Soren looked over the edge. The gap was at least eight feet across and the fall looked to be three stories into a dumpster with a metal lid. He backed away. "You shittin' me? I ain't jumping across that!"

He found a fire escape ladder that led to the alleyway and quickly scrambled down it, his feet clanging on the rusty metal.

Anne looked at the Panda. As strong as she was, the bouncer likely had at least a hundred pounds on her...and there was always the possibility that he was an Augment or wore an exoskeleton under his clothing.

Her eyes traveled over to a dimly lit exit sign in the corner. "There!" She sprinted over to the door and pushed it open.

Only to find out that it opened only a few inches. Nowhere near enough for the group to squeeze through. It was then she noticed that it was chained to one of the industrial light fixtures on the ceiling. And judging from how battered the light fixture was, it was clear several people had tried forcing the door open.

"Quickly!" She grabbed the chain using a tablecloth to protect her hands and started pulling. The light fixture groaned and squealed as she tried to tear it from its mounting. Luckily, the booming industrial rock helped hide the noise of what she was trying to do.

"Hey! The fuck are you doing!?" One of the bouncers noticed what Anne was trying to do and made his way over to stop her.

Aaron scrambled down the fire escape from the building he was on. He unholstered his pistol and looked around. Nothing of importance in the alleyway.

He narrowed his eyes as he noticed a door shaking in its frame as someone tried to pull it open. He raised his pistol and aimed at the door, ready to shoot if someone came through.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 10, 2016, 05:45:56 PM**

Emilena watched the Augmentician leave the rooftops; apparently he was going his own way. Perhaps it's for the best that somebody kept watch on the main entrance. Vaulting to the next rooftop, Emilena tried to spot a bead on their target. She didn't see him in the alleyway behind the bar, which meant... "He's probably going right, away from the main road," she radioed to Marcus and his men. "We need to cover a lot of ground, and quickly."

"Stop talking to the bouncers, silly!" Flora whispered to Rose, flashing a warm smile at the love of her life. She had plenty of experience leaving bars while intoxicated and underage. "Just head to the bathroom. Let's take a cue from the Beatles for this one."

The two left the main group and retreated into the girl's bathroom. Prying the screen off the bathroom window and forcing the window open, she shimmied her way out of the window. "Can you fit, or is your butt too big?" she asked, glancing back at Rose.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 11, 2016, 12:01:12 AM**

I can fit just fine ' Rose replied, annd followed her out the window. rose was in pretty good shape, and she was able to slide her way out of the window space without too much hassle ' "Now that we're out ' we need to find the guy, and make him talk..' Rose said. theres a total of 3 alleyways, although there might be 3 ir more additional side passages, '; we look down all of them. Now hurry, he's already got a head start on us." she said and began to run down the alley.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 12, 2016, 04:04:12 PM**

Axel swore inwardly as he saw the bouncer, a muscled tiger, stomping towards Anne. He bit his lip as he grew closer, trying desperately to think of something that could distract him. *Aw shit...* Running out of ideas, Axel did the only thing he could think of - he rammed two fingers down his throat. The smell of sweat and stale alcohol prevalent in the club did the rest. He stepped in front of the bouncer, clumsily grasping the front of his shirt, and puked over his front.

The bouncer stopped dead in his tracks, face twisting in horror. "Jesus, what the fuck?!"

"Uh, I... had... uh," Axel slurred, still holding on to him. The acrid taste in his mouth almost made him retch again.

"Get out of here!" The tiger made to push him out of the way. Over his shoulder, Axel could see Anne had almost managed to yank the chain loose.

"Nah dude, don't worry, I'm just... just..." Axel saw the chain break from its holdings, freeing up the door. "Alright yeah, I guess you're right." Letting go of the bouncer, he quickly stepped around him and followed Anne through, hoping that he cared more about the state of his clothes than following a drunk through the exit.

Stepping outside, he spat to the side and glanced at Anne. "Nice. C'mon, we might be able to catch him up." Gesturing, he took off down the alley, the beats of the club music still pounding through the air.

"Alright, see if you can keep tracking him from the roof," Marcus radioed back. Switching the comm line to the other Purifiers, he continued barking into it as he ran. "Team covering the exit on the right side, he should be heading for you. Be ready!" He ducked into the alley. The narrow passageway seemed to amplify the music coming from the building.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 13, 2016, 11:39:48 PM**

A man in a dirty windbreaker grabbed Soren from behind as he made his way to the street. "Hey buddy. Got any spare creds?"

Soren picked the man's hand off his windbreaker much in the same way he'd pick off some lint and then roughly shoved the man away. "Listen, I ain't your 'buddy'! Now leave me alone!"

"Come on, help a guy out."

Soren could smell the the stink of alcohol on the man's breath. "Look, I have to go meet someone and I'm not in the mood for your shit. Now fuck off!"

The drunkard looked stunned for a moment and then scowled. He swore under his breath as he stalked off to go do something else.

The augmentician casually stepped out of the alley and into the crowd of people. He took a seat on a battered metal bench as if waiting for a taxi. He watched as a drunken Border Collie staggered over to a lamppost, unzipped his pants and relieved himself it.

Aaron nearly pulled the trigger the moment the door opened, causing the smell of vomit and sweat to spew out from the interior.

"Fucking hell! I nearly shot you guys!" Aaron sighed. "Where is he!?"

Anne narrowed her eyes as she spotted a thin figure at the other end of the trash-strewn alley. "That him?" she asked pointing him out. The figure looked around for a moment as if deciding which way to go.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 14, 2016, 12:34:43 AM**

The figure realized they were looking for him, and immediately bolted along the side of the bar...right into Flora, who had been watching Rose's breasts squeezing their way through the tiny window and wasnt expecting to collide with a fully-grown man. Both of them screamed as they crashed to the floor in a tangled heap.

The Purifier grunts sprinted around the corner and tackled the pair. After a ferocious dogpile subdued Flora and their quarry indiscriminately, they stopped long enough to get a bead on the man's face. "We got him!" one exclaimed. "It's Metheun!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 14, 2016, 10:31:22 AM**

"*We got him! It's Metheun!*" The voice crackled over Marcus' radio.

The doberman pushed down on the transmit button. "Keep him secure, we're almost there." Sprinting, he and his Purifier companion reached the end of the passageway and turned right, slowing when they saw the group clustered up ahead. The Purifiers he'd sent up ahead were holding a smaller man between them, the shoulder of his jacket torn. His head hung down towards the floor, obscuring his face.

"Look at me," Marcus growled, approaching. He stopped in front of the man, towering over him, and reached down to grip his hair, yanking his head back. It was undeniably Metheun. "It's him," he confirmed.

"I could have told you that," Axel said from the sidelines, his arms crossed.

Ignoring him, Marcus released Metheun's hair and glowered down at him. "You're coming with us."

Though the side of his face was starting to swell from where one of the Purifiers had hit him, Metheun's mouth slowly curled into a smile. "I don't think so."

Marcus paused briefly, thrown off by his reaction. "I don't give a fuck what you think." He started to order the Purifiers to march him away.

Metheun's voice stopped him again. "The one in the black jacket," he said, looking at Marcus. His eyes then flicked to Aaron. "And the big guy standing next to the pony. Focus on them, the rest just follow orders."

The tiny transceiver resting in his ear picked up his voice. From a window overlooking the alley, Junko brought the sights of her sniper rifle down to rest on the group as Metheun stopped talking. She signaled the the rest of her team, positioned at multiple vantage points.

"Who's he talking to?" Axel asked, glancing uncertainly towards Soren.

"Get him-" Marcus started. Then the top of his head exploded outwards. Grey matter, blood and skull fragments sprayed across the group holding Metheun. Marcus crumpled, his body dropping heavily at Metheun's feet.

For a second, Axel stared, uncomprehending. His eyes rested on the doberman's fingers flexing once, twice, then falling still. Realization slowly dawned, and he took a step back. Had he been shot? The music still leaking from the club made it hard to tell-

Then a hailstorm of bullets assaulted the alley. One of the Purifiers holding Metheun grunted, falling back as his chest tore open. The floor and walls sparked as stray bullets ricocheted. Shrieking, Axel fell back, trying to crawl towards cover blindly, the club's noise making it impossible to hear where the shots were coming from. As another Purifier was killed, his body collapsed on top of Axel, pinning him against the ground.

"Fuck! Fu-" Axel started to gasp. Then he screamed as a bullet punched through his exposed leg.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 24, 2016, 11:49:53 AM**

Rose heard the gunfire from the next alley ' crap, crap crap.. should have known this thing wouldnt go smoothly.' she turned to Flora ' stick behind me, and stay low. don't know whether we're shooting or they're shooting. either way, try and make yourself as small as possible>' the gunfore continued, and got louder as they got closer. blending in with the loud dance music from the club, which was still having that dance party. ' as Rose turned the corner a scene of carnage greeted her vision. she saw a number of Purifier bodies, lying in pools of blood, parts of their heads gone. bullets ricocheted off of a garbage bin that lay next to the building, the glint of guns briefly flashing as the assailants kept firing. a few seconds glance, was all it took to realize they were completely covered from the roof trying to escape down the the alley was a basically signing your own death warrant. ' Back to the Club! rose shouted above the fire. She couldnt getv too good a look at he shooters, the y were too far away to see clearly. she looked around and noticed axel's leg with a large hole in it, blood pooling next him. Crouching ,low. Rose ran over in a brief break between gunshots and pulled off the purifier that lay on top of him, and tossed hi aside. the man lay still. " Come On Axel " She said hurriedly , offering the rat her paw" we need to get outta here. theres too many of them.. This guy has a lot of friends, apparently. Ah!' a bullet hit her left shoulder, sending rose to the ground, and straight into a puddle of blood.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 25, 2016, 10:53:28 PM**

Aaron howled as a bullet slammed into his chest. He fought to stay conscious as he drew his pistol and fired a few wild shots at the shooters on the rooftop. Sparks lit up the night sky as his wild shots tore open a power line. "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" he exclaimed as he tried to drag himself back behind a dumpster.

Anne pushed Axel and Rose back into the nightclub. Her lips were curled as the scent of blood and smokeless powder swirled around the alley, mingling with the smell of garbage. A sharp sensation tore through her upper body and leg. She ignored them, figuring she had pulled some muscles.

She used her horn to send out a message to Soren or Emilena.

Little did she know that Soren was already on his way; she had already alerted him that they had caught Metheun...before the whole thing went to shit.

He was delayed from immediately coming to to alleyway because of an bum who would take no for an answer. She then got grabbed him and demanded credits. That ended with him nursing a bruised jaw and her nearly being thrown in front of a taxi. She wisely left him alone after that.

His feet splashed in the puddles of water as he shoved aside the crowd, eliciting numerous angry shouts and swears. As he approached the alley, he drew his borrowed SMG.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2016, 12:05:48 AM**

Emilena reported to Marcus' radio, unaware that he was killed. "Two more tangos coming from the main road. Both in suits and carrying...looks like semiautomatic civilian rifles." She drew her sidearm, a silenced SMG, and opened fire on the pair. Within seconds, the unarmored hitmen were hit multiple times and chose to flee rather than try and pinpoint her position and return fire. "...Never mind, they're fleeing. The main road is clear but the civs are starting to panic. We should really go!"

Flora screamed and wrapped her arms around Metheun. Her panicking brain realized that this guy was calling the shots, and if she kept him on top of her then nobody would shoot her. Her plan worked, but not in the intended way. Metheun quickly overpowered her with an elbow to the solar plexus, dragged her to her feet, and used her as a human shield as he retreated down the alleyway, drawing a high-caliber handgun but keeping it pointing defensively at his assailants.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **December 26, 2016, 03:09:48 PM**

"Junko! Keep me covered!"

At the sound of Metheun's voice coming through her transceiver, mingled with the sound of gunfire and screams in the background, Junko swung the barrel of her sniper rifle around. The scope came to rest on Metheun as he dragged someone back towards the alley's exit. "Who's that?"

"No idea, she just ran up to me and I'm not about to look a gift horse in the mouth..." Metheun struggled with the figure for a second. "Stop it!"

Junko clicked her tongue impatiently. "Alright, fine. Just get them out of here!"

"This isn't a picnic for me, you know!"

She turned her attention back to the targets as Metheun disappeared backwards. She caught sight of a Purifier trying to get to Aaron, who'd managed to take cover behind a dumpster, and pulled the trigger, her bullet splintering the side of the Purifier's skull.

Axel cried out in pain as Anne hauled him back into the club, his arm wrapped around her muscular frame for support. His left leg dragged behind him, trailing blood. It burned as though someone was stabbing it with a red hot poker.

A few club goers had noticed the group enter, and as more people pointed them out to their friends, the number of eyes resting on Anne, Axel and Rose grew.

Gritting his teeth, his gaze numbly registering the attention they were drawing, Axel tightened his grip on Anne's clothing. "Got... got to get out of here..."

"What the fuck's going on?!" A bouncer stopped dead in his tracks then backed away before they could stop him, shaking his head. "I'm calling the cops."

Shit! "Anne, get... get us out of here..." Axel groaned as the bouncer disappeared into the crowd, his breath hitching in his chest. His body started to shake from the shock of the situation. "Forget the others, we can't... we can't let the cops see us..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2016, 06:17:43 PM**

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rose gasped, in ragged breaths, as she clutched her shoulder ' we're ... in.. no.. condition.. to run.. for all the cops know, we were simply in the wrong place, at the wrong time.,.they don;t know us.. from adam or eve.. my shoulder is kiling me ' she squuerzed at the area and stared glumly at the blood that stained claws. ' damn.. whoever shot me got me good.. i'm starting to go numb '
she heard a buzz .. Marita was checking in ' status report guys.. are we good or not? come in.. someone answer me..' maritas voice was insistent." soren? Anne? rose? anyone?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 26, 2016, 10:19:15 PM**

Soren quickly slid behind a concrete column as he heard the gunfire ring out. He looked around and saw nothing but the crowd panicking and running for cover. It was then he saw the flash of a silver retreating into the side entrance of Dobson's Alley. He immediately recognized the figures as Anne and Axel.

"Shit!" he muttered. He saw Aaron pinned down by a sniper. He scowled, wondering if he should just leave the Purifier to be die. He had no connection to him...except Rhaegson was likely to have his balls mounted as a trophy if he wimped out.

He dashed out of cover, raising his SMG and letting loose a volley of bullets towards the roof, hoping that he had either hit them or forced them to take cover.

Aaron coughed up some blood. "Gotta say, you're ballsy but fucking stupid!" He then grabbed the Human by the front of the shirt. "I'll be okay! Get Metheun!" The German Shepherd slumped over, dead or unconscious.

He peered out from behind the dumpster and saw the Metheun backing away from the group with one hand wrapped around...oh hell no...Flora's neck and the other brandishing a large handgun. He sighed as he lowered his weapon. There was no way he'd hid Metheun without shooting Flora as well.

He then heard Aaron's radio buzz. He reached into the man's pocket and pulled out the radio. He pressed the talk button. The dumpster rang as a bullet smashed into it.

"Yeah, Marita. It's Soren. The whole situation just got bricked. All the Purifiers are with us are dead. Metheun took Flora hostage. I think Axel, Rose and Anne got shot and are hiding in the club. And I'm hiding behind a dumpster because I'm getting shot at."

The ache in Anne's back grew even worse. It was then that she realized the wetness on her back wasn't from Axel's leg wound. She had been shot by the snipers.

Despite the wounds, she waved off the bouncers as she half carried, half dragged Axel and Rose to the entrance of the club.

She could already hear the sirens of both the police and the ambulance crew arriving.

(OOC = Brick [Verb, slang] – to render an electronic or mechanical device completely useless. By extension, to render a situation utterly hopeless.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2016, 02:20:58 AM**

Several of the men were spilling out into the streets in order to secure the area. One of them took a position in the alleyway under Emilena's roof, which allowed her to drop onto his head and make short work of him with a quick neck-snap.

Reloading her SMG, she strafed around the building so she could get a bead on Soren's position. She saw them hiding behind a dumpster and wondered why they weren't booking it when a sniper shot rang off the roof of the building above her. *Oh.* Climbing the fire escape as quietly as she could, she sighted a single sniper hugging the lip of the building and shredded them with a close-range salvo of silenced submachine rounds into the abdomen.

"Soren!" she growled into the mic. "On my mark, cross the street and let's blend into the marketplace district! Anyone who wants to live should come with you..." Borrowing the corpse's sniper rifle, she sighted the sniper guarding the other side of the street and plugged them between the eyes. "There, go now!"

Meanwhile, Flora was quickly doing whatever Metheun's body language was commanding. Her mind was racing and her instinct was to claim she was an innocent bystander, nobody for him to worry about...but something told her they'd just kill her for seeing too much. "I admit it, I was with the people trying to kill you!" she stammered to Metheun as he forcibly led her away from the shootout. "So don't kill me! I've got way too much useful info to just kill!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2017, 01:19:17 PM**

great , just fucking great ' so the whole thing went sideways in a major way . not only does half the team get plugged, but the ward i'm responsible for gets grabbed in the process. i don't need to tell you Soren how bad the situation is, not just for me and Rose personally, but for us as a whole. we need to get Flora back immediately. get anne , Rose and anyone else who is injured out of harms way and then chase down methuen. bastard was far more important than we knew, considering how many friends he brought with him." marita said her frustration evident in her voice. ' i'll try and see if i can latch into any phones or networks he uses.'

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rose griopped her injured shoulder, her face contorted in pain. 'gods' she swore, as as the sirens for the police and medics got louder and louder. the dancing was still going on, so everything sort of blended together in a cacophony of noise and sound. ' blood trickled from beneath her claws, as she tried to put pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding. her arms were starting to tingle from loss of blood, and her arm was getting heavy.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 04, 2017, 11:46:42 AM**

As they passed through the front door of the club, being given a wide berth by the clubbers who noticed the state they were in, Axel tried to urge Anne along, limping painfully beside her. "If the cops see us, we're fucked," he gasped through gritted teeth. The whining of the police sirens grew ever louder, signalling this was only moments away from happening.

The trio emerged from the club and started to stumble down the street. Not realising Anne had been shot too, Axel put his full weight on her as he scanned their surroundings for something to escape with. Someone waiting in line for the club stared as they passed, then elbowed the person he was with. "What kind of dance competition did you say this was?"

Sweat greasing his hair, Axel's breath caught as he recognised a car parked further up - the same vehicle Marcus had been driving as he'd driven them up. "There! Come on!" Moving as fast as his leg would allow him, Axel reached the driver's door and pulled it open, relief washing over him when he saw the keys were still in the ignition. "Lucky someone didn't take this for a ride..." he muttered, glancing over his shoulder at Anne and Rose. Axel's eyes widened when he saw the blood spreading over Anne's top. "Ah *shit*! You're shot too!" He swallowed, panicking as the sound of sirens filled the street - the cops would be here any second.

He punched the wheel in frustration. "Get in! If I use my other leg I can drive!"

Metheun jerked Flora back, his arm tight around her throat. "Keep quiet and maybe I won't. My ears are ringing like a fucking church bell."

Pulling her around the corner, out of range of any bullets the remaining Purifiers might send his way, he switched his hold on Flora. Pushing her in front and twisting her arm behind her back to stop the girl from running, he shoved her towards an exit of the alleyway. A dark vehicle stopped in front of them with a screech, and the rear passenger door popped open. Metheun shoved flora towards it. "Get it."

Junko saw Metheun and the prisoner move out of range as her ears picked up the approaching sirens. Peering through the scope down into the alley, it looked as though all Purifiers were either dead, or well on their way there. Whoever had taken out her operative on the roof, it appeared they weren't making themselves visable, and Junko didn't have enough time to hunt them down.

She signaled to those near her and spoke into her receiver. "Move out. We're done here."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 05, 2017, 12:07:45 AM**

"I'll be fine!" Anne replied. She clenched her teeth as the action of speaking made her chest feel like it was on fire.

She hauled Rose into the backseat of the SUV and shut the door. She winced as she did so, sending electric jolts of pain through her back and upper body. Anne looked in the rearview mirror and saw the flashing blue lights of the police cars as well as the red and lights of the medics.

The Shetland Pony grabbed hold of the the passenger's seat and used it to help prop herself up. "Go now!" Her voice was starting to get raspy as she further weakened. Her fingers loosened their grip on the headrest as she finally slid into semi-consciousness, her drug and adrenaline-fueled intensity having burnt itself out.

"Are you fucking serious!?" Soren snapped into the phone when he finally stopped running. He and Emilena had blended into the crowd at the marketplace district. A street vendor selling some questionable looking electronics looked at him but then ignored him. Realizing his outburst, he lowered his voice.

"You better not be hinting that Flora's 'manager' will send a bunch of thugs after us!"

He then silenced his smartphone's mic and turned to Emilena. "Can you believe this, she wants us to go get Flora and Methuen! I can understand Metheun but Flora?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 05, 2017, 01:25:19 AM**

Flora quickly did as she was told, climbing into the van and trying to will her heart not to thump so hard it burst out of her chest.

"She's good as dead already," Emilena said, knowing that Soren had likely come to the same conclusion. "They're going to milk her for info and dispose of her. Her only shot is being traded for a healthy celebrity ransom, we're certainly not going to be the ones to save her."

She purchased a soda from a vending machine. "You know, Soren..." she said in a low voice. "This might be our chance to cut and run. Our Purifier guard is dead, we could easily be dead as well. If the others are as wounded as it sounded like, they might be in police custody before we get an opportunity to do anything else."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 06, 2017, 09:10:16 PM**

he'll send thugs alright Marita said " but not after you guys> no, Me, rose and Marie will be the targets. In short, we're boned if we dont get her back.' Msrita sighed. " We will likely have hours, days at most, before they find us abnd extract payment for our failure. By which, I mean 3 bullets , into the base ofd our skulls> So, you guys can go after Methuen, but Flota is part of hunting him down> Its not your fault, and I'll wager Bailey wont mess with you. Its our fault , and our price to pay. I think it best for now, that we disperse. I'll try and get a lock on Rose, Axel and Anne, by hooking into thier phone network or failing that, finding Annes horn frequency Hopefully, they wont be in police custody, or being operated on in some backwater , low tech , office. Good luck , guys " Marita said

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Rose murmured as she hit the seat " Go, AXel.. Just.. get us out of here.. Cops will ask too many questions." She grimaced, blood trickling down her arm from the wound in her shoulder We really botched this whole thing up, didnt we?' she said, her fave stained with tears , tears shed from the pain of being shot.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 09, 2017, 04:02:39 AM**

As she was pushed into the back seat of the vehicle, Flora found herself sitting next to a solid man who looked as though he'd never smiled a day in his life. Metheun slid in beside her and slammed the door shut. "Go. The others'll meet us there," he said to the driver up front. Looking across at the man sitting next to Flora, Metheun nodded. The man pulled out what looked like dark glasses from his pocket and placed them carefully over her eyes, revealing that they weren't sunglasses - the device prevented any light from getting in, rendering her blind.

Metheun reclined back in his seat, idly looking out the tinted windows as the car pulled away. "I don't need to tell you to behave yourself, right?"

Axel pressed down on the gas with his good leg, starting to drive away just as, in the rear-view mirror, he saw a group of police and medical vehicles stop outside the club. His heart hammered in his chest as the lights gradually grew fainter, expecting at any moment to be pulled over.

When they turned the corner, he felt himself start to relax a little. *Holy shit, we made it out...* Trying to focus, Axel realised Rose had spoken. "Botched it up?" He let out a hysterical laugh. "We're alive, they're dead, and nobody's stopping us from leaving! I think that turned out pretty fucking great for us!" He winced as a burning sensation shot up his leg. "*Goddammit!* Well, pretty great." Axel hoped the others got out alright, but right now, he couldn't worry about them.

He looked across and saw the terrible state they were in. Anne especially, who seemed to be teetering on the edge of passing out. *Fuck... what do I do...* They needed help, that much was obvious. But having to go to a hospital gave him a bad feeling. They'd be vulnerable, and if it was discovered they were there... Axel tightened his grip on the wheel. He didn't know anyone who could help, and another glance at Anne told him they didn't have time to waste.

"There's a hospital about... I dunno, a half hour away, I think," he said to Rose. "I'm taking us there." He twisted slightly, grimacing at the pain it caused, and rubbed Anne's arm. "Hey, don't... fuck, I don't know, don't fall asleep or anything, ok? We'll get help soon." He started feeling a strange buzzing in his leg, and a wetness as blood began to pool in his shoe. *I hope we get help soon...* Swinging a hard left, ignoring the traffic light, Axel sped them towards the freeway.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 09, 2017, 06:41:27 PM**

Soren bit his lip. He looked around and made sure no one was listening. Luckily, there were too many people around the shopping district to care. He didn't really care for any member of the group...except Axel and, maybe Anne. Rose...well, he wanted to keep on Marita's good side.

He pondered Emilena's idea. He had fled from a horrible disaster before but this time, he had a vague feeling he wasn't going to be so lucky this time. That and he didn't want to lose his best friend again.

The Human sighed and ran a hand through his head. "I want to...but I can't get around the thought of leaving Axel behind. That...and I have a feeling I'm next on their list." He scowled. "And if so, I'll take their lives to hell with me."

The noise and lights of Seryet City gradually began a haze as Anne drifted in and out of consciousness. She could barely make out Axel's touch on her arm and his words but one thing stood out: hospital.

Taking a breath that stopped short and made her cough slightly, the mare spoke. "Guys killing...Purifiers, augments. What if...we're next? And...leave, piss off Purifiers?" The wound on her shoulder started bleeding again as she coughed. She grabbed a handful of tissues from the box and placed them on her back, pressing herself against the door in an attempt to apply pressure and stem the newly restarted flow of blood.

As much as she didn't want to work with the Purifiers, working on the street taught her that the more people you pissed off, the shorter you lived. Metheun and Black's thugs already wanted them dead. Dumping the mission and risk having Rhaegson and his goons on their case as well didn't sound like something the Shetland Pony mare was interested in.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 09, 2017, 11:08:48 PM**

Running away isnt an option Soren. if you run, there will be at least 4 groups wanting your head, well all our heads. Black's groups, metheun's, Rhaegson's and Baileys, all of whom will shoot first and ask questions later. So getting Flora back will ensure Bailey isnt pissed at us and Catching methuen will ensure Rheagson won't kill us for botching this job. The fewest groups that want our hides, the better. But we have no real good options at this point, really. Methuen got the drop on us, and nicked Flora and we are now no closer to finding out what he knows than before. Which is not a great position to be in, in fact its about as bad a spot as we could be in. Our list of enemies is growing, and the only way we are going to get out of this alive is if we stick together and get Flora back. Go search the alley, its possible Methuen might have dropped something as he ran off. a wallet, a card, a phone number written on a piece of paper. Anything that could be a clue." Marita said

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 10, 2017, 03:27:55 AM**

Flora nodded. "I'll be a veritable angel. Hell, I'm glad to be away from those bastards, they were twisting my arm to get me to work for them. Did you know one of them was a lesbian and used to molest me? Would stick her tongue in my mouth and everything. I felt like a slave, of the Sally Hemmings variety."

Of course, Flora still loved Rose deep down, but she figured that channeling her well-remembered disgust she once felt would hopefully maybe put her on her captors' good side. Rose would never have to know what hateful things she'd said.

"Could you cut your radio before we keep talking?" Emilena growled at Soren, nettled at her private comments being broadcast. She glanced around. "Also we might not want to hang around in public for much longer." She racked her brain, running through a list of her and Lily's old hideouts, and realized one was nearby. "Follow me. I got a place off the street."

Thirty minutes later, she tiptoed through the graveyard of an old church. Fishing a weather-beaten mop handle from the hedges beside the church wall, she prodded a cloth ladder in the outdoor rafters until it unraveled and provided passage to the church's bell tower. "There's some canned food under the mattress, and we can't be here on weekends, but it's a place." Sliding a cheap solar-powered laptop from a cubby in the attic boxes, Emilena positioned it so the setting sun would power it. "And if you need internet, get it now because this thing doesn't work at night."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 11, 2017, 04:02:58 PM**

Metheun glanced around at the girl as she spoke, his eyebrow cocking in mild amusement. "They're terrorists, honey. They turned a city into a bloodbath. If they *did* force you into helping them, I'd count yourself lucky if all they did was rape you." He shrugged. "Anyway, we'll find out what you know when we arrive."

He started to lean back in his seat again, then paused, rolling his eyes at Flora though she couldn't see him. "Actually, that reminds me. I should let him know we've got a guest on the way. He hates surprises." Metheun pulled a cell phone out of his pocket and flipped it open. He hit a few buttons then held it up to his ear.

"Hi. Yeah, it's me. Yeah, I'm fine. Yes, *of course* it worked. It worked perfectly." Metheun paused. "Well, alright, not perfectly, exactly. A few got away but tracking them down should be easy. The main targets are dead, at least." His eyes flicked to Flora. "Actually, there's something I wanted to let you know. We caught one." The corner of his mouth curled. "I don't know, she ran right up to me. Right. Okay. See you soon." Metheun hung up and slipped the phone back into his pocket.

"Get us back as quick as you can," he called up to the driver. "He wants to find out what she can tell us." Metheun glanced down at his shoes, and grimaced. "And I need to clean my shoes. They have *fucking* blood on them."

The car screeched to a halt outside the entrance of Peace Hospital. The vehicle bounced up onto the sidewalk, knocking down a trashcan and forcing a pedestrian to dive for safety. Inside the lobby, a doctor heard the commotion and ran outside. As he approached, the driver's door swung open.

"We need help!" Axel cried out, trying to pull himself out awkwardly. His left leg felt as though it was on fire; the jeans covering the limb were almost entirely soaked in blood. "Someone attacked us, my friend's... fuck, she's looking really bad!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 11, 2017, 04:44:21 PM**

the doctor took a single glance at Axel's bloody leg and pulled out a walkie talkie' This is Dr Mishi. i have an injured driver and passengers in need of immediate stabilization and treatment foir gun wounds." he radioed and went to help Axel get out of the van. '; How many are with you? He asked in a calm voice.'; _ Rose clambered as best she could of thge her side off of the van, her wounds obvious to even a casual onserver ' he got Shot in the leg, and me in the should,. but our friend here has the worst of it she in a strained voice. Mishi opened to the door to reveal Anne leaning against the window. I Need 3 stretchers' MUshi radioed "Coming doctor' he heard the reply " We have a shetland, a dog and a rat here ' Mishi said a scowl covering his baboon face.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 14, 2017, 11:23:50 PM**

Soren scowled. "I didn't turn my radio on." It was then he realized that Marita could remotely access the radios and turn them on and off to listen in on conversations. He had suggested that as a backup in case they were captured or something. That being said, he decided that it wasn't a "need to know" thing for Emilena.

When he arrived at Emilena's hideout, he looked over the place and watched the setting sun through a crack in the dilapidated church's roof. He then pondered Marita's last command to him.

The Human fished out a can of flaked catfish salad and sat down on a wooden beam. He hadn't eaten since lunch and his stomach was growling.

It was then that he said something he never figured he'd say to the Lanthae cop who had nearly gotten him thrown in jail. "Thanks, Emilena. But I can only stay for the night. I've got to see if Axel is okay."

Peace Hospital's ER was a flurry of activity as nurses, doctors and orderlies tended to the trio of badly injured patients brought in by car. Of course, given its location between the Oilworks District and seedy Circuits neighborhood (so named for its high concentration of suspicious electronics shop) there were a significant number of overdoses as well as victims of violence.

As Anne was in the worst shape, the staff began stabilizing her so they could quickly x-ray her and then get her into the OR to be treated.

Rose was next as her shoulder wound had a high chance of causing her to bleed to death. Axel was the lowest priority as he had been shot in the thigh, luckily no vital blood vessels or the bones were hit. That said, it was still a through-and-through gunshot wound.

Axel was put in a room as a nurse and doctor examined his wound and took his vitals as well as his personal information. Tellingly, they didn't inquire as to how he got that injury.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 19, 2017, 03:57:05 AM**

"Oooh, try using toothpaste!" Flora piped up. "Sounds crazy but it's amazing at cleaning shoes. I think it's the bleach."

Once the car arrived at its destination, Metheun's enforcer forced her out of the car with unneeded roughness, and Flora did her best to follow his orders. "Are you guys cops?" she asked. "Can I enter the witness protection program?"

Emilena nodded, she was too tired to argue. He didn't seem to want the laptop, so she checked the local news. "Black's body has been found, but every news site has a different story on how he died so they don't know anything." She grumbled when the laptop turned itself off as the sun slipped under the horizon. "I didn't see anything on our most recent excursion, but they'll no doubt have reports on that one by morning. At least we're the only two who didn't enter the club, so we don't have to worry about the security footage."

The others weren't so lucky; just another reason to leave them to their fate. But for some reason, as Emilena crawled over to her sleeping spot, she wasn't 100% convinced to ditch Soren and go her own way after this. *Why would I do anything else? He's risking his life for people I don't give a shit about...* she yawned.

Despite her exhaustion, it was a very long time until she fell asleep. She couldn't help but spy on Soren while he was still awake. *I'm just...making sure he's not slitting my throat,* she told herself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **January 21, 2017, 11:04:43 AM**

"Thank you Mr. Jackson." The doctor slipped a pen back into his pocket as he finished jotting something down, then made his way towards the door. "Someone'll check in on how you're doing in a little while."

Axel nodded as the man left the room. "Yeah, sure. Thanks." He had no idea if they (whoever *they* were) would be looking for him, but if they were, he wasn't about to help them by giving out his real name. With a sigh, Axel leaned back in the bed and pulled up his gown, revealing the wound in his thigh. It didn't look too bad now that they'd sewn it shut, and the morphine wasn't unwelcome. Still, it'd probably leave a scar. *I just keep getting prettier.*

He'd remembered to grab hold of his cell phone before his blood soaked jeans had been removed, and he turned to look at it now as it lay on the bedside table, turned off. Part of him felt the urge to try and call one of the others, to see if they'd made it out - but he knew how risky that could be.

Axel had no idea what he should do next. Would the Purifiers come after them because of what had happened? Would whoever they'd been looking for track them down? With the cops still after him, a future in Seryet City was looking increasingly bleak. His head hurting, Axel picked up the TV remote and hit the ON button. The TV mounted in the corner of the room flickered to life.

" -and in other news, the leader of Brennan Synthetics, Richard Brennan, has been reported missing." A reporter filled the screen, his expression solemn. "He was last seen two days ago leaving his residence in Upper Greenford at approximately 6 o'clock in the afternoon, alone. This news comes just days after Brennan Synthetics announced its closure, following the bizarre and tragic incident in which 78 people possessing Brennan Synthetic augmentations died, after the technology appeared to malfunction. Earlier this week, hospitals were flooded with citizens demanding their augmentations be removed. Many stated they didn't feel safe anymore, with this incident standing on the shoulders of the Lanthae massacre last year."

A female reporter sitting on the left spoke up. "Investigators have reported concerns regarding Richard Brennan's safety. Earlier this morning, Edward Coxon, the ex-owner of Focus Biological, a genetic augmentation company which closed its doors 40 years ago, and a close friend of Mr. Brennan, spoke to us to try and reach out to his missing friend."

The image changed to an old man. His wispy white hair looked disheveled, and his suit appeared as if he'd thrown it on quickly. His left hand trembled, and as Axel watched the screen, he thought the old man seemed so thin that a light breeze would blow him away like paper. Coxon cleared his throat and looked directly into the camera and spoke, his voice surprisingly clear in spite of his appearance.

"Richard, I beg you. Please, no matter how dark the situation seems, there is always hope. We can all recover from this. Seryet can recover, and to do this we *all* need to stand together, to work together. With this comes *strength*." He paused, blinking. "You are part of this strength, Richard."

Losing interest, Axel turned the TV off. He leaned back and gingerly probed his wound.

The car had stopped in the gravel driveway of a large, expensive-looking property. A guard stood to either side of the marble steps leading up to a set of imposing wooden doors, the main entrance. The long driveway stretched behind them, ending at a tall metal gate, hefty trees dotting either side of the path.

Metheun stepped out of the car, rolling his shoulders. As he adjusted his tie, he motioned towards the guard holding her arm. "Witness protection?" he smirked as the three of them made their way up the steps. "Sure. Whatever you say, honey." As they neared the entrance the doors swung open, revealing a nervous looking butler. They stepped through into an airy entrance hall. A carpeted stairway wound up to the second floor.

"Thank you, Felix. That cold sore's looking much better, by the way," Metheun said as the butler closed the doors behind them. He started for the stairway, speaking over his shoulder. "Take her into the meeting room. Make her comfortable, I'll be back soon. Felix, find toothpaste!"

Flora was led through a doorway to her left. A long table filled the next room, a fire crackling away on the far side. The guard led her down the room to the chair at the furthest end of the table and pushed her down into it, the fire warming her back pleasantly.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 24, 2017, 11:07:23 PM**

In a room a couple doors down from Axel, Rose glanced at the heavily bandaged shoulder that the doctors had spent nearly an hour operating on, to re set the bone, and clean out floating bone chips. she had given the name of Rosemarie to the doctors , which had been a name her parents had considered naming her, before settling on Rose instead. she had been told not to move the shoulder until a sling could be put in place " How are you doing , miss?' a nurse asked as she came in. " better. Really just came out of the anesthesia a bit ago, you guys gave me too much.' Rose said.' Shoulder doesnt hurt nearly as much." Well, it was a pretty complex surgery. you broke your clavicle, there was damage to the muscle, and quite a few nicked blood vessels. hence the level of blood loss. To say nothing of the number of bone chips we had to suck up. other that that, it was a clean hole." the nurse said, and she put in a fresh bag of iv fluid to the IV that was feeding into Rose's left arm." Do you want to watch Tv while we wait for the doctor? the nurse asked. " yes please" rose nodded, and the nurse turned onto a news program that had a debate about augments- are they safe? was the question being asked." someone sure screwed up on designing those augments" the nurse said in passing. all those people dying because their augments failed. i'm sure there wont be much money coming to the victims families though. those companies usually shut their doors after a fiasco like this."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 25, 2017, 04:52:23 PM**

Anne muttered something incomprehensible as began to come out of her drug induced fog. All she could feel was a dull aching in her back that seemed to cover her entire body.

"Ah, Ms. Mare, I see you're awake." It was standard procedure for patients with no identification to be referred to by their species. As Anne didn't have her wallet with her at that moment, she had no name other than "Ms. Mare". And she really didn't feel like giving them her actual contact information.

The mare said nothing but moaned as her eyes cleared. In front of her was a plastic pitcher of water along with a specimen jar containing the bullet that had been removed from her. Her horn implant was placed inside a plastic bag that was labeled "patient belongings. Two IV tubes ran into her arms and there was a helpfully labeled button to dispense painkillers. Internally, she chuckled. It appeared to be an older model that she could interfere with using her horn and dispense as much narcotics as she pleased. Of course, she dared not do that with the dour-looking Capuchin Monkey watching her.

"So what happened?" she said, her voice rough and weak. She used her left hand to try and pick up the cup of water but ended it up spilling it on the sheets. The nurse helpfully assisted her in drinking the water.

"Well," the nurse said. His accent hinted at his Peruvian origins. "Your right clavicle and scapula were completely shattered by a rifle bullet. And the right subclavian artery was severed. To be honest, you are very lucky to be alive. We had to replace those shattered bones with a titanium sponge structure and use osteointegrating nanomachines to meld them with your regular bones. "

Anne said nothing as she absorbed the information. She already was an Augment; some nearly unbreakable titanium sponge bone was nothing major."

"How long will it take before I can get back to normal?" she asked.

"A week for light exercise but maybe two or some months for total normality."

The mare blew some air our her nostrils. It seemed like she wasn't going to be doing too much to help the team.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 28, 2017, 01:41:24 AM**

Flora sat down and politely waited for whomever she was supposed to wait. "Do we have anything to drink?" she asked. "Wouldn't normally ask but I'm parched."

After Soren did nothing of particular interest for an indeterminate amount of time, Emilena drifted off to sleep.

(EDIT: crappy post I know, but Im super swamped right now and didn't want to be the stopgap)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **February 07, 2017, 08:48:07 AM**

The door to the room swung open and Metheun strode through, a satisfied smile plastered on his face. "Amazing! The toothpaste worked!" he announced, the click of his footsteps against the wooden floor echoing in the spacious room. He walked the length of the table before stopping in front of the chair adjacent to Flora. "You aren't just a pretty face, little miss."

The guard who'd been standing watch over her cleared his throat. "She says she's thirsty, sir."

Metheun paused, his hands resting on the back of the chair. "Thirsty? Well, of course! I suppose watching your friends die and almost getting your head blown off would have that effect on anyone." He considered. "Tell Felix to bring us a bottle of red. Something fruity. I'll trust his judgement."

When the guard hesitated, Metheun rolled his eyes. "You can leave us. Look at her, she won't try anything." Winking at Flora, he pulled the chair out and sat down in it with a sigh as the guard left. "Bloody hell. You know, whenever I talk to these guys I can't help but think, *lighten up*! *Would it kill you to smile*?! Ah, well, they're good at their job at least." He clasped his hands together on the table. "You don't need to look worried. Here, would some music calm you down?" Metheun tapped a small panel set into the wooden table, and from somewhere above soft classical music started to play. "We're just here to have a chat. A little... Q and A. Ah, that was quick!"

The guard had returned with the butler in tow, who was carrying a bottle of red wine with one hand, and two glasses in the other. Metheun kept his eyes on Flora as the butler set the glasses down, removed the cork from the bottle and poured for them. "Thank you again, Felix."

Felix inclined his head and retreated without speaking. Once the door closed behind him, Metheun raised his glass to Flora. "Well then! Cheers." He took a sip and nodded appreciatively. "Mmn. Subtle. Felix never lets me down." Once they'd both finished their glasses, Metheun poured again. "Good *shit*." He took another sip, appearing to consider something before setting the glass back on the table. "Right. We *were* supposed to wait for someone else before starting our heart to heart, but the sooner we start, the sooner we finish."

The guard turned and walked behind Flora, out of her line of sight. Metheun tapped his fingernail against the rim of his wine glass. "Let's start with the obvious. You're working with the Purifiers, aren't you?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 07, 2017, 10:31:43 PM**

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," Flora burst out, "though it's more right to say that my idiot caretakers worked for them and dragged me along for the ride!" Flora downed her wine in one gulp and started coughing uncontrollably. "So my dad Nigel," she spluttered incredulously, "he's a theater manager, he's worried about all this -*hic*- political shit going down in the news, and he doesn't trust the cops, right, so he pays this washout drug-addict ex-actress to keep me locked in her apartment!"

She looked around for an option to refill her glass, completely sick of being sober. "So for the last week she and her two batshit dyke girlfriends have been molesting me every night--hands up my shirt, tongue in my mouth, everything!-- and then they get this letter cause the Purifiers apparently had dirt on them or something? So they bundle me in a car and drive out to some alleyway, and there's these burly motherfuckers led by this ugly Doberman--"

As the wine overtook her, Flora completely forgot her original plan to store some good stuff for future bargaining, and instead took the opportunity to rattle off her huge list of complaints about the harrowing, dangerous, and unwilling adventures she'd been put through.

"--and so they're like '*Let's go to the strip club and find that dude so we can interrogate him*,' and everyone's fine with this for some reason, and they make me wait outside the club as a lookout or something but I can't concentrate because my rapist grabby-handed caretaker is hovering around me like a helicopter trying to convince me to go into the club with her and pose as lesbian lovers, and I mean, the fuck right? I'm just trying to *survive* this shit," she hiccuped angrily, "and I wasn't even supposed to leave the apartment, dad was super clear about that and he's gonna *flip* when he finds out how incompetent Rose was. I mean, Jesus, when you're being paid to keep someone's daughter safe, bare minimum of the job description would be to not drag her into fucking *firefights*, I mean come on, am I crazy or is that fucking common sense?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **February 08, 2017, 01:33:04 AM**

Anne she pressed the button to give her another dose of painkiller. She looked around the bland institutional setting of the ICU. The beeping of the the various monitors she was hooked up to blended into so much white noise that threatened to make her headache worse.

She snorted, wincing as the action sent a spike of pain through her shoulder. The mare looked around for something to occupy herself. She sighed as she realized all she came with was the clothes on her back. Hell, she didn't even have a *name* to the staff. Granted, she wasn't too keen on the staff knowing her identity.

Sighing, she turned on the TV in the room. Her ears pricked up in interest when a special report called "Rebirth. A New Era For Gene Mods?" On the screen was a Chinese man and Red Fox. Both of them were seated behind a desk.

"Hello. I'm James Xiang," the man said.

"And I'm Linda Burke." The Red Fox adjusted her glasses. "Tonight's special report is on the effects that current events have had on the augmentations industry. The past two years have been a very rough time for the cybernetic industry. The Lanthae Incident where hundreds of thousands of Augments were killed in a terrorist pulse-bomb attack in Lanthae and the subsequent rioting had dampened the enthusiasm for cybernetics. Albeit, only temporarily."

The screen then showed several clips of the reports that described the deaths from the Brennan augmentations. "However, the wave of deadly cybernetics failures that have plagued Brennan Synthetics's Aquila *line of augments may spell the collapse of the cybernetics industries."*

The TV then showed James standing in front of a large line graph that was projected on the wall behind him. There were two lines -- one red and the other blue. The graph in question depicted sales of augmentations (both genetic and cybernetic) in billions of credits plotted against time in years.

"As you can see here," James said. "The sale of genetic augmentations has seen a mostly downward trend with the exception of the spike during the time of the Lanthae Incident. The reverse is true for the cybernetic augmentations."

A gold circle was then drawn around the end of the graph that depicted the most recent timeframe. "However, that trend has started to reverse itself this year. Whether is is a statistical anomaly like the figures in during the Lanthae Incident or not remains to be seen.

The camera switched back to Linda. "Joining us today is Doctor Satoshi Shimura of Seryet University's genetics department.

Anne tuned out the scientist's explanation about gene mods. Her own gene mod that gave her incredible endurance as well as high tolerance to low oxygen environments was made by Neogene in its only venture into non-medical genetics. The company was still around but the particular gene mod she had was long out of production.

It was then that her painkiller addled brain entertained an idle thought. Was Brennan Synthetics a shell company by a gene mod corporation that was purposely shoddy augments to make its parent look good?

She lay back on her pillow and the drugs soon took effect, sending her to sleep.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 13, 2017, 11:03:20 AM**

Rose flipped though the news channels, before settling oin a channel. blacks face stared out at her " Hero cop Found dead" said the headline under the picture' a p[air of reporters were debating whether it was gangs, the mob, or some crooked cops that had done the deed. 'Police work is very dangerous, and officer black was involved in many dangerous operations that garnered him a lot of enemies. one, or more of them, killed him. His family is now in witnmess protection, for thier safety' one of them said.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **March 24, 2017, 05:29:36 PM**

(OOC - Metheun has been turned over to me temporarily by bushwacked.)

Metheun nodded as he swirled his glass of red wine and took a sip. "I see. Now I'm sure you feel a lot safer now that you're away from those two."

It was then he got an idea. He really didn't care too much for the girl but he could use her father to hinder the group after him. "Perhaps your father might be interested to know what the 'babysitters' he hired were doing to his daughter? Perhaps some video footage or other information might convince him to press charges."

The Human placed his glass on an elegant ceramic and glass coaster. "Now then, why don't we start with names?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 24, 2017, 08:34:13 PM**

"I hope he takes them to court and sues them for every nickel those assholes are worth!" Flora exclaimed hotly, downing another glass of wine. "None of them had actual jobs, I bet they're loaded. They never gave last names, but the Great Danes were named Marita and Rose, Rose was the former actress, and the third was like a yellow Labrador or something named Marie. *Three fucking dogs*, can you believe it? Have you ever been forcibly Frenched by a dog? It was absolutely disgusting!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 13, 2017, 08:22:12 AM**

Roses phong rang and on the Id It read Nigel Bailey " Oh damn : riose muttered before answering " Hello Nigel. " Where the hell are you' Bailey said, his voice coming across as very serious. Rose knew Bailey well, so she knew that she was in for a huge reaming, calls with this tone of voice from him almost never ended well for the recipient. ' i'm in the hospital Nigel. 'what for?" I got shot, in the shoulder>" consider yourself lucky, because i have half a mind to put one a little higher Rose. i just got sent a lovely text messagre from flora claiming you did all sorts of things to her and that she ran away to , as she put it ' get away from that pervert' Where is Flora, Rose?' She.. was grabbed by the people we're trying to catch>" Rose said " So she is now a captive . Just fucking peachy. remind me exactly why I agreed to pay you , and you gal pals , large sums of money to protect her?

I put her in your care because I thought you'd be reliable, discrete and trustworthy. Well congrats, you've failed miserably on all 3 counts, and got shot up as well. Listen, and listen well. You get her back, PRONTO. I dont care how drugged up they have you, I dont care how many pieces of you are missing, you get her back. Half of Flora is worth 100 times more than every inch of you and your friends. You have 48 hours to get her back, or else. If I don't hear back before then that you have her back safe and sound, not only is the money deal off, but so is any further consideration of you by me.Yyour life, and the lives of those around you, will be then measured in lengths of hours. Because the people I hire to dispose of incompetents, they dont miss, and they dont leave traces. You fucked up hugely Rose, and I am enormously disappointed in you, I expected much much better from you. Now get out of that hospital, and get her back. You do so, and I may, MAY, Mind you, overlook this colossal snafu when it comes times to settle accounts. but ONLY If You produce Flora and she is unharmed. Clock is ticking, Bailey, Out" the phone clicked. and rose exhaled, she hadnt been able to get much in in her defense, and given Bailey's mood, It wouldnt have mattered if she had. Bailey was not one to accept excuses, he demanded results. We are in VERY deep shit' Rose muttered to herself.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 13, 2017, 04:35:50 PM**

Metheun grimaced in distaste. "I have, actually. Too much tongue, spit and..." he waved his hand, face creasing with unwelcome recollection. "*Flappy* bits. And that's why we don't have tequila tuesdays anymore, isn't it James?"

One of the guards on the far side of the room gulped nervously. "Yes, sir."

"Yes." Metheun downed another gulp of wine then plonked his glass down on the table. "Right, so two things, honey. First off, if your father only wants to pay some druggie rapists to look after you, then either he doesn't care about you *that* much, or he's a horrible, horrible person. I mean, maybe some counselling could help."

He leaned forwards in his chair, resting his elbows on the table and steepling his bony fingers. "Second. I don't give a fuck about who raped you. Now, what I *do* care about, as I mentioned earlier, are the Purifiers you were with. I want to know their *names*. I want to know where they call *home*. I want to know what their *plans* are."

Huge, strong hands suddenly grabbed Flora by her hair and across her chest, tilting her chair back.

"I'm really, really keen to get on with this so I can get some rest," Metheun was continuing. "Hanging around in some shit-hole club waiting to get kidnapped isn't all the brochure said it would be." He stabbed a finger in the air, indicating whoever had seized Flora. "So, what Eduardo is going to do is hold you in the fireplace until you start talking, alright?"

Whether it was alright with Flora or not, the guard pulled her backwards in her chair until she could feel the heat of the fire sizzling her fur. He started to tip her back.

"Let's start again. What was-"

"Albert! Stop!"

Metheun jerked in his seat, twisting around. Standing in the entrance of the dining hall, doors flung open, was a tiny old man. On either side of him were stood two huge men in dark suits; the old man between them barely came up to their waist. Hands clasped over one another, he looked slowly around the room, then returned his gaze to Metheun. "Albert, what are you doing?"

Metheun shrugged. "Getting answers."

"It looks like you're burning her in my dining room. When I specifically told you she wasn't to be harmed!"

"Dad, I'm getting close! If she just-"

The old man took starting walking further into the room, surprisingly quick for a man of his age. His bodyguards followed doggedly behind him. Approaching Metheun, he stopped before him and fixed the man with a cold glare. "I. Said. Stop."

Metheun stared back. After a few seconds, he shrugged, sitting back and picking up his wine glass with a bemused expression. "Whatever you say."

The old man looked up, and the guard holding Flora let her chair settle back on the floor, away from the fire. His expression softened. "I'm Edward Coxon. It's been a while, hasn't it Flora?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 13, 2017, 05:18:10 PM**

Flora stifled an embarrassingly scared whimper as her chair settled comfortably away from the fire that had almost singed her eyelashes off. But any relief from Coxon's rescue disappeared when he casually referred to her by name. "I...uh..." *Fuck. They know who I am. There go any plans of keeping my identity secret.* "Okay, so you know who I am, but that means...you don't want to kill me...right?" she stammered. "Think of how much money I'm worth! And I'll give you names! The big dude in charge was...uh...Marcus, and his co-captain, somebody said his name, like, once I think...and it was......Adrian? Aidan?...Started with an A, gimme a minute!" She glanced nervously at Metheun and his goon.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 16, 2017, 10:31:53 PM**

Soren awoke from a fitful sleep. The mattress he had been loaned from Emilena did practically nothing to cushion his back from the wood floor. He sat up and stretched his back. The Human peeked through a crack in the wooden walls.

Nothing except for the brilliant white spot of light on the horizon that that indicated the bustling core of Seryet City. Further out, he could vaguely make out shimmering towers of algal oil farms and refineries.

The Human looked around and saw that Emilena was still asleep. Sighing, he checked the smartphone still in his pocket. Mostly dead.

Shit. He thought. *I forgot to charge it!*.

He didn't have a charger with him and he doubted Emilena had one available. For that matter, it seemed unlikely that this shell of a church still had electrical power after decades of being neglected.

He shot a quick message to Axel.

"*You okay*"

He groaned as the battery died the moment he sent the text out. He tucked the now useless phone back into his pocket and lay back down on the flimsy mattress.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 17, 2017, 05:22:30 AM**

"Mmn." Axel groaned, face twitching as he stirred awake. He'd rolled over onto his side in his sleep, facing the window, and his wound ached from where he'd put his weight on it. The vague suggestions of early morning light were pushing their way through the closed blinds. *Can't have been out too long.* He gave another groan and rolled onto his back.

Someone was standing on the other side of the bed, looming over him.

Axel blinked. *Oh shit.* He tried to push himself up, opening his mouth to scream.

The person's arms shot down, one hand clamping over his mouth, stifling any cry for help he might have made. With a sharp *snap*, a switchblade deftly appeared in the other, the blade darting forward and pressing against his throat.

Feeling the bite of the metal, Axel stared up at the person holding him down and waited for the end. Much of the person's face was obscured in shadow, but he could see it was a man with a beanie hat pulled low and a dark jacket zipped right up. His eyes were dark pits. *Couldn't you shoot me instead?* Axel thought hysterically. He supposed it would be less painful than a blade through the neck.

"If you scream, I'll cut your head off."

The rat blinked again.

"Are you going to scream?" The man, his voice surprisingly soft, spoke slowly and carefully, as though speaking to someone particularly slow.

After a moment, Axel shook his head. "Nmphh."

The man took his hand away and withdrew the knife, although Axel noted uncomfortably that he didn't put it away. "What..."

"Come on, don't act dumb. You know who I'm with. What the fuck happened?"

Purifiers. Shit. "Alright, look, it wasn't our fault-"

"*What happened*?"

Axel pushed himself further away. "It was a... an ambush or something! They knew we were coming!" He gulped. "Look, I don't know what you guys got told but we followed this guy Methson or Metheun or something to this club but when we followed him in they were waiting for us and then the shooting started..." Axel could hear himself babbling, his voice getting higher. "There wasn't anything I could have done!"

The darkness enveloping the man's face shifted as his expression hardened. "Or you lured our people into an alley and killed them. You thought you could get away."

"No! I mean, look at where I am! Does this look like something I'd plan?!"

"Maybe our people fought back," the man muttered.

Axel felt a flash of anger and started to sit up. "Fuck you-" Before he could finish, the Purifier slammed the hilt of his knife against Axel's wound, clapping his other hand back over the rat's mouth to stifle his scream.

"It's okay," the Purifier said over Axel's muffled, agonised squeals. It's okay, because I know you wouldn't be that dumb. And *why* wouldn't you be that dumb?" When Axel eventually stared up at him with tearful eyes, hands clasped on his thigh, the man continued. "Because you know we're watching you. We're watching *all* of you. You know that right?" Axel nodded, air whistling through his nose, and the hand came away again. "Good. Who ambushed you?"

Axel gasped for breath, his eyes squeezed shut. "Don't know... don't know..."

"Then you should find out. Soon. Time's running out." The man reached into his pocket. "One more thing."

When Axel opened his eyes, the knife was shooting down. He jerked, too shocked to scream - but with a heavy thud the blade buried itself in the pillow next to his head. Speared to it was a sheet of paper with something written on it.

"Be seeing you." The Purifier slowly turned and made his way over to the door, unlocking it. Casually, he opened it and walked out of sight, the door closing behind him gently.

He body shaking, Axel reached up and pulled the knife from the pillow, freeing the piece of paper. Unfolding it, he blinked at the message written on it: *GOOD LUCK! WE'RE COUNTING ON ALL OF YOU! LOVE, R*. Axel collapsed back down, whimpering. "Oh fuck."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 17, 2017, 04:51:27 PM**

Outside the building where Flora was being kept, a lone figure paced a bit, the heavy exoframe he wore emitting a low, pneumatic hiss with each step. After a few minutes of pacing, he finally sighed, shaking his head and leaning back against a column.

"Of course. Hire me to bodyguard some little starlet princess, and then they don't even let me in the *fucking* door. Tch. Typical."

He muttered to himself, shutting his eyes for a moment. Just as he began to relax, a soft ping alerted him to an incoming call. Flicking a cover on his left wrist open, he pressed a few buttons, and a youthful face popped up in the upper-right corner of his display visor.

"Hey, Kintoki. How's the new suit working?"

He chuckled at the female's question a bit, rolling his shoulder as he flicked a glance at a set of small diagnostics.

"Raiko, for the dozenth time, it's working fine. You know I'd contact you if something was wrong."

He said coolly, closing one eye for a moment. The girl on the other end of the line nodded a bit, adjusting her glasses as they slipped down her nose. Collecting herself, she gave Kintoki a small nod, disconnecting with a little salute. Kintoki returned the gesture, then leaned his head back against the column again.

And now...we wait He thought to himself...

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 17, 2017, 10:23:58 PM**

Anne groaned as the light shone in through the windows. Her back ached and she could feel the blood-soaked dressing sticking to her.

She pressed the button to dose herself with another bolus of narcotic painkiller. Her ears twitched as she slowly pushed herself to a sitting position. Almost immediately, she noticed that her horn had been placed on her hospital tray with a note skewered on it. The Shetland Pony reached over and carefully extracted the paper from the horn.

Her eyes widened as she read it over. "Fuck me," she muttered. "That guy's got eyes everywhere!"

Anne lay back, closed her eyes and sighed.

"Ms. Mare," a voice said. "We're here to change your bandages."

The mare snorted and did nothing as they slowly adjusted her bed to a reclining position.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2017, 12:21:47 PM**

Emilena rose as soon as her cell phone vibrated, signifying 7am. She wasn't usually one to sleep in that late, but she'd had something of a difficult day.

She needed to get back into her exercise routine, it kept her sane. Making sure to keep silent so as not to wake Soren, who had shown signs of going back to sleep, she completed 25 pushups, 25 situps, and 25 crunches. Panting with exhaustion and drenched with sweat, she crawled to the crawlspace. At exactly 8:30am, she heard the door to the church swing open and shut with a bang.

"Hey, Almaya," she gasped. "Sorry to wake you, but if you want food, a shower, or an outlet, now's your only chance to get that. Follow me."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 19, 2017, 11:56:29 PM**

Soren pushed himself up. He worked out a few kinks in his back from sleeping on the terrible mattress. His stomach growled.

"It's fine," he muttered. "I was barely asleep anyways thanks to that shitty mattress."

He sniffed the air and wrinkled his nose at the musky scent of Emilena after her workout and combined with the pungent funk of his own unwashed clothing. I think we could both use a quick shower."

The Human took his phone out of his pocket. "Shit, battery's dead." He sighed. "All right lead the way."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 20, 2017, 11:29:44 AM**

Emilena bit her lip. Now that he'd mentioned it, Emilena really should have warned him about how truly awful that mattress was. She would know, it was hers whenever she and Lily hid out in this location. *Too late now...*

"Keep your ear on the voice outside," Emilena muttered as she scaled the exit. They could both hear a pastor addressing a crowd. "He always addresses the crowd for ten or fifteen minutes before church starts, then there's a one-minute moment of silence. When he stops talking, we have sixty seconds to make ourselves scarce before they start filing in."

The inner church was lit up, a candle was glowing softly besides every pew, their shadows flickering around the room thanks to a central fountain that hadn't been running last night. Every single seat contained an old-fashioned tablet containing scripture. The tablets could draw power wirelessly from the charger seats on each pew, meaning the only outlet in the room was used to light up the overarching statue of J. Robert Oppenheimer looking somberly over the room. "Hope you're not religious, because we're about to score some extremely negative karma in the eyes of Father Atom," Emilena muttered, unplugging Oppenheimer's backlight and offering the outlet to Soren. "There's a large basket with communion crackers under the altar, and I'll setup the 'shower'."

Slinking delicately to the main entrance, Emilena snaked her hand under the massive stained-glass doors and pickpocketed the hand sanitizer dispenser while remaining invisible to the amassed congregation outside. Returning to the fountain, she stripped off her clothes and waded in, scrubbing herself down with sanitizer. With the time limit, there wasn't exactly time for decency. "Don't get too greedy, but you can help yourself to the coins in the fountain too," she added, dropping a handful on her pile of clothes.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 23, 2017, 11:08:13 AM**

Coxon smiled kindly at Flora as a guard pulled out a chair for him, helping him to ease down into it. He reached over to pat her hand with his own reassuringly. "Flora, you're worth more to me than any amount of money. It might surprise you but I actually knew you when you were... much younger." He looked at her approvingly. "You've grown into a fine young woman." *Good bone structure... no obvious abnormalities. Perhaps it wasn't a complete failure.*

Lounging in his chair across the table, Metheun rolled his eyes at one of the bodyguards standing behind the old man.

Coxon frowned at him then returned his attention to Flora. "It goes without saying that I'm extremely relieved you're safe. The people you were with are *very* dangerous. I want to protect you, but if you can tell me anything more it'd make things much easier. These two names you mentioned, that would be Marcus Hayton and Aaron Geasbrecht, correct?"

"That sounds about right," Metheun spoke up. "Junko would know for sure, but it's a pretty safe bet." He shrugged. "They're fairly dead though."

"I see." Coxon looked carefully at her beneath grey eyebrows. "Is there anything more? Can you remember if they mentioned where they're based? Was there anyone else noteworthy?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2017, 08:48:17 PM**

How the hell does this guy know me? Flora furrowed her brow. *Is he a sponsor? Maybe his son went to my high school or something.* Well, she wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth; if they didn't plan on killing her, they can have as much info as they wanted. "They said the name Ragson a lot, I think he's their boss and the non-Purifiers are reporting to him. They've got these other people who are being blackmailed into helping them. There's a former police officer named Emilena, she's got some sort of criminal record and she saved my ass like four times. There's these two grumpy guys named Soren and Axel, who don't talk much, and until recently there was this psychopath named Lily."

She shuddered. "Lily was just *creepy*. She kept talking about killing everyone, and one time she slammed me against the wall and I swear she literally sucked the energy out of me. Marita claimed she had healing powers, but I never saw her do anything but glare at people. But then last night, uh..." she shifted her feet, trying to figure out how to explain it without sounding insane. "She, uh, disappeared when like, her identical twin showed up, knocked her out, and dragged her off? I don't really get what happened, but Axel and I got paid to help her do it." She gulped. "I know that sounds retarded, but nothing about Lily ever seemed to make sense."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **April 26, 2017, 02:04:20 PM**

Coxon frowned. "A woman who could heal?" His eyes flicked across to Metheun, who'd suddenly leaned forwards, elbow on the table, his hand propping up his chin.

"It could be her... she mentioned an ex-cop called Emilena..." Metheun muttered, brow creased. "That can only be Emilena Echo. If she's there, it can't just be a coincidence."

"Flora, you said this Lily woman was kidnapped?" *And there was a twin? This could complicate things... but the potential rewards far exceed the risks. And there are potentially two people who could help us locate the subject. Axel...* Coxon smiled at the folf. "Thank you for this information, young lady. You've been very helpful."

The old man signaled to one of the guards standing nearby. "Could you please let our friend in please?"

Metheun spluttered as the man ducked out of the room. "Inside?! He'll wreck our floors again with his fucking suit!"

"It's important for her to meet her new protector," Coxon said. "Flora, I'm sure you understand - the ones who dragged you into all this will want you back. They'll want to make sure you don't reveal anything that could threaten them, and they'll likely do whatever it takes to accomplish this."

He spread his hands. "I intend to take every precaution to help you. But staying here wouldn't be safe. It's too well known. If you stay here, they'd likely hear about it before too long. So I've arranged for your transfer to a more secure location, and overseeing it will be someone I've grown to trust over the years. Someone who can guarantee your safety."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 26, 2017, 08:49:32 PM**

Soren plugged his charger into the outlet. He held his breath as he heard the pastor continue on. He wasn't religious by any stretch of the imagination but yet, there was something compelling about how the pastor blended nuclear physics, art, oratory and religion all together.

As his phone charged far too slowly for his taste, he carefully peered out from behind the statue of Father Atom. The church was still empty, the only presence being Emilena washing herself in the fountain and lit up by the flickering light of the candles.

The Human scowled as he smelled the pungent burnt wax odor that hung in the air. He shuddered; it smelled *far* too much like the fire that destroyed his livelihood back in Lanthae.

He said nothing but grabbed a vacuum sealed pack of communion crackers and shoved them in his pocket.

He watched Emilena finish her "shower" and get dressed. Saying nothing and pointedly avoiding the Vulpine's naked form, he splashed some water on his face, tossed the package of crackers on the concrete floor and entered the fountain without taking his clothes off. He scrubbed his clothes to try and get them clean and wrung them out. He emerged from the fountain with a cash chit worth 500 creds. "Someone must be trying to buy their way to heaven," he muttered.

It was then he heard "And may Oppenheimer's Light shine down upon our foes."

Soren was not religious by any stretch of the imagination but he had been exposed to enough acolytes of the Atomic Church to know that usually signaled the end of an address by a church member.

Those words were then followed by silence. "Shit! We gotta go!" he hissed, stuffing the pilfered communion crackers back into his pockets. He sprinted for the statue, grabbing his phone and hastily plugging it back in.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 26, 2017, 10:14:03 PM**

Emilena bit her lip; that sermon ended exactly on time, but she'd lost focus for a few precious seconds. This shower was the first chance she'd had in days to analyze her own body, and she was surprised by all the scars she didn't recognize. Almost every square foot of her flesh was pockmarked with the permanent remnants of old wounds, which wasn't exactly news, but a surprising number of new scars were fighting to make room. *When did I even get wounded these past few days?* As far as she could recall, she'd been blessedly lucky avoiding any physical harm during this Purifier business, but these deep cuts can't lie. *Most of them don't even look like combat wounds,* she pondered as she ended her shower and redressed. *They look more like surgical scars or...*

Soren's curse suddenly cut through her thoughts like a scalpel. "Stick to the walls!" she muttered, "or they'll see you trailing water down the aisle!" Emilena's feet were dry enough that she could blitz back to the main entrance and haphazardly stuff the sanitizer dispenser, counting the seconds with military precision before their minute was up. With a gymnast's vault, she grabbed the ladder rung and led the way into the crawlspace. As soon as they were both securely in the safe room, she retracted the ladder with milliseconds to go before the congregation began filing into the church. "Whew..." she whispered. "That was close. The Church of Atom doesn't screw around with nonbelievers violating sacred space."

It was several seconds before her breathing returned to normal and she could hear the church proceedings happening without interruption. "Echoes are a huge problem in this room, we need to be super still while they're here," she whispered. "Hope that spot of floor is comfy, and your phone is decently charged."

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"That would be awesome, I'm with you 100%," Flora agreed quickly. These guys were paradise compared to the hell her former comrades put her through. "So long as he doesn't hit on me..."

She waited to see her new protector, but something caused her to ask Coxon one last question. "Errr, at some point, am I gonna learn why you seem to know who I am? I mean, beyond being DJ Xyler?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 27, 2017, 11:12:26 AM**

Just as Flora finished speaking, the door swung open and Kintoki stepped in, shooting a glance of what could only be read as distaste at Metheun. He gave Flora a brief glance, then turned to Coxon.
"Good to see you again, sir. I presume this is Flora?
He said, bowing his head respectfully as his visor popped open a small window, with text scrolling across it.
Of course it is, Kin. Who else would it be, huh?

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **April 30, 2017, 09:24:53 PM**

Soren bit his tongue and held his breath as he lay in the dusty crawlspace. He had left some water droplets in the aisle but he hoped that they attributed it to a leaky pipe.

He carefully peeked through a small crack in the floor and spied one of the altar boys looking for the communion crackers in the altar that held a bronze model of an atomic nucleus. Said altar boy turned to the priest standing behind the podium.

The Human couldn't make out any words, but it looked like the altar boy was was asking where the communion crackers had gone.

Hope they don't find out someone filched them.

He shuddered. Atomic Acolytes did *not* take kindly to blasphemy. If he got caught, a good beating was likely to result.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 02, 2017, 11:51:27 AM**

Rose, by this point, had convinced her doctors that she was well enough to go home. ' I'll be sure not to move my shoulder too much ' She said to the Nurse. ' Be sure to change ylour bindings every few hours,

and your physical therapy starts in a couple weeks' the Nurse giving her a card "Just tell Brian that you u are coming from us and you'll get 20% off your first t five sessions." Thank you " rse said " i just need to contact my.. roommate, to let her know I'
m ok." Rose said Pul;ing out he phone and dialing Marita's Number.
_ Marita answered after the third ring>' Rose? where the heck have you been? Marita said " I'm in the hospital about to be discharged. The stakeout was a fiasco, and Bailey is royally pissed, as you might imagine. We've got 2 days to fix things, or bailey will.." Off us? Great, just freaking great. We have just 2 days to track her down? I could do it, maybe, if you gave me a week." We don't HAVE a week Marita ' Rose said as she got out of the hospital bed and signed the disclosure forms, upon which she was given her regular clothes back. Rose took a couple minutes to change. " we need to find everyone, get them together, and go after her" rose said as she walked down the hallway towards the hospital entrance. 'Finding them all, will take hours, and every minute is now precious beyond measure. Did Bailey say he;d back off if we got her back? ' If she's unharmed, yes' Rose said. Marita sighed audibly. " we're really up against it this time Rose.'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 06, 2017, 02:32:51 AM**

Coxon inclined his head at Flora. "Of course. When you return here, I'll tell you everything." If she managed to survive a little longer, he supposed he owed her that much. He heard the door open at the other end of the room and turned to see Kintoki enter.

"Oh, look. The trashcan's arrived," Metheun announced, returning the mercenary's unsympathetic expression.

"Kintoki. It's good to see you too... it's been some time since I last required your services." Coxon gestured at Metheun. "Go tell Junko to make preparations. And tell her about this Axel character, he could be important."

Annoyance flashed across Metheun's face. "*I* could take care of that. I'm good for more than sitting around in a filthy club as bait, waiting to get shot."

"No. Not this. Go."

Metheun stared at him for a moment, then downed the rest of his wine. "Your wish is my command," he muttered, smoothing down his jacket as he stood. Sweeping past Kintoki, he noted a fresh crack in the marble floor, behind the mercenary's foot. ""For crying out loud, someone tell Felix the floor needs repairing again," he called out to a guard in the hall as the door swung shut behind him.

"To answer your question, yes. This is the girl," Coxon said, returning his attention to Kintoki. "I've arranged for the safehouse to be prepared for you." He paused. "Naturally, you're aware of the task. Protect her. At all costs." *And if she tries to run before the job is done, for whatever reason, disable her. Non-lethally. Break her legs, sever her spine... just make sure she doesn't become a problem.*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 09, 2017, 12:27:48 PM**

The church meeting was almost over, and the Head Acolyte was leading up to the end of his sermon. Emilena took several deep breaths; she was starting to get impatient and her freshly-washed cuts were stinging.

"We must all remember..." he swelled his voice, "that light is a sign of righteousness, but not necessarily a benevolent one. Just as Father Atom bestowed two great lights of destruction upon his foes, so to may your path deliver light in a way that seems harmful. But remember that you must trust the light, for your own plight is a worthy sacrifice for the greater good."

And then Marita's phone call set Soren's phone vibrating. It was only two brief buzzes, but against the ceiling it caused such a rattling that the congregation immediately looked around in curiosity.

"Did someone...forget to silence their phone?" the Head Acolyte asked with barely suppressed rage.

"No, I think it came from the ceiling," stammered the first acolyte he made eye contact with.

"The church doesn't have vermin, does it?" a female acolyte asked in an accusatory voice. "That would explain your missing communion."

"Of course not!" the Head Acolyte snapped, well aware that his followers would crucify him were they to decide he hadn't been maintaining their sacred space adequately. "Spread out, and seek the disturbance! Obliterate it!"

Emilena's blood ran cold. "Erm, think we'll be able to kill them all?" she whispered, glancing at her SMG still sitting beside her mattress. "It's that, or flee and have *another* group that wants us dead..."

Flora raised an eyebrow upon seeing her protector. "Errr, is it completely sane?" she asked, wrinkling her nose. The cyborg was so unabashedly Augmented that she shared Metheum's less-than-enamored opinion. She stepped backwards tentatively, as if giving a wide berth to a diseased dog. "You're not sticking me with something else that's gonna molest me, right?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 27, 2017, 04:14:57 PM**

Rose then remembered that she hadnt been the only one shot, and diakled the phobne number anne hhad gicen her ' she waited for the the mare to answer Once she did, and told Rose which room She and axel were in , she would go get them discharged and head out to get Flora back. every minute was precious thanks to Baileys blunt and murderous threat. ' What a huge fiasco we've gotten outrselves into " she muttered as the phobne rang for the second time.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 27, 2017, 04:34:51 PM**

(Church of the Holy Atom)

Soren bit his lip as his forehead began to sweat. "I say we run for it. They didn't get a good look at us." His pistol bumped uncomfortably against his hip as he adjusted his position slightly.

It was then he noticed two wires going into a light fixture. A insane...and probably suicidal plan formed in his mind. "I say we give them something more pressing to think about than two interlopers..."

(Hospital)

Anne picked up her cell phone that was on her table next to her pitcher of water. The phone was a cheap, prepaid one that she could toss into the nearest electronics recycling bin when it attracted too much attention.

"Yeah?" she asked as she took a sip of the lukewarm water from the cup.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 30, 2017, 05:16:49 PM**

Its rose. Which room are you and Axel in? I'm coming to get you out of there, so we can start looking for Flora. We are under a deadline to get her back after all" rose said ' Just give me the room number and I'll come get you" rose added as she walked down the hallway looking at the rooms, some of which were open, most of which were closed.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 31, 2017, 04:04:27 PM**

Coxon chuckled good-naturedly. "Yes, I suppose he does look a fraction... intimidating." He shifted in his chair with a small wince as his joints started to ache. "I assure you, he is quite sane. And you have my word that no... molestation... will take place." Coxon fixed his gaze on the mercenary, his eyes hardening for a split second. "Will it, Kintoki?" *But he already knows what my stance is on rape. If this girl is interfered with, his payment disappears.*

He clapped his hands once, softly. "But don't take my word for it! Kintoki," Coxon continued, gesturing. "Say hello to the poor girl!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **May 31, 2017, 04:18:59 PM**

Anne narrowed her eyes as she tried to look at the room number on the electronic display.

"Room 441A," the mare said into her phone. "And what's about this deadline?"

Her ears pricked up as she heard footsteps coming from outside the room. She wondered if it was staff, Rose or someone she *really* didn't want to see.

As it were, she pressed the call button that was located on the table and waited for a nurse to remove the IV that was snaking into her arm.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 31, 2017, 04:35:46 PM**

I'm on my way. and the deadline is from Bailey, who put me and the girls in charge of keeping flora safe. to say hes pissed at us for letting her get grabbed is a gross understatement. I'll be there in a couple minutes and fill you in more once we get out." rose said and hung up. 441A was on the 4th floor and it would take Rose a few minutes to climb the stairs and then find the room.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **May 31, 2017, 05:17:02 PM**

"Shitshitshitshit." Axel's leg dragged behind him as he shuffled across the room, leaning on the wall for support like a drunk after a long night. When he reached the chair on the other side, on which a plastic bag containing his old clothes had been placed, he looked down at his bandaged thigh. It didn't look as if it had started bleeding again.

So far so good.

Axel picked up the bag and opened it, crinkling his nose at the sight of his ruined clothes packed inside, stiff from the dried blood. "No good... I can't wear these..." he muttered to himself. Dropping the bag on the floor, he shrugged off his gown and pulled the plain-looking hospital shirt and trousers from the back of the chair. Easing himself into a sitting position with a gasp of pain, he set about gingerly sliding the trousers on, keeping an eye on the door in case the Purifier came back for a second visit.

Trousers on, he yanked the shirt over his bruised torso then eased his feet into his old trainers. *You got dressed. Good going.* His cell phone suddenly started ringing on his bedside table, making him jump.

"Shitshitshitshit."

Successfully shuffling back across the room to his bedside table, he picked up the phone and hit the answer button after he'd checked who it was. "Rose, we need to... what? Bailey? Flora?" He snorted. "What the fuck do I care? I just got..." The rat sighed as Rose kept talking. "Room 441A? That's a few down from me. Alright, see you there."

Hanging up, Axel glanced back down at his pillow, the knife still pinning the note to it. He pulled it out, pushing the blade back in and shoving it out of site into the waistband of his trousers. After a moment's pause, he also snatched up the note, then turned and hobbled towards the door.

By the time he'd reached Anne's door, he'd learned that by keeping his leg stiff in a particular position, he could make a good pace without his wound hurting so much. He noticed that none of the nurses seemed to care that a patient was stumbling around the halls. *Either the patient care is terrible, or I don't catch the ladies' eyes as much as I used to.* Reaching Anne's door, Axel pushed it open and fixed her with a disgruntled frown as he limped in. "Say one thing about us, it's that our luck is consistent." He plonked into a chair. "Consistently shit."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 31, 2017, 05:43:19 PM**

Kintoki smirked a bit at the reaction from Flora, unclamping his helmet to reveal a relatively young fox's face.
"Ahhh, right. Where are my manners. Sakata Kintoki. I'll be acting as your body guard for the foreseeable future. And don't worry, I have absolutely NO interest in molesting you."
He snarked, replacing his helmet with a pneumatic hiss, rolling his shoulders lazily. Turning towards the door, he glanced back.
"Oh, and for the record? I'm 100% organic. Just so you know, Flora."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2017, 12:41:17 AM**

The hustle and bustle in the Church of Atom was getting more frenzied as the acolyte's lust for something to punish set in.

"Check every crevice!" their leader preached. "Do not overlook the slightest of disturbances! Remember, a single neutron can split an entire nucleus!"

Emilena narrowed her eyes. They'd be checking the attic in a matter of minutes. "Whatever you're thinking, science guy, let's do it." She gripped her SMG and waited for Soren to put his plan into motion. "Just tell me who to shoot..."

"Good, cause I'm 100% mechanical." Flora cocked an eyebrow at the fox, who turned out to be far younger than she expected. ""First generation prototype android. So I guess we're completely incompatible."

She glanced one more time at Coxon. At least he seemed far more in-charge than anyone she'd met on the Purifier team. She actually got a vibe that he knew what he was doing, at least enough to follow his orders. "So, Kintoki, you think you can hold your own against anything that comes our way?" she asked. "No offense, but you're...uh...kinda scrawny."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 02, 2017, 07:52:51 AM**

Kintoki smirked a bit, shrugging his shoulders.
"Suppose that depends on your definition of 'incompatible', doesn't it?"
He chuckled, then, at Flora's questioning of his capability, he turned and tapped his chestpiece.
"As to if I can actually hold my own...well, let's just say I didn't get to where I am by being just a pretty face."
He turned to Coxon, nodding a bit.
"Sir, as soon as you're ready, I can get her to a safehouse. Got one set up and ready."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 03, 2017, 09:06:32 PM**

Soren said nothing but carefully opened the package of communion wafers and poured them onto wooden floor. He then ripped the two wires from the light fixture. A shower of sparks indicated that the wires were energized. Taking care not to touch the bare metal ends, he carefully touched them together until they began to glow red. He groped around for something and found a discarded paper wrapper from one of Emilena's meals.

Touching it to the glowing wire, the paper soon caught fire and he placed it on the pile of communion wafers. He gently blew on it until the dried wafers had caught fire.

He then drew his pistol with a smirk. "A fire should keep them busy."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 05, 2017, 01:01:15 AM**

Emilena grinned. "Works for me." She crawled backwards, watching approvingly as the fire started filling the attic. "Stay near the window, the smoke might be able to cover our escape!"

After a few minutes, the attic's floorboards caught fire, and the church's roof collapsed in a flaming heap. Screams started filling the air, and at least one person's firearm went off for reasons Emilena couldn't fathom.

"Alright, before they evacuate outside, let's do this!" She led the way out the window, vaulting off the roof and hitting the hedges with a controlled tumble. Rolling into the graveyard, she combat-crawled to the nearby wall using the hedge as cover from the churchyard.

Bailey was so incensed he smashed both of his fists into the armrests of his pedicure chair, letting his cell phone clatter to the ground.

"Oh!" protested the salonist. "Careful, sir!"

"How the hell did they screw that up so goddamn *badly*?" Bailey snarled, looking around angrily. The only other person in the shop was the next customer in line, an off-duty mall worker wearing a large Jigglypuff costume. "My instructions were *really fricking clear*," Bailey ranted to nobody in particular, "just hide Flora in the house and don't let anything happen to her! How do they fail so spectacularly at doing that, that she gets *kidnapped by terrorists?*"

The mascot shrugged. "Jigglypuff."

"Sir, if you could please sit still," the salonist started, but Bailey angrily kicked her aside, grabbed his phone and marched out of the salon. "Well, I never!" she started. "Fine then. The usual, poptart?"

"Jigglypuff," nodded the mascot happily.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 05, 2017, 01:36:16 PM**

Coxon inclined his head. "You may take her. But you will escort her to a safehouse that I have already prepared. The coordinates will be forwarded to you, in addition to other essential information."

As he finished speaking, one of his hulking bodyguards retrieved a device from the inside of his dark suit. He pressed a button, sending the information to Kintoki's system, then nodded.

"It's done." Coxon's hands folded on top of each other on the tabletop. "Remember what I said. Keep her safe." He gave Flora a final smile. "Goodbye my dear. We'll see each other again, I'm sure."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 09, 2017, 02:08:45 PM**

"Thanks. It's, uh, gonna be nice to be safe." Flora wasn't sure where to place herself on Coxon's totem pole. He seems to be going out of his way to protect her, and she couldn't see any sort of trap in the situation he'd set up for her; indeed, if he'd wanted her dead he could have done that at any time. But she couldn't figure out what his plans for her could entail. *Absolute worst case scenario, they're gonna ransom me to Bailey for a couple million bucks, but I can live with that.* Better than dying from a gunshot in some strip club somewhere. "Just let me know anything you need, or want to know," she added as she followed Kintoki to the exit. "I'm at your beck and call..."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 16, 2017, 09:07:19 PM**

Soren quickly holstered his pistol and exited through the window just before the attic collapsed. He felt the flames licking at the back of his feet as he scrambled onto the roof. He watched as Emilena dropped off the roof and rolled.

Taking a breath to steel himself, he dangled himself over the edge of the roof. The gutter promptly gave way and he unceremoniously dropped onto the -- thankfully mulch-covered ground. The hedges also helped break his fall.

Swearing softly as his legs and body ached from the fall, he bolted for the graveyard and hid behind a large headstone.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 04, 2017, 08:12:42 PM**

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rose enter the hospital room where Anne was with a tired expession on her face. there was a free seat next to the bed, so she took it. ' Hi anne. How many bullets did they take out of you?" she asked wryly. ' I got 1 , clean through the shoulder. i'm under orders not to do much with it for awhile.' She sighed then turned to Axel " so how do you propose we get out of here?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 05, 2017, 06:22:12 PM**

(A month later)

Buller (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550&view=findpost&p=22094871), the Purifier special ops agent, glanced surreptitiously out the peephole before double-locking the hostel room's door.

"You didn't really think we were gonna let you all just walk away, did you?" he growled, glancing at his captives. "Things go a little pear-shaped, and you all take the opportunity to skive out on our deal? I should kill you for that."

Emilena, Soren, Axel, and Marita were bound tightly with zipties and gagged. They were also sporting bruises and scuffs from Buller's less-than-gentle methods of retrieving the purifier's 'investments'.

"And you know what? I think you do deserve a reminder who you're dealing with." Emilena winced when Buller grabbed her by the arm and withdrew a thin retractable switchblade. Slicing a small gash in her upper arm, Buller rubbed her new wound with a moist towelette. He repeated the process with his other three captives.

"Feel good?" he remarked casually, crossing to the sink and flushing the towelette. "That there was achlysalt. It's got some perks to it. Lets you stay up longer. Keep focused." Buller lit himself a cigarette. "For about two days. Then your antibodies break it down and it becomes a fast-acting poison. *Very* painful. And the best part..." he smiled, showing nicotine-stained teeth, "is that no two batches are the same. You want the antidote to that recipe, there's only one supplier. Us."

Emilena murmured angrily through her bonds. Buller removed her gag. "Okay, we get it," she growled. "We solve your problem in two days or die. You got a plan to make use of us, or would you rather just shoot us now?"

Buller smiled. "You deadbrains did manage to succeed at one thing back in the strip club, you accidentally got a contact into their inner sanctum. Metheun took that pink-skinned broad with him when he hightailed it. We could track her with the same bugs we used to find you idiots." He fished a tourist map out of his trenchcoat and threw it, hitting Axel in the face. "I marked an X on the spot. Too bad it's in the Derwent District. The Purifiers got protection deals with the businesses down there, we'd be breaking some longstanding agreements if they caught our agents in the area. Which is where you come in."

He unlocked the door and doffed his hat mockingly. "I wasn't able to find your other friends, but I'll leave it to you to figure out the details. Y'all are really good at those. And one last thing, if you could cover the tab for this room, that'd be great." He let the door slam shut behind him.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 07, 2017, 10:34:38 AM**

Marita managed to moved her tied paws over her head and remove the gag. ' she took a pair of deep ragged breaths. " great. another 2 days to so something or die dadline..' and i don't think hacking will bail us out of this one like it did with Bailey. who's still rather ticked with us, but we will still be paid assuming we survive all this." she said.

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Rose had managed to locate flora, in the interim, and had managed to escape the purifier trap that had netted Axel, Sorem and Emilena and had traced marita. ' she had managed to convince those holding Flora that she was a friend of flora's, a backup dancer. so, in this way, rose had managed to hold bailey off from sending goons to kill her, Marie and Rose . so that was one problem off their back. however, she had had no luck in finding a way out of the situation that didn't involve blowing her cover and almost certainly getting both her and Flora killed.

Marie sat at a stool in a street side bar, nursing a drink, and trying to munch on some peanuts. she looked over at Anne, who had three empty bottles in front of her. ' well, anne, what's the plan to get our friends back? you and I are the only ones, that aren't being held hostage by either Methuen or the Purifiers. Any ideas?' the setter said, as she threw some peanuts into her mouth.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2017, 01:31:01 PM**

Emilena shimmied over to Marita and presented her ziptied hands. "First let's get one of us untied. If you can get your finger in there, hold the locking pin up while..."

After a few false starts, Marita managed to free Emilena from her bonds, and Emilena returned the favor. "At least we have a very obvious lead." She checked the map after freeing Axel, while Marita worked on Soren. "They're holding Flora at these coordinates. We don't really have time to case the joint, so I think our best bet is to just head out there and see if we can gain access somehow."

The Derwent District was an industrial hotspot, mostly warehouses and factories. "Once we've gained access to Flora's stronghold, we can search the place for another lead."

"Kin, the WiFi is down again!" Flora collapsed back on the saferoom couch in a huff. "Why does everything here suck so bad?"

She'd given up on asking if they'd ever let her go. For what felt like an eternity, she'd had no contact with anyone except a socially-awkward cyborg teenager, and was seriously considering offering to blow him in exchange for a day trip to the mall. "*Kin!* Get it back up or I'm going on another hunger strike!"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 07, 2017, 02:15:29 PM**

Rose stuck her head inside the safe house room. ' hey, there. i got some snacks here' she said, as she came in carrying a tray of food. Hope you like bacon-wrapped Sushi Rolls. ' She said to Flora as she set the tray down. " boss says we got to keep you alive.' Rose was wearing a standard issue uniform, she found it chafed against her skin, and pressed her breasts flat, but trying to wear her normal gear wasn't an option, they had trashed her outfit as pat of buying her story about being a back up dancer, they had literally burnt her clothes into a dumpster. She had only gotten a couple chances to even visit Flora over the past few weeks, as she had more or less become a servant to Methuen and the others. They often grumbled about her, and the food she brought them, but so far they hadn't tried to kill her. Although there had been threats. More than a dozen, by Rose's latest count.
"I'm Bianca' She said trying to give the vixen a smile.

Marita managed to get Soren freed from his bonds and gag, and tossed the zip tie away. ' The Direct approach? well, we don't have the time or money to do anything more elaborate, as that stuff that Purifier dick gave us, will almost certainly kill us within 2 hours or so after it turns toxic. Very Nasty Stuff, the kind used to blackmail people out of everything they have-money, info, favors- and then the poison kills them anyway." Marita said rubbing her wrists where the zip tie had cut into them. " You ok, Soren? She asked . "Things could be worse. We could all have bullets in the back of our skulls.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 07, 2017, 07:03:22 PM**

(Bar)

Anne drank her sixth bottle of beer. Despite the fact that she had consumed six bottles of beer in as many minutes, she seemed to be completely sober. Her ears splayed and tail swished as pondered. The bar they were at was grungy and the neighborhood equally dirty. A few bums outside scavenged the trash for discarded electronics they could sell for some money.

She tapped her fingers on the table top. "Hmm...a friend of mine owes me a bit of a favor. I suppose she'd be willing to tap into some info we can't get access to."

(Hostel)

Soren spat a few times onto the ground to clear the taste of the gag from his mouth. He stretched a bit to make his achy body hurt somewhat less.

"Yeah, I'm fine. I could use some painkillers but other than that, a-okay," he said.

He looked at the map that Buller had tossed at Axel. "Perhaps we can tunnel in from one of the nearby warehouses?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 08, 2017, 12:26:50 PM**

well, we'd need equipment for that" Marita said. "not to mention quite a bit of creds. unfortunately we don't have much of that, at the moment.' She sighed, and took a seat on the bed where she and the others had been held prisoner. " so we'll need to find something to get in there. Some aliases, and excuses to be there. " She went over and looked at the map. ' what about the warehouse right behind it.?' she asked Soren.

_ What kind of favor?' Marie asked ' if you don't mins me asking? Its better than nothing, which is what I'm coming up with at the moment. Marita the one that handles breaking into secure places, About all the talents I have is fixing a mean drink, had to do that a lot at the Black Sheep.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 20, 2017, 07:55:39 PM**

Emilena washed her face off in the sink. "Let's scope the place out and decide what to do then. We'll have time to discuss while we're driving over."

As the others were getting ready, Emilena took Axel aside. "I'm not sure why I'm talking to you about this, but... I've been having this problem." She hiked her sleeves up, showing her arms covered in fresh scars and shallow cuts, mostly needle picks and surgically-clean incisions. "I've got these all over the place, and there are new ones every night. I can't figure out where they're coming from. Soren even watched me one night, he swears I'm not going anywhere in my sleep. They're just appearing on me."

She pointed to a few cuts of note. "These are mostly on major arteries or bloodletting spots. It's like I'm being tested on. You know, if I was actually going anywhere..."

Flora yawned. "Put 'em by the TV," she said dismissively. She'd never seen this girl Bianca before. "You, uh, sticking around or do you need to go? I can walk you out."

If Bianca left, Flora could peek a glimpse at her entering her passcode to the front door.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **August 21, 2017, 01:20:46 PM**

Axel lit a new cigarette as he took a cursory glance at Emilena's wounds. "Mmn. Looks nasty." He nodded across the room towards Soren as he took a drag. "Maybe he did it. Trying to fuck with your head. You two aren't exactly BFFs." Though obviously this wasn't true - whoever inflicted these injuries knew what they were doing. Axel shrugged, his mouth dry as hell. *Jesus, I could do with a drink*. "What do I care? Long as *I'm* not the one getting cut up."

He started to turn his back on her, zipping up the grubby hooded top he'd found discarded on the street, then stopped. "Wait. You sure they're just popping up? Like some messed up magic trick?" Axel lowered his voice. "There's only one person we know who can do that kind of stuff, right? And, I mean, you both got your minds..." He waggled his metal fingers next to his forehead. "Did you do something to piss her off? I know how fucked up she got... this is exactly the kind of shit she'd do."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 21, 2017, 02:29:00 PM**

Emilena bit her lip. "We, uh, struck something of a deal right before she left (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550&view=findpost&p=22091813)..." She subconsciously rubbed one of the cuts. "And now that you mention it, Lily probably wasn't happy about it. But that does give me an idea for how to get her what she wants..." she glanced at Soren and Marita. "Something to worry about once we've solved this more-pressing Purifier nonsense. We ready to go?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 21, 2017, 09:56:12 PM**

(Hostel)

Soren looked over the tourist map and scowled. "You know what," he said. "Screw the whole warehouse plan. I say we pose as Seryet utility workers or even law enforcement."

He brought up his smartphone and read some information about Seryet's power grid. Apparently, it was an intelligent grid that was capable of reading meters and even shutting off power from a central control station. Said signals were of course, heavily encrypted to prevent unauthorized people from tampering with them. Soren smiled, shut off his smartphone and turned to Marita. "Marita, think you can crack the encryption on Seryet's intelligent grid? Because I think a blackout might get us to where we need to be."

He then overheard Axel implicate him in something to do with Emilena. Scowling, he turned to the Rat. "For fuck's sake, Axel, what the hell are you going on about!? Are you *trying* to get me killed!?"

(Bar)

Anne nickered as she nibbled on some peanuts from a bowl set out on the counter. Her ears splayed as she pondered. A loud game of poker was being played at a nearby table.

"Well," the Shetland Pony said as she lowered her voice. "She's kind of an info broker/corporate enforcer. Her name's Marion."

(OOC - Yes, this is the same Marion Wu from *Racing the Storm*.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 21, 2017, 10:21:01 PM**

Marita paused before cracking her knuckles , after looking at the information on Soren's smartphone ' Hmm. 7level encryption, 9 key passwords.. its doable, but it will take me awhile, every year these systems get harder and harder to get into' She paused.' and even if I do get into it, I'll only have a couple minutes before i'll get locked out. We'd need something like an earthquake to knock it out for more than a few minutes. Unfortunately the nearest active fault is more than 300 miles to the south and this system would need to get hit by, say a 7 on the Richter Scale, to be knocked offline.' Marita took in a big breath. " i'll need to get a computer unconnected to the main system- dont want it to be traced back to us, like what happened after Flora got grabbed.I'm ready to go."
Bar

Marion? why does that name sound familiar? Didnt we run into her at some point?'Marie said " Something about a sunken ship in the Nile River? Or I might be getting her confused with someone else, I've been known to do that from time to time."
-
Bianca set the food around as directed ' I'll stick around, if you want me to. ' She said earnestly. ' I imagine its lonely in here, then again I am under orders to stay away from the bosses , um, 'guests' without their permission." she added

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Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 26, 2017, 11:12:15 PM**

(Bar)

"I've never been out of Seryet or Lanthae," Anne replied. The poker game soon degenerated into a loud alcohol fueled argument. She took a pull from her now warm bottle of beer, not caring that it now gone somewhat off in flavor.

She watched as a group of bouncers ran over to the impending brawl in the corner and separated the two loudest patrons -- an Augmented Human and a Bull.

(Hostel)

Soren nodded. "If we can find an Aureum used electronics store, I could probably get us a cheap-ass laptop that we can just chuck into the nearest electronics recycling bin when we're done."

The company in question was notorious for selling electronic goods that were one grade above (or not even) what could be picked out of an electronics recycling bin. Another dirty secret of the company was its *incredibly* poor handling of electronics with data still on them.

The Human then looked over the map again. "We should find the place where the hideout is located and then we can have Marita kill the power to the whole area. Hopefully, that'll give us enough time to go and grab Flora and the others."

Soren winced as a bruise from the beating that Buller had administered began to act up.

(OOC - This company is mentioned in my ITB Codex.)

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2017, 02:50:46 PM**

Emilena nodded. "Sounds good to me, Soren. Figure out the logistics while I go pay for the room. Let's not waste time, we've only got 48 hours. Marita, if your girlfriends want to get involved, we could use a car. I assume you've got them on speed dial."

After making herself presentable in the bathroom, she headed for the door.

"No, stick around," Flora burst out, almost too eagerly. After god knows how many days stuck in this pristine purgatory, she'd take anyone over the silence. "If you're down to hang, we could, like, play games or something. There's a playstation with *Saints Row 5*, I've beaten it like a dozen times now, but it's got two-player. Or we could eat something, or something else."

The receptionist looked alarmed at her haggard appearance. "Um, how can I help you?" she stammered.

"Checking out of room 218." Emilena's stomach rumbled when she saw the snack machine lit up outside; a heavy fog was blocking the sun, making it look far later than early afternoon.

"218?" the receptionist squinted. "Ah yes, Miss McCutcheon. Can I see your ID?"

Emilena's neck hairs prickled as she flashed the ID card of the dead officer she'd impersonated several days ago. *Very funny, Buller.*

The receptionist started typing. "You were scheduled to leave in three days. If you check out now, I'll need to add a $15 cancellation fee."

"Ugh, of course. Here." Emilena left a large wad of the stripper money she'd been tipped during the Black sting. "I'll be back in a second for my change."

At the vending machine, she purchased salted pretzels and a bottled water. She didn't appreciate Buller using a tainted name for the room; the cops could potentially track a known alias like Candace McCutcheon. *All the more reason we need to move faster and put this whole business behind us...*

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 30, 2017, 10:09:15 PM**

Sure, a game sounds fun ' bianca said. " Just give me the second controller. We can do the multiplayer maps, or co-op story play ' She said sitting down in a chair next to the Playstation.

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i have no idea where Rose is, or Marie " Marita said. " And we don;t have a car. you'll have to procure one, for us..' she sighed " shutting off an entire city is going to be a big ask' She said, her claws flying over the keys.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 04, 2018, 02:02:02 AM**

"I'll see if I can get a car at the same time I get a shitty computer," Soren said. He then saw Marita using her own computer. "Wait, could you hold on until I get the crap computer."

He winced as his back began to ache. "See you in a bit."

The Human exited the room and entered what looked like a lounge. The carpets were filthy and discarded tabs of electronic hotsticks littered the floor like metallic confetti. A vending machine that had seen better days was in the back, next to an overflowing ash tray. Soren sighed and approached the vending machine. Hopefully it dispensed pills in addition to drinks.

Sure enough, he pressed a button for ibuprofin and a vacuum sealed packet with two white tablets came out the slot at the bottom along with a printout. Throwing the printout into the ashtray, he tore open the packet and swallowed the two pills without water. He gagged as the foul aftertaste hung in his mouth like a bad blowjob.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 06, 2018, 10:42:27 PM**

Alright, I;ll wait for you Soren, But make it it snappy" marita sighed and she crackled her knuckles. ' gods i could use a drink. Hell, even a Diet Coke would suffice ." she looked over to Axel " we're really just ding this bare bones. blunt, brazen, stuff that gets done all the time and cop shows and ends up with the hoods breathing through tubes in the joint. Unfortunately, we really don't have much choice in the matter.

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Bar
So what sort of favor did you did for Marion, if you don't mind me asking?' marie asked, and she finished the last few nuts ion the bowl at the table, she and Anne were sitting at.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2018, 05:18:42 AM**

Emilena returned to the room. "We're all paid up and checked out," she reported. "Ready to leave when you all are."

Flora put the game in and had fun being a gangsta with Bianca for a couple hours.

"Hey, you're actually pretty fun, you know that?" she yawned. "Is the boss gonna be mad that you're spending so much time here? On that note, where's the waeaboo kid?"

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 07, 2018, 08:37:54 AM**

No, Bianca said, i've been given orders to make sure you feel at home." anything she wants, she gets, except phone calls" those were the bosses exact words. As for the waeaboo kid,whats-His-name? I have no idea where he might be. if I had to guess, I'd say running errands for the boss or his top guys. you're a lot of fun too, Flora, you're aces at this game, I don't think I beat you in score in any of the main levels or co - op battles. Miss Gangsta, indeed ' She chuckled. Is this the only game you have? if we have others we could play them" She stretched from her position on the sofa.

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Marita nodded to Emilena. ' I'm ready to go. I have the shutdown program ready to install, we just need Soren to get here with a junk able computer that we can use and then ' burn'

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 29, 2018, 01:46:10 AM**

(Bar)

Anne finished off her beer and swiped her credit chit on the reader. "It's something I can't go into details about. You know how it is with these info broker types." She got up and stretched, her joints cracking as she did so. "Regardless, I got her info handy just in case." Of course, she wisely left out the part that she did occasionally get involved with Marion's escapades.

"Anyways, we should find the others," she began to walk out of the bar and into the clear streets of Seryet City. Or at least as clear as possible given that a light drizzle was starting to fall.

(Seryet City Streets)

Meanwhile Soren was browsing through the racks of an Aurem Electronics store. The store itself smelled like cigarette smoke and burnt electronics. Inside the store were racks and bins filled with everything from laptops to cell phones of questionable origin. A large Nile Crocodile dressed in beat up jeans and a denim biker vest entered the store. He didn't seem to notice as he pushed aside a weedy looking and filthy Gecko who was had plastic bag full of discarded USB sticks.

"Ah Gustave," the clerk said as she laid eyes on the burly crocodilian. It was pretty clear that this man was a regular customer. "Got some fresh loot?"

The Nile Croc merely grunted and placed a laptop on the countertop. He opened it and gently pressed the power button with a clawed finger. It soon booted up flawlessly.

Soren looked at the computer as he browsed the racks. It was clearly a high-end one...probably stolen. Instead, he settled on a laptop with some...suspicious stains on the keyboard. As he gently closed it and stood in line to pay for it, he tried hard not to think what actions may have transpired over said keyboard.

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 29, 2018, 11:31:27 AM**

Of course, hush-hush, better off not knowing. Thanks for the drink" Marie said ' Would be nice if the others could call us.. then again given the Purifiers paranoia, calling would not be a good idea- it would be traced- and well those guys arent the nicest anyway." Marie said. Any idea where they might be. The battery on my phone is pretty much dead, I did to find some place that sells charge cablkes so I can recharge it."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2018, 12:15:41 AM**

Before long, Emilena had finished checking out, and returned to the room. "Is everything in order?" she asked, noticing the bedside clock read 11:57. "In three minutes, they're gonna be charging us extra for leaving the room after checkout."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 15, 2018, 11:29:47 PM**

I'm all set." Marita said. "Let's scram, she said, tucking her computer under her arm. So where are we headed first?' She asked Emilena. 'Then again, any place is better than here."

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2018, 12:44:45 AM**

"The Durwent District, as soon as Soren's back with the car," Emilena replied. "We don't exactly have time for sightseeing."

She glanced out the window at the street, just in case Soren was on his way back. When she didn't see him, she decided she probably had time for...something. An idea she’d had downstairs, and not a good one. "I'm gonna take a quick shower. Knock on the door if Soren gets back before I'm out."

Once she had the privacy of a locked door, Emilena removed her clothes and observed the freshly-healed cuts and scars across her body. There were even more than before. What the hell was Lily up to? They seemed to mostly be restricted to her arms and upper body, which was thankfully covered up by her long-sleeved khaki shirt. *This fabric isn't thick enough to fully mask an open wound on my arm...* Emilena pondered where best on her body to test her theory. *...hopefully Lily keeps an eye on her legs too.*

Slipping a disposable hotel razor out of her jeans pocket, Emilena snapped the plastic tip and pried the blade out. Taking a deep breath and biting her tongue, she sat on the shower floor and carved four deep straight cuts in her thigh. Two simple letters.

H I

Staggering to her feet, she turned the shower on maximum coldness to try and quickly stem the bleeding.

* * *

“Ummm, there were a few others, but they weren’t really my type.” Flora switched to the offline menu. “It’s just the stuff that comes for free with the PlayStation. *Scarlet Glove* is the time-in to that shitty movie last year, *Fortland* is a farming game, and...” she blinked when she saw the last name on the list. “Huh, I guess *World of Dance* might be playable for you. I had trouble with the motion sensors not tracking fuchsia skin...”

Title: **Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2018, 11:59:59 AM**

"world of Dance" sound like fun " Bianca said ' what Is "Scarlet Glove" About? it might be fun to play if only for laughs at the bd story, graphics and weapons. You want a REALLY bad game ' Guns Vs Planes ' Its about a bank robber trying to get away with a big bank heist, and he's being chased by cops in planes and helicopters. your job.. shoot down the planes.' Bianca laughed.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 23, 2018, 10:03:03 PM**

Marita was typing in ' treatment for Achylsalts" into her computer and a smile broke out on her face ' as some results popped up ' Well guys, we just may have gotten lucky!. Theres treatment for what the creep Buller gave us" She said. " Polyethlene Glycol and Naltrexone are drugs used to purge the body of drugs, poisons, and bile buildup. Used mainly for bad drug overdoses, opiods and the like. There is a catch, however. You can only get those drugs from a hospital, they dont sell them over the counter." She finished, before looking at the others. '

So ee'll need to "Help' ourselves to some , enough to treat the four of us that Buller drugged, as well as having some in reserve, in case they try to poison any more of us. We'll need to find a hospital that has it, and find a way to get a hold of some.. Some disguises might be in order. " She finished . Marie made a face ' so basically, we go to the nearest hospital and what? Bluff ourselves into some PlyGlycol stuff?

" Polyethelene Glycol, Marie. Well, actually there's a spray version, called Evzio. Its quicker than an injection. " Marita said. " however we get it, we need to get it within the next 43 hours, or the compounds will turn toxic. And then we're royally screwed. " She looked around at the large table at which they were all seated , at a back alley coffee shop that served coffee that was somehow both watery and clumpy " So, Anyone have any ideas on where to start looking?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **June 24, 2018, 03:40:32 PM**

Picking up his plastic coffee cup, Axel took a tentative sip, grimacing as the lukewarm liquid coated his throat with grounds. "Well, we can't exactly risk heading back to Peace Hospital." He considered, then pushed his coffee across the table with a grimace. "43 hours... so we'll need to act fast. And we need somewhere close." As Axel settled back in the booth, the Purifier's knife he'd pocketed from the hospital dug uncomfortably into his spine, a painful reminder of the additional pressures they were under.

He drummed his fingers thoughtfully on the table's surface. "You know... there is a smaller hospital near where I live. Doctors there barely give a shit about patients and the security's not worth crap so getting our hands on this polyethylene glyco-whatever shouldn't be *too* hard. Place called *Darwin's Hope*." Axel shrugged and looked around at the others. "I knew a guy who used to score, ah... supplies there. Could be worth a shot."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 24, 2018, 08:55:09 PM**

"If these hospitals have the same policies as Lanthae General, we'd be fools not to hit them," Emilena agreed. "I stabbed a doctor to death with a scalpel *twice* and they still gave me lifesaving surgery."

"...Seriously, what's wrong with you?"

Emilena ignored her teammate's comment. "The real question is what happens after that. Much as I'd like to just disappear off the grid, Soren and I pulled every trick in the book and Buller found us in less than a month." She sighed. "Things have changed a lot since Rhaegson gave us those initial offers, we have no proof they're even still on the table. If we manage to find what the Purifiers are looking for, we might not want to hand it over willy-nilly, and we might want a backup plan for when our usefulness finally runs out."

Flora nodded, even though that wasn't much of a reply to Bianca's question. She was beginning to realize that Bianca seemed to be trusting her, and she might be able to glean more info on her situation, but she had to approach such a topic of conversation carefully. "Speaking of the boss, he said he was gonna meet with me after all this is over, but I haven't seen him since that first night." She yawned. "That was like a month ago, I don't think the Purifiers are coming. When's the last time you heard back from Coxon? Or do you report to somebody else?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **June 25, 2018, 12:29:01 AM**

Soren stumbled into the coffee shop. The stink of auto-cig smoke and stale coffee briefly sent him coughing. A few rough looking individuals looked at him but then went back to their drinks. He looked around for his companions and spotted them in the back of the coffeehouse next to a fake plant that looked like someone had stubbed out cigarettes on its leaves.

"Right," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper. "I got our burner computer." He placed it on the table and opened it up, revealing the stained keyboard. He rubbed the back of his neck. "Uh, pay no attention to the stains," he added.

The Human then looked around the group. "So what's on the agenda today?" he asked.

Anne rubbed her horn. "Trying to get out the shit that Buller put in our bodies." She swirled her cup of coffee, the viscous, gritty liquid clinging to the side of the cup like used motor oil. She was used to ingesting some vile substances but even this was too much for her. Had she not been an Equine and lacking a gag reflex, the first sip would have caused her to puke up her lunch. "Goddamn it," she muttered. "This is the nastiest coffee I've had in a while."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 25, 2018, 09:36:30 AM**

I last heard from Coxon a few days ago' Bianca said ' He told me that my job was to make sure no one harmed you or did anything to you, and if I failed at that , he;d pry out my fingers one by one with a rusty wrench. " she made a face. ' nothing like the threat of being viciously maimed to keep you focused on the job right? As for the Purifiers, from what very little I've heard of them, They don;t give up easily. So a month isnt long enough for you to be safe, heck a year probably isnt long enough. IF they came after you once, you're probably still on the " Intend to grab" list, but, just spitballing here, they might have other targets in mind before settling scores with you. As For who i answer to, well, I'm basically below everyone, I have to do as I'm told. Get them coffee, get them the tv remote, get them breakfast, that sort of stuff. Pretty much everyone answers to Coxon, so I'd say Coxon is my ultimate boss, besides the big boss of course. Why all the questions? Just thinking about stuff to talk about? " Bianca said " Alright, I've told you what I'm here for, lets hear about you. ' Bianca said "Or well, we can keep playing video games. We have world of Dance and the terrible tie-in movie you mentioned. We could play Scarlet Glove if only to laugh at the bad design bad levels and bad voice acting. So, you have a choice- talk about yourself or go back to video games. "
-
Sorry about the coffee everyone, but this place isnt exactly 5 star. or even 1 star, for that matter.' Marita said. She turned to the computer Soren had provided, many of the keys had been rubbed down to the point where you could barely see the letters , W, B S X and Z were the only letters that were completely visible.all the others were partially to completely rubbed off. " well it's not the worst computer I've ever used Soren' She said trying to clean off as many of the stains as she could with a napkin. " But it will have to do. I wont ask what you had to do to get it. What matters is you got it. Our first task will be finding out as much as we can about Darwins Hope , and hitting it Hard. Axel, see if your friend would be willing to help. If he can get enough Polyethelene glycol to cure us, he can hawk whatever extra he gets his hands on. His business, not ours. What matters is getting clean. IF you can get ahold of him, tell him you have a issue that needs his expertise and that theres a time limit on on it. Day and a half to be precise."
-
Marie spoke up. " Well, we still havent found Rose or Flora, and we need to get both of them back . Marita and I have a LOT of money riding on it, enough to set us all up for the rest of our lives. We'd be willing to split the creds with you guys, and make sure all of you get roofs over your heads. Assuming of course the deals we had with the Purifiers still stands, and after Bullers little science experiment, I have serious doubts about that. It would be safer to assume the deals are no longer valid, and go from there. Which means basically we;ll be looking over our shoulders for the rest of our days until we either die or the Purifiers finally kill us. Cheery thought that. Times like this, I wish I was back at the Black Sheep. Sure there was drugs, the pay was lousy, and the lights often went out but the worst could happen to you there was being pulled on stage and french kissed by a drugged-out female llama. Here, well we could get brutally executed. " Marie said.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 04, 2018, 01:39:25 AM**

Flora turned a slightly lighter shade of fuchsia. "Um, me? I'm...a terrorist," she said lamely, trying to come up with any answer other than 'millionaire pop star on the run' and picking, in hindsight, the worst possible one. "I... really hated the government, and wanted to burn it down. And take it over for the Purifiers." *That's what they were fighting for, right?* "Before that I just lived in the projects, nothing special. Not much to talk about, really."

She wasn't sure why she was lying to the only nice person she'd met in this whole ordeal; to be honest she just didn't want to lose the closest thing she'd found to a friend. Bianca was the first person Flora had encountered who seemed to lack either the will or even ability to ruthlessly dispatch her without another thought. "To be honest, I'm a bit video-gamed out. Could we go somewhere? Maybe see a movie at the mall, girl's night out." *I mean, it's worth a shot...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 04, 2018, 12:51:34 PM**

A Terrorist? Literally, a terrorist?' Bianca sighed " Great, the only person here who doesn't boss me around, blows up buildings for kicks. Bianca, Why did you not answer the Ad that said " Extras for Sunset Speed? " Bianca wiped her brow with her paw. 'I'd need to get permission for you to leave here, Even to run to the nearest French fry place. We're talking from Corxon himself here. If we left without permission and got caught, well, um. me getting "fired" would be the least they'd do to me. Try, Bullet to the back of the head, execution style." Bianca shuddered. Tell you what, you tell me what you want to eat, and I'll go on a run for it. burgers, Fries, Shakes, Maybe Ice cream if I can get back quick enough so its not completely melted." Bianca said " So what would you like? ' She offered.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 06, 2018, 09:00:50 PM**

A chuckle came from the darkest corner of the diner. "You? make it past hospital security? Please... don't make me laugh."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 06, 2018, 10:34:48 PM**

Anne nodded. "I'll see if I can get a hold of Marion," she added.

When the chuckle came from the corner of the diner, her ears immediately pricked up as adrenaline surged through her body. The Shetland Pony exploded to her feet and her nostrils flared as her ears flattened. She looked around in preparation for an attack.

Soren fought the urge to pull out his gun. He'd wait to see what would happen next as he figured whipping out his pistol might cause problems. Even in a shithole like this, gunfighting was not an acceptable activity. Even so, he kept his hand near his pistol.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 06, 2018, 10:40:44 PM**

Out from the shadows came a human wearing a trench coat. "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation." He looked like he'd had heavy augmentation. "Did you even stop to think that security at the hospital would've been increased because of what happened at Lanthae?" The human took a seat across from the group. "I'm also hunting for those responsible for Lanthae's destruction, but I could help you get the antidote you need... for a price."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 07, 2018, 02:57:14 PM**

Emilena wished beyond anything that she had a gun. "Who let the gearhead in? Almaya, is this your doing?" she growled.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 08, 2018, 01:20:56 PM**

On hearing the chuckle and approaching footsteps, Axel sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Goddammit. What is it about us that assholes find so irresistible?" The rat folded his arms and stared as the guy sat down, his eyes flickering red as he scanned the human's upgrades.

He gulped.

Jesus, this guy isn't messing around...

Axel surreptitiously whispered out of the corner of his mouth to Emilena. "I don't like this. He's packing some serious gear in him..."

Clearing his throat, he raised his voice to address the stranger. "Hey, um... guy? I don't know what you think you heard, but me and my friends here are just chilling, enjoying this, er, amazing coffee. We don't know what you're talking about. So how about you get back to, like, stalking chicks or whatever it is you do, and we can get back to our thing, alright?" Axel jerked his thumb to indicate Anne's bulk, his metallic hand reflecting blue from the neon light above the counter. "My friend here might look like a delicate flower, but she packs one *motherfucker* of a punch," he warned.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 08, 2018, 04:37:43 PM**

Marita turned to look the newcomer ' Three things. Its rude to eavesdrop on people, for one. two, NEVER underestimate what people are capable of. Look at General Custer. Underestimated Crazy Horse, got slaughtered as a result. And Three, don't be an asshole. We dont know you from Adam, nor do you know us . " She took a look at him, noticing the heavy Augmentation . ' as for security at hospitals , you'd have to be an utter moron not to think its been tightened up significantly. We KNOW its been tightened. Significantly. " She sighed.

"Now, normally, first meetings warrant introductions. Name, occupation, things of that nature. We'll start with that. That, and precisely how you are able to get your hands on Polyethlene Glycol? its usually only available at hospitals, at least the good quality drugs are . There's street stuff but its so diluted and frankly mixed with so much other stuff that its effectiveness is basically zilch. ' Marita said. " Lets start with your name first. What is it, and what did you do in Lanthae? "

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 08, 2018, 07:08:48 PM**

"You can simply call me 'Awe'. you've probably heard of me." Awe looked around as if he were scanning the face of everyone in the room. "I have broken into higher security areas than a mere hospital. So I can help you get in and out without being noticed, since that is my thing after all." Awe walked forward and sat at the table next to the group. "Now shall we discuss a price?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 08, 2018, 11:26:05 PM**

For once, Soren had nothing to say to the cop but he shot an icy glare at Emilena that all but said, *Don't blame me for everything*.

Anne scanned over the man. She wasn't liking her chances, even if she cracked the rather heavy looking flowerpot with the tacky fake plant next to her over the Augment's head. That and unscrewing her horn would be a dead giveaway to what she was planning. That said, she tried listening in to the new person's augments to see if they were transmitting or receiving anything. She shot a sidelong glance at Marita. The Shetland mare's muscles tensed as she awaited a reaction. She knew that mouthing off to the wrong person ended with a trip to the hospital or morgue...and Marita had just done so.

Upon Awe's response, Anne relaxed slightly. "Sorry, don't know anyone by that name," she said. She then folded her hands on the table. "

Soren shook his head indicating that he didn't know anyone named "Awe".

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 08, 2018, 11:40:22 PM**

"Well I must say I am surprised." Aw shook his head. "Most in this city know me. I worked for a rather large corporation that happens to help fund to hospital here." Awe took his left shoe off and twisted his foot around and scratched his back the funny thing was his feet seemed to be more ape like than human. "And I am quite familiar with their security procedures." He moved his foot and leg back down and put his shoe back on.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 09, 2018, 11:09:26 AM**

We're not originally from here ' MArita said ' awe, is ot? Well Awe, it is.. nice to meet you. As For money or creds, well we're a bit short in the money departmentat the moment . this is more in line of the ' favors" department, You help us get clean, we'll repay you later when you need help with something" marie spoke up I dont think hes the 'do favors' type Marita " marie said " Its creds , or nothing. Tell us what amount you want, and as long as its reasonable, and you're wiling to accept installments, we'll pay it. I think We have something like 3000 creds on us, all told. ' Marie said. " SO How much do you want, Mr Awe? We need to get clean, and we need to do so within the next 30 hours or so, or we're toast. you have anything for achylsalts? because more than of few of us got jabbed with it , and we need treatment for it, pronto. Hence, the hospital>"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 09, 2018, 05:04:05 PM**

Emilena narrowed her eyes. She'd heard of Awe. He showed up on several lists of high-profile vigilantes the Seryet PD wasn't too happy with. Emilena had repeatedly tried to get Lily to agree to target him, but Lily had always overridden her vote to keep eliminating serial killers.

For now, she let her teammates do the talking, but if push came to shove she'd vote to keep him around. Assuming she could survive this whole Purifier situation, there were several different ways she could benefit from having insider information on the abilities, actions, and recent locations of a wanted Augment.

"Just...some sort of chicken salad and diet soda. No fries. See you soon..." Flora's heart sank as Bianca left. She couldn't decide if she was more sad about losing Bianca's company, or that she didn't get a chance to escape by accompanying Bianca on the food run.

"Sorry about that..." Kintoki yawned as he returned from the back rooms, where Flora wasn't allowed to go. "Still on the couch? Have you moved since I last saw you?"

"Depends, are we counting just in person, or whenever you're spying on me through the security system?" Flora growled.

"Wow, who stuck a bee up your bonnet?" Kintoki rolled his eyes playfully. "I do not *spy* on you, that'd be a violation of your privacy. I was just gonna ask if you wanted me to cook something. Haven't seen you eat since yesterday."

"No, just leave me alone." Flora folded her arms and turned the game on just to ignore him. "I'm on a hunger strike."

"Suit yourself. That is just the sort of thing an android would say~" Kintoki joked, returning to the back rooms as the fur on Flora's neck bristled.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 09, 2018, 09:40:38 PM**

"1500 creds call it a discount." Awe replied folding his hands. "Or shall we start the haggling? Or, if my price is fine we can get the achylsalts you need."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 12, 2018, 04:26:14 PM**

1500 is fair" marita said ' we need the medicine, more than money. after all, creds arent any good to us if we're dead. Which, Actylsalts have a very good track record of killing their victims in VERY unpleasant ways, and very quickly as well. Hence our rush and desperation." Marita said.
_ " Salad and Diet Coke. Fine. I'll throw in dessert as well, this place has a great hot fudge sundae.' Bianca' s said as she left to do the food run. ' She was allowed to leave on these food runs, whenever some of the guards wanted a burger, they sent her. That was one of the ways Bianca had ingratiated herself to the group, by basically being a food gopher. She was allowed to keep any unspent creds, which slowly adde up over time, to where she probably had a couple hundred creds on her. the fry place was close by so that there was a good chance she would be there in back in less than 15 minutes, assuming the staff there was competent at their jobs.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 14, 2018, 05:02:23 AM**

Axel sighed. He trusted this Awe guy about as much as he could throw him... which, judging from Awe's size and Axel's experience of throwing things, wasn't far at all. *But it looks like I'm outvoted. And it's true we need to get this shit out of our system. If he can actually help us...*

"Fine. I guess I'm in," he grumbled. "If you creds up front, you're outta luck though. I didn't even have enough to pay next month's rent." Axel leaned forward, crossing his arms on the table and cocking his head at Awe. "So if you *are* gonna help us... what's the plan?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 15, 2018, 01:52:13 AM**

"We should probably try to do this stealthy." Emilena swirled her stir stick in the small black coffee she'd purchased but didn't trust enough to drink. "Or bluff our way in. We've finally gotten the cops off our back, it'd be really great if we could keep it that way, at least for a while." She glanced at Awe. "Though I guess you're the expert. What's your vote?"

(OOC: I'm ready for a time skip to the hospital whenever everyone else is)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 15, 2018, 03:14:45 AM**

"Stealthy is the best approach. Get in quick and quiet and get out." Awe tapped his forehead. "I can interface with the hospital security to corrupt any footage they'd capture of us. That way there would be no evidence we were there."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 17, 2018, 10:46:09 PM**

Anne relaxed as Awe spoke. She sighed. Already, she wasn't entirely trusting him but they had no choice. In a little over a day, they'd all be dead from achylsalt poisoning. Her hears splayed out as she took a breath and exhaled. "Okay, I'm in," she said.

Soren swirled his cup of coffee watching the viscous liquid clinging to the sides and weeping back down into the depths of the cup. "Let's do this."

(OOC - Time skip?)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 18, 2018, 02:12:58 AM**

Emilena poured her coffee out the window. "No objections here," she agreed.

Flora's eyes drooped as she sank deeper into the couch. She'd just watched a full episode of some sort of reality show following dumpster divers, and despite their best efforts she couldn't bring herself to care about their penny-pinching lives. *Oh please. No way in hell somebody just threw out a 2011 Pentium full of bitcoin...showrunners musta planted it there...* she yawned.

She tried to hit the button to switch channels, but accidentally brushed the wrong one and changed the language to German. *Aww crap, how do I get it back to...* she tried to return to the main menu, but all of the channels were different. The default channel was now a German talk show. *Woah, it's not just the language. I can get TV channels from anywhere in the world,* she realized. *I wonder if Coxon has some nefarious reason for needing a cable package that large...*

She clicked left a few times, and gasped in surprise when an entirely different sort of 'package' filled the screen. *Woah. Leave it to Germany to have hardcore gay porn on cable. Hah, you know what...* She raised the volume. *Have fun spying on me now, you little bitch...* she smirked, rolling over sleepily.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 19, 2018, 12:15:00 PM**

Bianca entered the room with Flora’s food , but stopped in her tracks as she saw exactly WHAT the folf was watching “Umm just what the blazes are you watching girl? “Bianca said putting the food down in front of Flora and quickly seizing the remote.”I don’t think Corxon would like it if he came in here and saw us watching a guy-guy-guy three way where they’re all blowing each other.” She began futzing with the remote and got the channels and language back to English and switched the channel to a nature documentary on flamingos.”I got you your food and it should still be warm “Bianca said with a smile.”Look if you really want to do something kinky,I guess I wouldn’t mind trying something with you.You only live once after all”Bianca blushed “This would be my first time doing anything like this though “She stopped as the impact of what she had said hit her.”Or, we could just stick to girls chat.He he”she said she pulled out some fries.”Just had enough left over for some fries” Bianca said

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Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 19, 2018, 03:46:26 PM**

(OOC: Everyone seems on board with a timeskip, so I'm just gonna initiate it)

After a four-hour hike through the seedier alleyways of Seryet, the team emerged into the Airport district just as the "leaving work" traffic started filling the streets. Darwin's Hope appeared down the sidewalk at around the same time their fellow pedestrians began to be dressed in dinner outfits and upper-class evening wear.

"You didn't mention it was gonna be flanked by Homeland Security..." Emilena muttered, noting the department next door to their target. "I hope we can keep the alarm off, or else response time will be almost instant."

Flora was roused from her sleep when Bianca returned. "You actually came back!" she exclaimed. "I didn't think you were gonna come back, nobody comes back except that asshole Kintoki who just spies on me all day." She quickly made room on the bed. "Sorry about the porn, that was to try and annoy Big Brother."

Her heart skipped a beat when Bianca offered to sleep with her. "I...uh..." She mulled it over. "You know what? I really respect you asking me politely. There were these pushy women who worked with the Purifiers, and they kept trying to pressure me into sleeping with them. One even tried to molest me after I said no!"

She smiled and began unbuttoning her shirt. "It's nice to meet someone who respects boundaries. Let's have some fun!"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 19, 2018, 07:58:48 PM**

"Unless we find a way to distract them and draw them away." Awe said. Awe went behind a stack of boxes and changed into a more stealthy suit revealing a bit more of his augmentations before he climbed the side of one of the buildings in the alley. "Do we have any of the plans for the building?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 20, 2018, 02:30:05 PM**

Bianca blushed as Flora began taking off her top. ' Well, i can't speak for anyone else that you've encountered so far, but i don't like it when people push you into things, especially if you are uncomfortable doing so. You have to have a say, right? Its no fun otherwise, you're forced to do whatever the guy or the girl wants, and I can't find any fun when you don't get a say in something." she said as she sat down next to Flora." Those girls were simply being too pushy about getting you to show interest in them. Things like that, can't be forced, it can only work if there is, well, attraction there from both sides.Like I said, i've never done anything like this, and I'll have a better idea about how i feel afterwards. It would be nice if they weren't spying on you, anything you do gets recorded, and I mean anything. I wouldn't be surprised if they watch you in the shower.' Bianca said , shaking her head. "I would be willing to have fun, but we eat first. Don't want the food to get cold, right?"
-
I Have the layout of the Hospital" Marita said to Awe

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 21, 2018, 11:08:14 PM**

"looks like the two of us are going in then to get the meds." Awe commented. "You have the layout I have the stealth."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 22, 2018, 11:21:57 AM**

You lead the way then." marita said ' The rest of you guys will have to pretend to be patients or outpatients. You guys have enough bandages?' Marita asked, as they had decided the best option to avoid too much notice is was to have some fake injuries." there were three staircases" she said turning to awe" On our left, slightly to our right and on the far right. Which one is our best option? " the one on the far right skips the second floor."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 23, 2018, 07:17:46 AM**

"I'm covered in fresh surgical marks," Emilena commented, rolling up her sleeves and revealing her pockmarked forearms. "Get me a hospital gown and I bet nobody would look twice."

(OOC: RP'd with nick via Google Docs)

Bianca blushed as Flora began taking off her top. ' Well, i can't speak for anyone else that you've encountered so far, but i don't like it when people push you into things, especially if you are uncomfortable doing so. You have to have a say, right? Its no fun otherwise, you're forced to do whatever the guy or the girl wants, and I can't find any fun when you don't get a say in something." she said as she sat down next to Flora." Those girls were simply being too pushy about getting you to show interest in them. Things like that, can't be forced, it can only work if there is, well, attraction there from both sides.Like I said, i've never done anything like this, and I'll have a better idea about how i feel afterwards. It would be nice if they weren't spying on you, anything you do gets recorded, and I mean anything. I wouldn't be surprised if they watch you in the shower.' Bianca said , shaking her head. "I would be willing to have fun, but we eat first. Don't want the food to get cold, right?"

Flora shrugged as she tossed her shirt aside. "Fair enough," she grinned, pouring the dressing packet onto the salad and shaking it with the lid tightly fastened. "And Kintoki's a limp dick, don't worry about him. I've never met a more awkward loser. I just do whatever I want and pretend he doesn't exist."

She took a few bites of salad. "Just curious, when you say you've 'never done anything like this,' are we taking complete abstinence for your whole life, or...?" She sipped her soda. "Not to pry, I just want to know what experience level I'm working with here."

I ah' Bianca turned crimson from embarrassment" I've never done it, period, ok? I just haven't met the right person is all. It's not that i didn't WANT to, but i just haven't had the opportunity to really get close enough to someone and feel wanted by someone. Yeah, Yeah, I bet you've heard this sort of speil before, but I tell you it's the Truth " Bianca said,munching on her fries

"Hey, no worries," Flora smiled. "I didn't lose my virginity until I graduated college. Sometimes it's not as easy as everyone else makes it sound."

She gulped. "Um, since we're fully disclosing here, there's something you need to know as well. I'm male-to-female transgender. Pre-op."

" wait a minute. You're not a full-on girl?" Bianca started.

Flora shook her head, her heartrate speeding up. "Nope. Still, uh, 'packing heat.' If that's a problem, I totally understand. We could stick to just oral, I can dimestore lesbian if you'd rather it not get involved."

"Look, you're being honest, and thats fine. I cant really be picky after all.' Bianca shrugged. "It'll take getting used to, I'm sure. Do you wear condoms, and all that?"

"Absolutely. That's a hard rule with me." Flora fished her wallet out of her pants pocket and retrieved a leftover condom from the ones she'd purchased for her night with Amos Black. "Hey, while we have the chance, you want me to teach you how to put one on?" She grinned. "It'll be a useful life skill for your future dates."

"Sure. and after we do that, we could share a kiss ' Bianca said. "Just a regular kiss, to start." she added, blushing noticeably."Sorry, i'm just a bit nervous."
"Well, you came to the right place, cause we're gonna whip you into a ladykiller," Flora wrapped her arm comfortably around Bianca's shoulders. "Rule one: never apologize. You want to be the one taking charge; guys and girls both love that, trust me."

To prove her point, she leaned forward and confidently pressed her lips against Bianca's.

Bianca started as Flora's dark red lips locked with her dark red lips, and for a few moments she passively let Flora kiss her. Flora had soft lips, Bianca thought, and clearly was more experienced in kissing than she was. Finally, Bianca slowly moved her arms around Floras neck, and began returning the kiss. As the kiss lingered Bianca began to be slightly more assertive.

Flora let Bianca take charge, smiling inwardly as Bianca's tongue played with her own. "There we go," she panted. "Now bring your hands into it. Keep testing the waters until they stop you. Once they give you an inch, see if they wanna go for the mile."

Flora laid her hands tenderly on Bianca's breasts. "Me, I don't want you to stop until you've ripped all my clothes off," she whispered breathlessly in her ear.

Bianca blushed at Flora’s frankness. “ You certainly know what you want’ She whispered back “ And I like it when folks know what they want.’ She added.’ Bianca reached out and began caressing Flora’s breasts ‘ Hmm, Good size, good firmness, you’d swear you were born with them.”She said before leaning in close” What do I want? My tongue pushed so far down your throat, I can taste your stomach’s contents ‘ She said with a smirk.

Flora quickly converted her reflexive facial expression into a cough. “That’s...a really good start for a pickup line!” she nodded encouragingly. “We’ll work on that. Later.”

Without further ado she quickly returned the kiss, letting their tongues explore each other’s mouths. Flora quickly slid Bianca’s shirt off, sighing in pleasure as she sank her fingers into the girl’s ample breasts. Flora had been so sexually stymied these past few months, she wasn’t going to let this opportunity slip away.

Bianca eased her tongue fully into Floras mouth, and focused on the kiss, She felt the soft caress of Floras hands against her breasts, periodically feeling Flora ease off her clothes until she was now fully nude. Bianca was enjoying this , and letting Flora , as the more experienced of the pair, do as she pleased. Bianca caressed her tongue against Floras and nibbled on Flora’s lips as the kiss lingered.

Flora returned her advances passionately, grabbing Bianca by the shoulder and backside and tumbling both of them onto the bed. Flora pressed her naked body against Bianca’s, relishing the tender feeling of finally letting her guard down and just being with someone.

After fifteen more minutes of fooling around, Flora broke the kiss and tore the top off the condom packet. “You sure are good at this for a virgin,” she grinned warmly. “Maybe you won’t even need my help putting on the condom, you might be a natural.”

“Well I’m not a natural.” ‘ Bianca said fumbling with the package and dropping it, the sight of flora above her being a major distraction. She reached up to caress Flora’s face.”You’ve got all the experience in this get together. The odds of you getting me pregnant on a first encounter are close to nil anyway, I had my period about 2 days ago. “ Bianca said. ‘Then again, karma has a way of slapping you in the face, am I right?”

"After the luck I've had recently? Sorry sister," Flora shook her head. "I gotta insist on protection."

And fuck, she felt like she was going to pop already. Not content to wait any longer, she grabbed the packet and put the condom on herself. "You'll do fine, don't worry," she whispered in Bianca's ear, mounting her and easing in slowly. "Just warn me if I'm hurting you..."

Bianca reacted by kissing Floras passionately on the lips and holding it as she felt the folf move around inside of her. Bianca felt the bed underneath her as well as the pressing of Flora against her from above. Bianca’s breasts bounced off of Flora’s as the pair made love, although given Bianca’s inexperience, the lovemaking would not last very long, already Bianca felt herself rising towards her peak.

Flora was in a similar state. She knew she was pent-up from the sexless and harrowing last few weeks she’d suffered through, but not *this* badly. It felt like only a few minutes had passed, but her orgasm quickly roared up and she groaned helplessly as it coursed through her with just a few more thrusts. “Fuck...sorry, I...normally last longer…” she gasped, cheeks flushing red with unexpected shame. “Are...you there yet, by any chance?” She quickly pulled out and switched to manual stimulation, suspecting her partner still needed some help.

" i'm.. Really close ' Bianca said in a ragged voice. " Like, another minute, tops. This is something that I'm going to have to get used to, if this is going to be a thing between us. IF not, and this was just a one time thing, where we simply made love for the hell of it, then how long I last before climax doesn't matter. After this is over, I am going to need some time to wrap my head around all of this.You shouldn't feel ashamed, at all. This is on my end, figuring out things about myself " Bianca said.

"Don't worry about any of that," Flora smiled. She massaged Bianca's inner thighs. "Just lie back and relax." After setting a rhythm with her fingers, she nestled her head between Bianca's legs and brought her lips and tongue in on the action. *If I'm going to be the bad lay in this hookup, I'm at least going to make sure she comes away satisfied,* she thought to herself with conviction.

Bianca tensed as Flora began to stimulate her ' Gods, i'm CLOSE' she moaned, gripped the bed sheets with her claws as she reacted to Flora. ' Bianca quickly hit her peak and sprayed Flora in the face with her juices ' Oh, God!" Bianca said turning beet red with embarrassment " Flora I'm so sorry! I Just couldn't hold it in any longer! You can tell this is new to me" She said in a small voice.

Flora, for her part, couldn't stop from laughing out loud. "Well, at least we both embarrassed ourselves," she rolled over and collapsed beside Bianca on the bed. "We'll both get better," she assured her partner. "No pressure, no worries."

After a quick trip to the bathroom to clean herself up and dispose of the condom, she sighed as she collapsed back onto the bed and sank into the covers. "And most of all, no rush. After all, I don't think I'm going anywhere soon. Don't know how your schedule looks, but I'm probably stuck in this apartment for the foreseeable future…"

Bianca went to the bathroom to clean herself off and return to the bed " So, we've got something here, then? Good, I enjoyed that little romp, even if I made a mess of things. For Now, though a nap will both do us good. I'll go on another food run once I wake up, The guards outside will probably want the mega-burger from the place two blocks over. I'll get you a drink and we can split it. Good night Flora ' Bianca yawned as she snuggled up against the pillow and close to Flora.

"Good night?" yawned Flora. "It's barely afternoon! I'm not going to sleep, I'm gonna...hmmm…" She tried to decide what she would do instead, but she kept getting distracted by riding the post-orgasm high. It was so nice to feel *happy* again, she'd almost forgotten it was even possible. She was actually pretty content to just lie here against Bianca…

Before she even realized it, she'd drifted off to sleep.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **July 24, 2018, 01:46:15 PM**

Looking between the hospital and the government building nestled against it, Axel crossed his arms, his face creased anxiously. "I dunno... maybe it's safer to keep someone on the outside? You know, as a lookout?" He blinked around at the group then raised his hand. "I volunteer. Hospitals kinda creep me out anyway."

Pushing his twisted ear flat against his head, the rat pulled up his hood then pointed a finger at Soren and Emilena as he drew out a stale-looking cigarette from his pocket. "I got your numbers. If anything looks, ah, fishy I'll call."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 26, 2018, 07:03:25 PM**

"Good idea," We'll have one stay outside to keep watch, Marita and I will go in the back and get the meds everyone else grab a gown and go in as patients." Awe said. "I will also take care of the security tapes."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 26, 2018, 07:56:04 PM**

The gowns are handed ou by hospital staff emilena ' Marita said " everyone of you will get a gown once you check in." Marie had bandaged a cut on her arm, that she had gotten from climbing down a decrepit starch, it had collapsed on her as she slid down. " Lets go everyone. the stage is set."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 26, 2018, 11:13:35 PM**

“Stay safe, Axel.” Following Awe into the hospital, Emilena took the proffered hospital gown and slipped out of her clothes. She debated leaving them behind the same dumpster as Awe, but experience taught her that this team never seemed to leave a building in the same way as they’d entered. Plus there wasn’t anything particularly valuable for her to come back for, since she’d spent the last of her credits balancing the hotel room.

“I don’t think we’re checking in, Marita,” she replied as she chucked her old clothes out the window and directly into the dumpster. “We’re just sneaking in, stealing stuff, and getting out. The fewer interactions and alibis we give to people, the better.”

After donning her gown, she peered cautiously under the door into the hallway. They were deep in the recesses of the hospital, where only medical personnel and current patients would be found, and for the moment the hallway was clear. “How about you, Almaya?” She offered her hand in case he needed help climbing inside. "You disguising as a doctor, or patient, or what?”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **July 27, 2018, 01:01:58 AM**

Soren carefulyl climbed onto the dumpster and slithered in through the window. Anne's stocky frame posed a bit of a challenge though. Instead, she opted to grab the window and yank it straight down, forcing it open further than it was designed to do so. Even so, it was a tight squeeze.

The scent of disinfectant and cleaner hung in the air. Luckily, this was the rear where all the laundry and other logistical parts of Darwin's Hope was located. Even so there was a message for a "Doctor Gern to the trauma department" that came out of the overhead speakers.

"We'll go as doctors," Anne said as she filched two bundles wrapped and sealed scrubs from a clean linen cart. She tossed one to Soren and hastily ripped open her own package.

Soon, she and Soren were clad in the dull green scrubs that characterized the medical personnel of the hospital.

Anne then sent a single message out to Axel using her horn: *We're in*.

Soren adjusted his slightly loose scrubs. He looked and noticed that his gun wasn't visible. He had to admire the Shetland mare's foresight in choosing an outfit that was large enough to hide his weapon but not so large it aroused suspicion. "Okay, now what?" he whispered as he looked at Awe and Emilena.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 30, 2018, 08:08:27 PM**

"Emilina and I will go round the back and sneak in. I'll disable security once we're round the back the rest of you go in as patients." Awe looked to emilina. "Sound good?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 30, 2018, 09:18:08 PM**

"Let's do this." Emilena nodded. "Lead the way."

She followed Awe through the hospital, taking cues from him since he was better trained in stealth than her. At least her bare feet let her walk as silently as she liked.

(OOC: If you ever want to take control of Emilena during their travels, f-22, you can have her silently do things that Awe commands)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 30, 2018, 11:50:06 PM**

(OOC: Okay)

Awe lead the way across the street and once again climbed up the side of the building once they reached the shadows again. Awe silently lead the way before seeing a camera and motioning for Emilena to stop. Emilina stopped as instructed and watched as Awe put his hand on the camera.

In the control room the camera view became static for a few moments before returning back to normal. Awe signaled Emilina to follow again and the pair continued on their way. "Now that the security system is hacked so we don't show up all we need to do is avoid any security guards."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 31, 2018, 03:38:17 AM**

"If I'd known we were going to cross the street, I'd have grabbed a hospital gown that cinched in the back..." Emilena muttered, creeping through the security camera's line of vision.

At one point, they heard a door open up ahead and Emilena dove into a supply closet as a guard walked through a hallway perpendicular to their own. "Owww..." she grumbled, rubbing her shin after banging it on a supply box labeled *pectoral vasculators*. "Oooh, what are these?" she whispered, eyes lighting up. "Are they valuable?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **July 31, 2018, 07:49:52 PM**

"Hmmm?' Awe looked over to what emilena asked about. "Yes. they're quite valuable. In fact they're used to restart circulation after DHCA surgery."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 31, 2018, 10:46:38 PM**

"Well in that case, I'm sure they won't miss just one." Emilena delicately slipped one out; it looked like a thin white patch and fit snugly in her gown's breast pocket. "What about weaponry?" she asked, eyeing the medical tape and other assorted office supplies. "I bet I could fashion a spiked club out of those needles, magazines, and duct tape. Or at worst, I could quickly turn that wire into a garotte."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 01, 2018, 12:56:44 AM**

Soren opened a supply closet. Seeing as he and Anne looked like hospital staff, no one paid any heed to them. He quickly browsed through the shelves. Inside were bandages and various ointments for treating burns and superficial injuries but not what they came for. Seeing as no one was present, he swiped some bandages and ointments and pocketed them.

Anne was looking through a crash cart. One of the passing nurses complemented her on the assidiousnesss of checking the supplies. Little did he know that the mare was actually looking for drugs.

She found a syringe of temazadraline -- a synthetic norepinephrine analog -- that was used to treat shock...and abused for its ability as a performance enhancing drug. She pocketed it and continued digging through the supplies.

"Damn it," Soren muttered. "Where to they keep this shit?" He sighed as he tossed a sterile stitching kit back into the closet.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 02, 2018, 10:19:31 PM**

'Possibly," Awe replied. "You could also use sleeping pills or put whoever you want in a simple sleeper hold."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 03, 2018, 12:40:27 AM**

Since they didn't have all day, Emilena settled for the garotte, creating the handles by bisecting a firm sponge. "Ready when you are," she nodded, keeping her new weapon hidden in her clenched fist.

(OOC: Demonstrated with dental floss, (https://imgur.com/a/v8fH7PF) but Emilena would be using much-stronger multifilament surgical thread and quadruple-hitch knots)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 03, 2018, 03:12:50 PM**

Marita sighed as she looked around. ' Well, its not in this room. I'm guessing they store it with the more potent drugs' She said to Awe. " any idea where that might be? Perhaps the second floor?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 05, 2018, 09:27:50 PM**

"Most likely," Awe replied. "We'd have to slip past the nurses station there to get to it."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2018, 08:50:09 PM**

' thats going to be tricky. We'd have to pass as staff to get through there" Marita said."OR pretend we are family going to visit a patient. lets do the latter. We can pretend that we;re lost and looking for the roomn our family member is in."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2018, 09:08:54 PM**

"You're the best dressed to pull that off," Emilena remarked to Marita, glancing at Awe's catsuit and her own hospital gown. "I only see one Nurse in there, just insist she show you the way and that'll clear the route for the two of us."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 08, 2018, 12:11:59 AM**

"True, that is one way." Awe noted. "I could also slip through the vents since I'm flexible enough to do so."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 08, 2018, 12:48:04 AM**

"Well, one of you bloody go do it already," Emilena shivered in the drafty supply closet, "because if I walk in there, I'm choking that bitch to death!"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 10, 2018, 09:27:57 PM**

Awe took the grate off the air vent. "Well, get going you two distract her while I go through the vents to get the meds!" Awe crawled fully into the vent disappearing from sight.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 10, 2018, 10:45:09 PM**

Marita approached the nurse at the desk ' Excuse me mam, I'm looking for my friend Anne, I believe shes been out into one of the rooms on this floor, but I'm not sure which one. Could you help me locate her please? Poor girl broke her Horn implant and she's scared about complications from repairing it" Marita said, " and i thought I would visit her and cheer her up. Any help you could give me would be appreciated."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 10, 2018, 11:17:08 PM**

The nurse glanced at her computer. "Well, if her problem involves a cybernetic implant, she'll be in Augmentics. You got off the elevator too early. Let's get you over there!" the nurse beamed cheerily and led Marita to the elevators.

Once she and Marita were gone, Emilena slinked over to the computer. She quickly clicked through inventory pages looking for where the achylsalts would likely be kept. *There we go!* They'd be in the poison control center on the 2nd floor. After some searching she located the supply closet where they were stored.

Now she just needed to transmit this info to the others. Lacking any better options, she hit the intercom button. "*Dr. Awe and Dr. Soren, please report to the poison control center, supply closet 9. Dr. Awe and Dr. Soren, please report to the poison control center, supply closet 9.*"

After registering a no-show appointment for Anne Doe in Augmentics (just in case Marita found herself in trouble), Emilena almost set off for the poison control center herself...but an idea gave her pause. *You know what...* She scheduled herself an immediate upcoming appointment in dermatology. *Let's get these mysterious wounds checked out by a professional...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 11, 2018, 12:31:38 AM**

Awe heard the announcement from the vents and made his way to the poison control center and removed the grate from the vent there upon arrival. He crept slowly sticking to the shadows slipping a miniature camera and checked to see if the coast was clear before he continued his way to the supply closet.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 11, 2018, 12:44:40 AM**

The announcement was heard through out the hospital. Soren hoped that there wasn't really a doctor with the surname of "Soren". If there was, their plan was done for.

"That's our cue!" Soren whispered, nudging Anne. The mare was partway through rummaging a pile of IV bags when she was nudged.

"Finally," Anne muttered as she shut the door and headed to the main lobby of the hospital. As usual, it was crowded with visitors and the gift shop and cafeteria were busy with activity seeing it was the middle of the day.

Soren scanned the directory on the wall and found poison control. He hit the button for the elevator and waited for it to open. When it did, the visitors gave him and Anne priority, seeing as they were both dressed as medical staff.

When the doors slid shut and the elevator began moving, the Human let out a breath. This was shaping up to be an easy task.

Soon, the elevator arrived at the floor, which was painted in calm green and blue tones in an attempt to make the sterile halls slightly more inviting. The beeping of various monitors permeated the entire floor.

"There," Anne said as she pointed to a supply closet that was helpfully labeled with the number nine. She then tried the door. As was standard protocol, it was locked. "Damn it," she muttered.

Soren racked his brain on how to proceed. Breaking the door down was an obviously bad idea but then again, maybe he could play the "lost my ID" angle. He approached a nurse on duty.

"Excuse me," he said. "I'm Doctor Soren and I was ordered to report to supply closet nine. And I can't get in because I dropped my ID."

The nurse, a sour looking Anaconda flicked out his tongue in annoyance and slithered out from behind the station. "Damn new docs," he muttered. "Up to date on the newest medical science but couldn't find their own asshole without an anatomy textbook."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 11, 2018, 01:39:17 AM**

A few minutes later, Emilena was sitting patiently on a hospital bed when a handsome Tiger doctor walked in. "Hello, Ms. Verze?" He checked a clipboard. "Hmm. The nurse didn't fully fill this out. It just says here you came in for 'unexplained cuts and bruises?'"

"That's correct, doctor." Emilena held an arm out. "I keep waking up with these, and I can't figure out where they come from. My partner insists I'm not hurting myself in my sleep."

"Hmmmm." The doctor whistled softly when he examined the sheer volume of scar tissue dotting her arm. "Might I ask your line of work?"

Emilena yanked her arm back. "Don't worry about the scars. I'm a...retired soldier. It's the fresh cuts I'm interested in."

"Hmm." The doctor frowned. "Well, since it seems to be sleep-related, I'd probably request a polysomnogram. You'd sleep here overnight, we would attach some wires to your head, fingers, and chest, and in the morning we could go over your results."

Emilena fidgeted. "I'm not sure I have time to stay here that long. Do you have anything faster?"

The doctor sighed. "We could check the cuts themselves with a dermal ultrasound, I suppose. I'd recommend simply scheduling the sleep study for a later date."

"Let's do the ultrasound today, and I'll come back when I have more time..." Emilena bit her lip. Soren seemed to be right about the ease with which this hospital treated patients. If she caught a break in the future, she might even be able to return to get that polysomnogram.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 11, 2018, 01:56:07 AM**

Awe made a quick stop grabbing a lab coat before he approached the door to the supply closet found it was locked and leaned against the wall waiting for Soren to arrive.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2018, 11:17:21 AM**

Marita was led to room 17in the Augments section and invited to sit down and read some papers while waiting for her " friend' " any idea how your friend broke the Implant? ' Asked the nurse. " Accident at home, unfortunately. She was trying to repair something- i think a wobbly wall shelf,-when it toppled over onto her head and broke off a big chunk of her horn. Fortunately I live on the floor below and I heard her cry out in pain so I rushed up there to check in on her. Horns , once broken are really hard to repair, its not like fixing a plate or a coffee cup, where you can just superglue t back on. and then theres the expense, Anne told me her horn cost like 75000 creds, it was NOT cheap' Marita said ' and the dear girl might have had a concussion too, shes been a bit wobbly since the accident. Hopefully you can get her fixed up, We had a Dinner outing planned on Centralia street, there's this very nice bistro place, shes been raving to me about, for like 10 straight weeks. We finally got a reservation for this evening, normally reservations fill up in like 20 minutes but this time we grabbed one. And then this happens' Marita shrugged her shoulders. " Bad luck, huh? well we get our fair share of patients like that. Depending on how bad the implant is broken, We should be able to repair it in a couple hours. IF everything goes well she'll be out in time to get to that bistro place ' The Nurse said

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **August 20, 2018, 11:11:05 PM**

Soren let out a quiet breath as the door was opened. "Here," the nurse said as he pushed the door open. "Next time, keep track of your ID cards."

The nurse then slithered back to his station. Soren entered and held the door open for Awe.

"All right," he said. "Now let's get what we came for and get out before someone catches on," he whispered.

The head nurse in the Augmentics section got the message from Emilena. Seeing as it was from the hospital network, she didn't think anything of it. She then headed out to Room 17.

"Excuse me," she said. "But I just got word from the front desk check in that 'Anne Doe' did indeed check into the hospital but she did not show up for triage to be properly seen."

The nurse who was with Marita nodded and sighed. "Well, we can't go and force her to see us. Besides, we have other patients to see."

The head nurse then turned to Marita. "I'm sorry, Ma'am but your friend has decided to refuse medical treatment. Now, while she can do so and it is her right as she is of sound mind, I have to state that by law, we are not liable for any injuries or death that she sustains as a result of doing so. However, for recordkeeping purposes, we will have you sign a wavier saying you will not pursue legal charges against us in the event of anything happening to her."

The other nurse left to get the required paper work.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 20, 2018, 11:18:45 PM**

Awe nodded his head and followed Soren inside. "Yeah the quicker we can get what we came for and get back out the better."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 21, 2018, 01:31:06 AM**

After the dermal ultrasound, the doctor showed ‘Eunice Vezde’ the printout. “Sorry, ma’am, can’t tell you anything more than that the cuts are healing nicely. Beyond that, if you don’t know where they’re coming from, neither do we.”

Emilena took the printout. “Seriously?”

He shrugged. “I can’t really schedule anything beyond a polysomnogram unless you have healthcare or a payment plan on file.”

“Forget it. Thanks, doctor.” Emilena allowed herself to be led out of the room. Several hallways later, she and the doctor parted ways and she took a quick left turn before reaching the lobby. *Well, if modern medicine doesn't have any ideas, Axel's theory is still my leading guess. I’d hoped at least for a plan on stopping new phantom wounds from happening, but for the time being I'll just have to hope that--*

Suddenly she felt a searing pain in her leg, and she looked down in alarm as blood started staining her hospital gown from the inside. Limping to a nearby urine collection station, she frantically locked the door and collapsed on the toilet. Peeling the bloody gown aside, she watched in horror as a series of straight cuts started appearing on her inner thigh, adding five more letters to the two she’d carved earlier.

HIDEOUT

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 21, 2018, 05:28:54 PM**

Marita sighed ' Dear girl must have left to go home ' Marita said ' I'll have to bring her in another time, my gues is that she's gong to try to reattach the broken part horn herself. Stubborn as an ox, sometimes. just get me the paper and i'll sign it.."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **August 24, 2018, 10:58:51 PM**

Awe was scavenging through the supply closet. "The achylsalts should be around here somewhere," He muttered as he continued searching.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 25, 2018, 05:57:16 AM**

Emilena gritted her teeth and clotted the blood as well as she could with toilet paper, but it quickly became a messy business completely unmanageable with her tools at hand. *Lily could not possibly have picked a worse time to contact me!*

Her leg wouldn’t stop bleeding, and finally she gave up on saving her only article of clothing and wrapped the gown tightly around her new wound to stem the flow. *I’m not leaving out the door now…* she flashed a glare as somebody’s shadow briefly passed under the door.

With few other options, she tested the ceiling and found that the linoleum tiles were removable. Even more, there was a pretty healthy space between the floors. After washing her hands in the sink to avoid leaving bloody handprints, Emilena hoisted herself into the dusty mess of wires that occupied the crawlspace. Balancing her center of gravity, she kept her body weight spread out and her hands and knees on the borders between tiles. It seemed safe enough to crawl on at least long enough to reach a different room…

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **August 26, 2018, 10:33:35 PM**

((Rejoining on LBT Rations' invite! Annnd that's the Model J's reference picture: https://goo.gl/images/gzmK3B))

Tony Stracci had been out of contact with the group for quite some time. He'd temporarily provided them a lift at the start of this, but things were getting serious once more. "Shit..." the ferret whispered, tearing off the note he'd scribbled earlier to himself on his fridge. He was pretty much alone these days, his father having passed away a year ago, leaving him a new house, some of the "legitimate businesses", and his massive automobile collection. The name of a hospital in the city was scrawled upon the note, and he committed it to memory; he knew where it was, having driven past it plenty of times.

They'd need a vehicle... but the problem (it wasn't so much one in his own mind) was he didn't have any of those crappy and under powered electric cars... he only had his gasoline burners down in the massive underground garage that rested beneath the manor (having been carved into the cliff the house rested on). His claw tapped on the marble counter top, his lips pursed, his brow furrowed, and a thoughtful frown on his features as he pondered how best to go about this.

He really didn't have much time to waste... he knew they'd need transportation, and need it soon. Looking off to the side, he pondered his ability to provide this... he'd need a big car... 7 passengers at least... but he hated having to bring one into these escapades... even if he had previously reinforced most of their bodies with much stronger compounds.

Smirking, he figured he'd just suck it up and take one of his father's most prized possessions out: the 1934 Duesenberg Model J. But first things first; he needed a weapon. Pushing himself off from the counter, he strode through a few rooms, the carpet padding under his feet before he reached a cabinet, sliding his thumb downwards along the electronic reader, which blinked blue and opened up the doors. Reaching in, Tony pulled out a Smith & Wesson M&P M2.0, shoving it into his waistband along his back, and grabbed a laser pistol for good measure.

Hoping he wouldn't need more than that, he shut the cabinet and moved to the elevator that led down to the garage. Closing his eyes during the ride and trying to steel himself for this, he waited patiently until the elevator doors swished open, and the lights snapped on before he reopened them. Everywhere chrome, bright paint, and exotic metal gleamed. The sight always brought a smile to his face, as he never took it for granted... never.

Stepping out and walking with his paws behind his back, his shoes thudded in the concrete room before he came to a stop in front of the massive Model J. Once America's most expensive and premier car (a vehicle that could cost $25,000 in an era when a Ford was $800), it was painted in a red on its front that met a semicircular black painted section that continued all the way to the back. Louvers on the engine cowling gave the car a swept back, rakish appearance, and the hood ornament stuck right at him like an arrow. Everything about this car denoted luxury, speed, and power. Smile growing, he admired the fine automobile for a moment, knowing that with its powerful straight-eight engine, it could outmatch many modern cars (once again, those electrics whirring along on the highway weren't much of a match for this beauty) with its torque and speed.

Heading around to the driver side door, he opened it up, and sat himself down on the leather seat. OK... time to start this beast up. Sliding the spark advance lever to the halfway position, he pulled out the choke, then turned the key in the ignition to generate electrical current to the engine. He then reached for the chrome starter control, and pulled it all the way out from the dashboard, listening as the starter motor began to turn over, kicking the straight-eight into life with no problems whatsoever; it was American engineering at its finest.

Pushing the starter and choke back in, he advanced the spark lever all the way down and smirked, nodding with satisfaction. Releasing the parking brake, he shifted into 1st gear to get the car rolling, then almost immediately shifted into neutral and then 2nd as he turned right and began driving for the garage's exit. The car slid smoothly along, the ferret seeing the big door rise up into the ceiling as he drove under it, then gunned the engine a bit to move up the hill and out into the driveway. Making a slight right again, he increased speed, listening to that throaty hum as he began winding his way down the road that led into the city.

"Well... I'm on the way." he said to himself, flipping his flat cap on his head as he took the westbound freeway, increasing speed (though not wanting to show off, he kept it in the slow lane despite his speed) so that he could be there in 15 minutes tops. No more wasting time... it was time to get back into the fight...

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 02, 2018, 05:51:26 PM**

"Goddamnit!" Soren shouted as he quickly scanned up and down a shelf that he swore he had dug through previously.

Anne yanked open a drawer and hastily looked dug through the syringes. "Shit!" she exclaimed. "They're not here!"

Soren looked at the closet. It wasn't too much of a mess given that everything was labeled and thus, easy to look through. Still, they didn't bother with precisely putting things back in the right place. "The only place I could think of next is the pharmacy," he said. "And it's not like we can go raid that area."

Anne had a sudden spark of inspiration. "We can't go raid it but we can get them to bring stuff to us."

The mare then looked off into the wall but she was actually sending a message to Marita's phone: *Marita. Use the system to send a request for antidotes for a severe case of acute achylsalt poisoning.*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 02, 2018, 06:47:10 PM**

Gt It' marita texted back after signing the documents for " anne" then headed out of the room she was in. fortunately no one was at the desk where the intercom was ' and so she turned it on " Attention all personnel: l We have a pair of patients , John and Jane Doe with acute Achysalt poisoning. We need all Antidotes in stock for treatment, and time is of the essence, Bring them to the Augments Section, rooms 19 and 20. Thank you"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 02, 2018, 08:05:01 PM**

I swear, if I'm the one to fuck up this stealth mission, Soren will never let me hear the end of it…

Emilena had reached the elevators by crawling as slowly as she dared in the wire-filled gap between the upper floor and the ceiling. Her original goal was to take the elevator to the parking garage, but after realizing she was eight floors from the basement but only two from the roof, she decided to take her chance with the roof instead.

After determining the coast was clear, she dislodged the nearest ceiling tile and used it to press the elevator summoning button. The second the doors opened she dropped to the floor, scampered inside and hid herself out of sight of the entrance as fast as possible. She remained plastered against the wall just to be safe as the elevator doors closed and it slowly shambled past one floor...two floors...she sighed with relief when it reached the roof.

"Hey, who are you?" asked a worker, stepping into the elevator from the roof and looking at the naked and bloodstained vulpine in surprise. Emilena quickly swept his legs out from under him and pushed him, sending his head cracking against the metal wall with a sickening thud.

Emilena bit her lip and dragged the man's unconscious body with her onto the roof. *OK, this is still under control…* she told herself. She didn't see anyone in the alleyway behind the hospital except Axel, so she pushed the body over the side, aiming for the dumpster. Her aim was unfortunately off...but the dumpster helpfully blocked the resulting splatter from the street's view. *Worst case scenario, they find the body in* *the morning and think it was a suicide. Best case scenario, Axel comes up with a way to hide it.*

With that problem 'solved', she looked around what seemed to be a depressingly bare-bones rooftop. *We just need to be gone by the time that happens...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 02, 2018, 08:32:15 PM**

As Tony blew down the freeway, the hospital began looming up in the distance. Perfect! He was almost there. As he took the proper exit, he began coasting down the ramp and pushed in the clutch and brake as he came to a stop at the street he needed, exhaling and tapping the wheel a bit, bobbing his head to a song he was playing out in his head, then downshifted to first to get rolling as the light changed and he turned the big Model J onto the proper street.

Immediately shifting into neutral and then second, he cruised along, releasing the big shift lever as he pursed his lips, craning his neck down a bit to look out at the windshield at the hospital. "OK so... let's see..." he said softly, sticking his paw out and lifting his arm at a right angle out the window to indicate he was turning right (not that anyone would probably know that signal anymore), but he moved his Model J into the parking lot and down towards the front entrance, spinning the wheel to turn down to receiving and intakes. "Wait..." he said to himself. "They wouldn't be coming out the front... would they?" he asked himself, the ferret glancing to the doors as he drove on by, shaking his front. "Nah... they'd be somewhere else... but where?" he asked, pulling out a toothpick and jamming it into his mouth as he drove around the lot, receiving a whistle and a thumbs up from someone who was making their way towards the hospital's main entrance. Grinning, he honked the horn twice and waved to the passerby, and then refocused.

"Come on, come on..." he whispered, turning right and beginning to circle the building. He was astutely paying attention to all entrances and doorways, and noticed the alley that backed up to the building. Not seeing Axel though as he was behind the dumpster, as was the body that had just been tossed, he kept going, figuring he'd keep his eyes peeled and just keep circling... he'd see something eventually, and with how noticeable his car was... only his friends would recognize it as significant... everyone else would would just either stare or pay him no mind as he drove around.

Keeping the Duesenberg in second gear, he began making a circuit, briefly contemplating parking, but figuring that'd be pointless as they might be exiting in a hurry. He could be heading in while they were heading out... better to keep his car ready to fly out of here at a moment's notice. The red and black Duesenberg kept up its circular motion, the ferret constantly watching the building and only occasionally flicking his eyes forward to make sure he wasn't about to collide with anything. Twirling his toothpick about in his mouth, he gnashed his teeth briefly as he tensed his body, ready to stop at a moment's notice in case someone raced out he recognized.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 05, 2018, 02:12:11 PM**

The bottle clanked sharply as Axel's foot connected. "*Son of a...!*" Axel jumped at the sudden noise and glared at the offending item as it rolled noisily further down the dingy alleyway, then resumed his nervous pacing, shooting nervous glances towards where the passage opened out onto the street.

Nothing... No sirens, no shooting... "Maybe we're getting better at this," he muttered to himself.

Letting out a long breath, Axel willed himself to calm down and stopped pacing, resting back on the dumpster shoved up against one of the alley walls.

He took a last drag on his cigarette, burned down to a stub, dropped it to the floor and ground his foot against it. He blew out a lungful of smoke.

A change in the light, a brief moment of darkness. On reflex, Axel glanced up.

Then dived to the side, squawking, as a shape slammed down from above onto the corner of the dumpster he'd been resting against moments before. It bounced off, then ended its journey on the alley floor with a crunch.

On his hands and knees, Axel stared in dumb shock at the shape... which he realised numbly was actually a person. "Oh jesus... what the *hell*..." Heart hammering in his chest, Axel slowly picked himself up. The body on the floor was male, wearing some kind of worker's outfit. Somehow, only a little amount of blood was dribbling from the guy's nose... but his forehead was caved inwards, and his neck was at an alarmingly acute angle with a knobbly shape poking up under the side of his neck.

Eyes wide, Axel managed to tear his gaze away from the body and looked up in the direction it had come from, catching a quick glimpse of someone ducking out of sight.

Someone blasted a horn on the street. He flinched, the noise snapping him out of his shock. A glance at the alley's mouth told him nobody had noticed the guy's unfortunate... accident. At least, not yet. *The last thing we need is someone seeing this... Oh jesus, what do I do?!*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **September 05, 2018, 08:13:10 PM**

Awe slammed the cabinet he was searching shut. He took a deep breath and looked to Soren. "Now what do we do?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 05, 2018, 08:16:36 PM**

Emilena shivered as the evening wind sent chills through her fur. The sun had almost set and it was getting too dark to see, but a quick search of the roof confirmed there was still very little to help her get down. No supply closets or toolsheds, no fire escapes.

As daylight faded away, she sighed and resigned herself to the only real option she saw for escaping the stratosphere; the corporate skyscraper bordering the southern side of the building. With one fewer floor than the hospital, Emilena could probably make that jump without fracturing both of her ankles...or missing completely and falling to her death.

She gulped, chose an adequate starting distance and vaulted off the side of the building after a strained sprint. Luckily, it was dark enough that nobody from the streets below noticed as she sailed through the air, hit the faraway concrete roof and rolled out the shock with a pained squawk.

For several minutes, Emilena clutched her feet and waited for her heartbeat to return to a manageable level. She had a secret fear of heights (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341.msg400048;topicseen#msg400048) and had made the mistake of looking down in the middle of her roofhopping stunt. *I am NEVER doing that again!* she promised herself, glad nobody could see her shaking and gasping for air hysterically.

When she finally felt able to crawl, she hobbled forward and tried the door leading into the top floor of the building. Locked, of course. Overall, this roof seemed to have even fewer options than the hospital's. And the exterior walls were smooth and almost entirely glass, no possibility of getting hand or footholds. Unlike the next building over, which had easy-to-climb balconies leading down every floor...balconies that were within jumping distance...

Emilena cursed out loud. *Goddammit fine…* she groaned inwardly. *Maybe one more time…*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 05, 2018, 08:47:46 PM**

As Tony continued his circling, he was making his way back to the alley for the second time; he wasn't in the right position to see Emilena jump to the adjacent building, but as he drove around at the entrance to the alley, this time he did see Axel, protruding from around the dumpster, and slammed the brake and clutch in to bring the car to a sudden halt. Shifting into neutral and setting the parking brake, Tony rapidly exited the Duesenberg and made his way around the big vehicle's front to the alley. "Axel!" he called out. "Axel! It's Tony!" he stayed low as he moved on into the alleyway.

He drew his gun, just in case, but kept it pointed down. "Where's everyone else? And... jesus!" he came to a halt, eyes going wide at the corpse that was splattered on the ground. "What the hell happened?" he asked, confused by the sight.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 05, 2018, 11:18:22 PM**

Anne received the transmission via her horn. "We have to get to rooms 19 and 20 right now in the augments section."

"Why?" Soren demanded.

"I had Marita broadcast a fake code." She then began pushing both Soren and Awe towards the door. "Now come on before someone gets suspicious!"

The Human swore under his breath as he opened the supply closet door. Thanks to the code, the poison control floor was getting ready to receive two patients with severe achylsalt poisoning. As a result, there were doctors and nurses on high alert. A crash cart with an oxygen cylinder was at the ready as they waited for the patients to be transferred to their floor.

"You two!" a doctor called as she saw both Anne and Soren. She motioned them over. "Give us a hand, we got two patients coming in soon! And it's bad!"

A bead of sweat ran down Soren's forehead as he tried to find a way to deflect the request. Luckily, Anne was ready before he was. "We have to get to the augments section, they've requested two staff from the poison control floor."

"Fine. Get going then!"

Anne nodded and quickly ushered Awe and Soren into the elevator and hit the button for the augments floor.

"Thanks," Soren said as he let out a breath he didn't realize he was holding.

"We're not done yet," the mare said. "We have to grab the antidotes and quickly get the fuck out of here. Once they find out that Marita's code was fake, they'll suspect thieves."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 05, 2018, 11:42:07 PM**

Marie had managed to make her way up to the Augments section, upon hearing maritas call, she had made her way to Room 19, and had collapsed onto the bed, looking for all the world like the drug had overwhelmed her. Thanks to maritas code, Marie would be given the Acylsalt antidote as part of the treatment, but the rest of them, would not be so lucky.
-
marita had gotten a quick text from Marie outlying her plan, and she contacted anne through her horn., ' Need to have one more of us pose as a patient. Maries already posing as a female druggie, we need someone to get to Room 20, so that my call looks legit. the quicker you do that, the better.Marita, Out"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **September 06, 2018, 12:42:04 AM**

Awe watched as anne and soren left before going in a different direction. "Should be one of the others posing as a patient," he grumbled to himself. "it'd be easier to fool them with someone who actually needs them."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 08, 2018, 04:27:57 PM**

Axel spun around as he heard the tires screech to a halt on the tarmac. He tensed, preparing himself for a confrontation... but sighed with relief when he saw who was approaching.

"Tony! Shit, I..." He trailed off then shook his head. "I've got no goddamn idea, he just *dropped*... I think I saw someone up there..." Axel blinked, then indicated the wall of the building behind him with a trembling arm. "The others are in the hospital. I've got a feeling this, ah, this wasn't exactly unrelated."

Axel took a breath. "I was keeping a lookout, but, ah, can't exactly do that with this guy here." He glanced at the dented dumpster and hurried across to it, shoving the lid open.

Only to find the dumpster was filled to the top with trash. "*Of course*..." Axel tried to push the crap aside and make a space, but it was no use. He swore and lowered the panel. "No way we can fit him in there."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 08, 2018, 05:08:34 PM**

As Tony looked at the mostly pulverized corpse, he shook his head, quickly assessing the situation. "Put him under it. We don't have time to waste. Even with the garbage truck picking up the dumpster to empty it, odds of them noticing the body are slim as they're usually looking up to make sure nothing's wrong with the dumping. And even if they do... by that time we'll be well clear of here." he advised.

"Come on..." He put his gun back into his waistband behind him, and picked up a part of the body (probably an arm) and began hauling it towards the underside of the dumpster. "That doberman guy... what was his name? Buller? I can't remember... he told me you were all out here and might need a ride so... I brought something powerful and fast." he nodded back behind him towards the Duesenberg, idling at the entrance to the alley. "Once we stash this guy... we gotta get outta here. He looks like a worker and he was probably having a smoke break on the roof... meaning one of our friends most likely tossed him off. He'll be missed for his shift and that'll send the hospital on alert." he informed Axel, still assessing the situation and walking himself through it.

"I hope the others aren't... well in too much trouble. Would HATE to have to actually shoot my way in there. Not looking forward to taking on hospital security." By now, the ferret was pushing the body underneath as best he could with his shoes, trying to get him as up against the building as possible. "With any luck... he'll be mistaken for a dead junkie but... I wouldn't bet on that... anyway... I may keep circling once he's taken care of." he stated.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 09, 2018, 06:08:23 AM**

With a strangled oof, Emilena hit the balcony wall stomache-first and dug her claws desperately into the wood. With the wind knocked out of her she had to drop down to the next level before collapsing on the tin balcony floor and gasping for breath once again.

An ominous clear glass door showed the inside of the apartment itself. The lights were off and the room was pitch-black; Emilena hoped it stayed that way but she didn’t want to give the occupant any additional time to wake up. Dragging herself to her feet, she looked down at the next floor. She was not looking forward to making that climb, especially considering she’d have to gamble on every level whether someone would be awake in their apartment.

She spotted another option as the last of the light left the night sky and a soft green glow clicked on from the courtyard on the connected side of the building. This complex had a gated swimming pool, and if Emilena could scale a few balconies sideways she could easily make the jump.

After a few pauses waiting for specific rooms to go to sleep before she trespassed on their balcony, Emilena dove off the corner of the building and went cannonballing into the heated pool after a harrowing eight-story fall. As she floated slowly into the shallow end, she debated whether she could just stay in the pool for a bit. *Nobody's here, nobody's probably coming, I'm sure the others can handle finding the—*

Suddenly she felt a slight twinge in her shins. Before she could even do anything about it, it spread to her toes. Then up her torso. She suddenly felt very sick. *Oh crap.* Buller's posion was kicking in!

Staggering out of the pool, she limped for the hospital, body slowly becoming more and more racked with pain. She hoped they'd managed to locate the antidote, because time was running out.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 09, 2018, 10:52:17 PM**

I'll go. Anne sent the message to Marita and Awe. Already, her legs were starting to go numb and tingle. A sign of achylsalt poisoning. Thankfully, her incredible drug tolerance kept the effects at bay but she knew that she had only hours to go before she slipped into a coma. The mare gave off a dark chuckle as she took the elevator up with the group; it looked like she wouldn't be faking the signs of acute poisoning. Thankfully it opened into the augments floor.

Anne quickly stripped off her clothes and tossed them into a linen hamper. She then lay down on a gurney. "Quick!" she whispered to Soren. "Get in an IV!"

The Human looked at her with a puzzled look.

"Goddamnit," she muttered. "I'll do it!"

Soren ducked into a supply closet and returned with an IV set that he handed to her. He watched as she got the needle in place and the fluids hooked up. It was reminder that Anne was intimately familiar with injections and assorted medical procedures due to her usage of drugs. "Go!" she snapped as she lay down.

The Human nodded and unlocked the gurney as he rolled it to room 20. "Got our second patient here!" he said. "Poison control confirms that she's got achylsalt poisoning."

Soren watched as the doctors and nurses arrived with the antidote syringes. Already he could feel the creeping numbness spreading from his toes upward.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 10, 2018, 12:52:47 AM**

Marita too was starting to feel the acytsalts start to affect her, she clenched her teeth as her toes began to tingle. Marita figured that she had 4 hours, top, before she was lapse into a coma. Marita slowly made her way over towards the Augmentation room where she had been to see " Anne", a nurse was in the room preparing the bed for a patient ' " I hate to intrude, miss, but I'm not feeling well' marita said. ' I Mean, really not feeling well." The Nurse a cheetah, took one look at her and motioned for her to get into the bed. " Any symptoms?' the nurse Asked, pulling out a clipboard. ' my toes are tingling, like sorta like they're falling asleep. except worse." Marita said as the nurse got an IV ready and hooked her up to it. the Nurse looked at Maritas arms which were starting to change color ' Achylsalts!' the nurse said with a hiss . " I'll put in a call for an antidote. ' When were you poisoned? Or do you not know? " A couple days ago. mugging. The knife the mugger used had something on it. I didnt think anything of it at first, but now ' Marita said. " I'm Maven " ' Well Maven just hold on.. We'll get you the antidote. pronto ' the nurse, whose name was Cleera, said. ' She pressed the intercom. ' Request Achylsalt antidote for room 17, I have a patient here with symptoms of severe achylsalt poisoning. Request Immediate assistance, over."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 11, 2018, 07:19:32 PM**

"Axel?" Emilena staggered into the alleyway from the shadows hugging the opposite building. Her breaths were sporadic and her features were wracked with a sickly pallor. "What's with the fancy car? Is Tony...?" She started when she suddenly noticed the ferret standing beside him. "Oh, it is you! How...?"

She stumbled and clutched her forehead. "Are...uh..." Without further ado, she crumbled to the ground unconscious.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 11, 2018, 09:01:00 PM**

As Emilena wandered into sight, Tony quickly retrieved and raised his gun to challenge her, but lowered it as he recognized the very... naked vulpine. "Emilena?" He asked, surprised by this. But as she collapsed in front of them, he gasped, putting his gun back away behind him as he raced over to her. "Oh goddammit!" he cursed. Kneeling down, he felt for her pulse, finding it, but noting it was weak.

"What the hell happened?" he asked, looking to Axel. "We need to get her in the car! Now!" he instructed. "What are the others doing inside? Are they trapped or... helping out?" he inquired, unsure on the situation as he bent down to start hoisting Emilena up so he could move her to the Duesenberg with Axel's help.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 16, 2018, 11:03:39 PM**

Soren watched as the nurses injected vial after vial into Anne's IV line. He didn't understand half of what they said or the vital signs on the monitor but it sounded like Anne had gotten a *huge* dose of achylsalts. Of course, he was instructed to stay back in the event of the mare suffering any adverse effects. He shot a glance at the Shetland mare; she seemed perfectly lucid and healthy. In fact, she was almost proud of the fact that she had mostly survived a dose of achylsalts that would have killed most others.

A numbness that climbed up his legs was a stark reminder that he was going to be the drug's next victim. He noticed that someone was pushing a cart into room 17 just across from Anne's room. The pharmacy technician was passing over an enormous amount of vials to the nurse in charge.

The Human discreetly slipped out of the room and peered into the room. He noticed Marita on the bed. She too had an IV line in-place. He held a finger to his lips as a sign for the Canine to not say anything. As he watched the vials being passed over and logged, Soren wondered how'd he'd get those vials to Axel and the others. He shot a glance over his shoulder back to Anne's room.
Good, they hadn't noticed him missing yet. In the meantime, he wondered where Awe was. Hopefully, he wasn't causing havoc.

Marie had an IV line inserted and she too, was getting the antidote.

Her phone buzzed with a message sent from Anne's horn: "How do we get antidotes for others?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 17, 2018, 06:31:16 AM**

' Need to find a ' flush shot", which is an inject-able version of the antidote. The drawback is, it knocks you out for 10-15 minutes, longer if you take too much. you'll need to find a place to take it that they will just thank you're taking a nap while you're passed out. Ask for 6 doses of flush shot, claim you have new patients coming in.' Marie texted. . Hurry, we dont have much time. Marie"

_
marita briefly saw Soren, but pretended like she didnt recognize him. the IV and antidotes were starting to take effect, purging her system of the poison. Marita was starting to feel drowsy , a side effect of the medication. " How are you feeling Maven ' Cleera asked looking over her with her clipboard in paw '

Starting to feel better. 'Marita said " good good, you're likely feeling drowsy, its a side affect of the drugs that we've been trying to minimize , you may nod off a few times in the next hour or so, but your body should be cleaned out by the time you wake up. " could I have some water?' Marita asked ' Of course " Cleera said, going over to the sink and filling a medium sized plastic cup from the dispenser. she then walked over and handed it to Marita who began sipping down the water. " let me know if you need anything else, Maven ' Cleera said.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **September 22, 2018, 09:41:15 PM**

Awe wandered through the hospital looking for the others. While looking he overheard a doctor talking to a nurse. "Make sure that Mr. Olivieri gets his shot."

"Olivieri." Awe said to himself. That was the name of one of his targets a major underworld kingpin he'd been looking to get at for a while. He couldn't let this opportunity pass him by and followed the nurse from a discrete distance after he started walking.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 23, 2018, 02:18:41 AM**

(OOC: Skipping my turn since both of my characters are unconscious or asleep)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 23, 2018, 10:30:46 AM**

Anne had been stabilized and the staff had dispersed to attend to the other patients. She watched as Soren entered the room. "Things going okay?" he asked. It was a show to try and make it seem like the Human was a legitimate doctor.

The mare nodded and beckoned him closer. She had no phone but her horn implant had a text-to-speech system that allowed her to receive text messages. "I got a tip from Marie. Grab the injectable antidotes. We'll need six of them."

"What about you?" Soren asked.

"I'll be fine."

The Human nodded and looked over his shoulder. He saw Cleera exiting Marita's room and turning down the hallway. He took that as a signal to open the door and enter. He looked around and spotted the basket full of the autoinjectors for the antidote. He quickly grabbed all three of them and shoved them in the pockets of his scrubs. "Marita," he said. "We're almost done here...though I do wonder where Awe is."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 23, 2018, 12:15:18 PM**

Axel gaped as Emilena collapsed to the floor, snapping out of it at Tony's voice. Hurrying over to her, Axel stooped and grabbed her legs. "They're in the hospital, looking for an antidote to what Buller gave us." He nodded and together they lifted Emilena off the floor, making for the Duesenberg.

"Some guy told us he'd help out, they're... with him now," he grunted. "Got no idea what happened, something... something must have gone wrong... *shit*!" Axel swore as his foot caught and he always went sprawling. *What the hell...*

A strange numb sensation had started to work its way up his legs, his limbs starting to feel like blocks of wood. "Aw crap! We need to get her in the car now!" Reaching the vehicle, Axel and Tony bundled Emilena in none-too-gently. As soon as she was in, Axel slumped against the side. "I think the poison's doing something..." he tried to explain to Tony - but his vision had started swimming before his eyes.

Dragging his phone out of his pocket, Axel tried to focus on the screen... but the image just became a smeared mess. Fighting back nausea, he closed his eyes and held it out. "Tony, call Soren," Axel said slowly, his voice strained and sickly. "Ask him what the hell's taking so long."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 23, 2018, 03:13:49 PM**

As Tony moved towards his car with Emilena and Axel, he noticed Axel nearly trip, and he grunted, looking back to him, and widened his eyes. "Dammit... you OK?" he asked, realizing swiftly there was something wrong with how he was moving... he wasn't moving the way he normally did, even barring his usual clumsiness. And Buller had poisoned them? What was that crafty canine up to? Playing games with them no doubt.

Shoving Emilena into the backseat, he tried to prop her up as much as he could before Axel leaned heavily against the car looking like... oh no... the poison! It had to be the poison! Axel confirmed this shortly after, and Tony shook his head, feeling helpless as he tried to think of what he could do. As Axel fumbled for his phone, the rat seemed to be having problems looking at the screen. Dammit! Dammit!

"Um..." as Axel held the phone out for him, Tony nodded rapidly. "R-r-right! Right!" he agreed. "You get in the car! I'll swing around the front and pick everyone up!" he ordered, running around the massive front of the big Model J as he dialed Soren's number in the phone. "Come on... come on!" he urged quietly, practically throwing himself in behind the wheel of his still idling car. Setting the phone down briefly, he pushed in the clutch and brake, released the parking brake, and shifted into first gear to get the car rolling. As it started to move, he immediately shifted into neutral, then second, and turned around the back of the building picking up the phone again. "Soren?" he asked, hoping he was there.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **September 23, 2018, 07:07:38 PM**

Awe continued following the nurse from a discrete distance. Though coming around the corner he made an immediate u-turn. He looked back down the hall and saw what he presumed the door to Olivieri's room and the police detective in charge of taking him in in front of it. Awe cursed to himself in German and walked away, it wasn't worth getting arrested he'd be able to get the crime boss another day. He started making his way back to the group.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 27, 2018, 07:11:05 PM**

Thats good to hear" Marota said softly ' Drugs are starting to take effect, I'm going to fall asleep in a couple minutes. Make sure everyone gets the antidote in them. Better make sure you take one yourself , so you dont collapse. I wager you're feeling the same effects of numbing feet I was. Its only going to get worse the longer you wait. Emilena and Axel are starting to feel the efects now, I'd wager, if they lose consciousness, they'll slip into a coma within a couple hours. Then, without immediate application of the antidote they'll die. Find, them, get them into treatment, then find a place where you can pass out for 10-15 minutes.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **September 27, 2018, 07:28:20 PM**

Soren moved to catch himself on the doorway as his feet gave out. "Yeah. I'm not sure I have much time left. I'll go find them."

His legs were starting to feel like pillars of concrete but he knew that if he didn't hurry, he'd be dead in a few hours.

The Human hoped that the three would be enough to remove the achylsalt from their systems. Anne, Marita and Marie already had IV lines in place and the stronger antidotes administered. All he had was the three autoinjectors.

Soren immediately ducked out one of the stairwells and quickly headed down the stairs. Thanks to the effort driving up his heart rate, the achylsalts were circulating faster through his body.

Several times, he nearly tumbled down the stairs as his legs gave out but he managed to stumble out into the alleyway. He looked around and saw that it was empty. His fingers trembled as he grabbed his phone from his pocket. He swore as he realized that he missed a call from Axel.

He quickly called the number back. "Axel," he said. "I've got it. I'm in the alleyway in front of the--" Soren grunted as he tumbled to the ground. His legs refused to obey him forcing him to crawl for the dropped cell phone. He picked it back up and tried to see through the haze that began to cloud his vision. "In front of a pharmacy."

The Human didn't bother to hang up as he withdrew one of the autoinjectors and yanked off of the safety cap. Luckily, it had instructions on the side of the device. He pressed it firmly against his thigh and pushed the button at the top. Soren's lower body so numb that he didn't feel the large needle go into his thigh. Almost immediately, he could feel some sensation going back into his legs but drowsiness washed over him.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **September 29, 2018, 01:10:12 PM**

As Soren picked up, he must've naturally thought he was talking to Axel. "It's Tony." the ferret responded, but waited to listen to him. He was outside... in the alleyway they'd just left... goddammit!

Putting the phone on speaker and placing it on the seat next to him, Tony pushed the accelerator down and rapidly whipped the big Duesenberg around in a 180° turn and back the way they'd just come, the parking lot fortunately being big enough for such a maneuver. Easily pushing it up a little to race the big motor car back to the alley, he pulled up with a screech as he braked hard, seeing Soren upon the ground. Bringing the car to a halt by completely pushing in the clutch, he shifted back into neutral, then set the hand brake once more by pulling the lever back, listening to it click multiple times as it went into place.

Throwing the door open, he dashed out to Soren. "Soren!" He called. "Soren! Jesus!" Dropping to his knees, he began searching for the antidotes. "You OK?" he asked, paws groping for anything that felt like an injector or vial or something... and as he found two, he pulled them out, then tried to drag the human forward towards the car. "I brought transportation... the others?" he asked, grunting as he slid him along, releasing him after a few feet. "I'm going to help the others! I'll be back!" He told him, racing over to the car to yank the back door open.

"Here!" He handed an injector to Axel, and looked down at the nude Emilena. Well... the legs were usually good places to jab... he wasn't sure where... just somewhere along the thigh. Looking for a vein as best he could, he pushed the injector against her, then shoved the button down, hoping this worked. Tossing the "pen" into the backseat, he exhaled, looking around at Soren, then back to Emilena. "Please work... please work..." he whispered, unsure really how fast this was supposed to happen. Maybe she wouldn't regain consciousness for several hours... he just wasn't sure, as he wasn't a doctor.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2018, 02:58:44 PM**

Emilena let out a small gasp and her muscles relaxed. She couldn't roll over or move, but it was clear the antidote had done something. "Huh. Uhh, didne whom...unh." Her words were slurred and she drooled with every word. She barely glanced a glance at Tony. "You thins..." she murmured before exhaustion overtook her once again and she slipped into a relaxed stupor.

(OOC: Unless Tony or Awe have things to do, should we have a short timeskip soon to where everyone's waking up?)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **September 30, 2018, 01:45:19 PM**

Biting the inside of his cheek to desperately retain some awareness of his surroundings, Axel flailed with his hands and snatched the injector from Tony's grip. His vision was swimming so he couldn't make out the instructions on the side of the device... but he'd had some experience with injecting substances in the not-too-distant past to know the thigh was a safe bet.

At least you learned one thing in your shitty life, Axel thought somewhat hysterically as he unceremoniously tugged the left side of his jeans down and stabbed the needle into his leg. Pushing the button, he sighed as a cool sensation started to work its way down his leg, and with it some degree of feeling.

With a grunt, he flopped back in the car seat. The injector fell from his fingers and landed with a clunk at his feet. "Jesus, you guys cut it... cut it petty short..." Axel swallowed. His tongue suddenly felt like a lump of lead in his mouth. His head grew fuzzy, eyelids impossible to keep open. "Than-" Axel started to say. Then he collapsed, int unconsciousness and across Emilena.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **September 30, 2018, 06:59:24 PM**

Awe rejoined the rest of the group seeing most of them passed out except one whose face he didn't recognize. "I assume we got what we came for?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 01, 2018, 09:38:20 PM**

As Tony watched the antidotes start to take effect, he hoped to god or whatever existed that this worked... it seemed to make them pass out, but upon studying one of the tubes, he could see that marked drowsiness was a side effect so... perhaps... that was all. The ironic thing was, the hospital was right there... far better equipped to handle this than him, but they were trying to escape so... while he felt this wasn't the entire party, he wasn't sure what to do. They all had phones... they could stay in contact.

As some random person approached him whom he didn't recognize, Tony eyed him. "Hell if I know. Who are you anyway?" He asked, moving over to Soren's form and starting to drag him to the car. "If you're coming along, you can sit in the front. Plenty of room up there. I'm going to head to a hotel I think. Let them recuperate... it'll be close enough to the hospital that we can return here if we need to to pick more up." He explained. Opening the Duesenberg's back door, he placed Soren cleanly on the floor. He wasn't too worried about that, as the floor was carpeted and plush and would actually be quite comfortable.

Heading around to the front, he slid behind the wheel, released the parking brake, and shifted into gear as he brought the big automobile around in a semi-circle so he could head back the way he'd come and out of this hospital parking lot. There was a hotel close by, and as he pulled out of the lot and into the street, he watched the lights play off the red and black hood, flashing by in linear motions as he drove along in silence, keeping one paw resting high up on the wheel as he watched cars move by in the opposite lane. All were boring old electrics... sleek, angular, and all the same. No real excitement or thrill there...

Turning into the hotel lot a short time later, he headed down a ramp into the parking garage, and slid into a spot, killing the engine and looking behind him. "Now... we wait..." he commented, not even going to make the attempt to move everyone himself. Exhaling, he waited patiently, tapping his claws on the wheel before reaching over to the glove compartment, pulling out a book, and beginning to read as he settled back in the seat.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 01, 2018, 09:45:44 PM**

"The name's Awe. I offered my services to your friends to get the medication they needed," Awe replied after he had gotten into the front seat. Awe kept an eye out to make sure that they weren't being followed to the hotel. After they had arrived he looked to the driver of the car. "And your name is?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 01, 2018, 10:04:31 PM**

"Awe, eh? Sorry if I was a little blunt earlier... I didn't recognize you, and I've been through a lot with these guys." he explained, hooking a claw to the trio in the backseat. "My name is Tony, Tony Stracci." Awe would see he was a ferret of fairly typical build, a bit on the lanky side, with nothing too remarkable about his appearance save for his clothing seemed a bit out of 1920s Hollywood. He sported a vest, gray shirt underneath, slacks and a flat cap. He fit right in with the decor of the classic automobile they were sitting in. And of course, anyone worth their grain of salt would recognize the name Stracci as a former mob boss empire mostly turned legitimate in recent years.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 01, 2018, 10:16:00 PM**

"Ah, yes I've heard of you," Awe replied. "The mob boss turned legitimate." Awe chuckled a little. Awe was sure that Tony knew Marcus Olivieri was in the hospital they had just broken out of. "It's good to see that you made the right choice otherwise we might not be meeting under such friendly circumstances."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 01, 2018, 10:38:27 PM**

"Well honestly it was more my old man was really the glue holding our empire together and I guess I just... couldn't fully follow in his footsteps afterwards. Power wasn't all for me... and I wanted to try... making more of a legitimate run out of it." he explained, scratching the back of his head. "I guess I kind of... accidentally met these guys... ended up helping them out... and we've been buddies ever since." he concluded, giving Awe a nod.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 01, 2018, 11:00:18 PM**

"It's always nice to have a friend or two around when you need them," Awe said. "I mainly wanted to go freelance that's why I quit my corporate job. I felt I could just do more outside of a corporate atmosphere." Awe kept his eyes open scanning around the parking garage with his eyes.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 02, 2018, 07:46:49 AM**

"Certainly is... and while I've kind of been out of the fight for a bit..." he nodded, looking into the back seat briefly. "It's good to be back. Heh... so... former corporate employee, eh?" he asked, grinning now. "I don't blame you on leaving... so you're like a... what?" The ferret noticed him looking about the garage, doing a casual scan as well. "Man with a certain set of skills?" he asked, grinning as he didn't go into much detail beyond that.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 02, 2018, 07:07:40 PM**

"You could say that," Awe replied. "I'm a former assassin for Werner Industries a major arms manufacturer. I may be freelance but that doesn't mean i'm heartless."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 04, 2018, 07:54:03 AM**

"Heh well..." the ferret grinned. "I had somewhat inferred that from your statements but..." he whistled. "Werner Industries, eh? I'm familiar with them... let's just say... did some gun running of their products for my father awhile back... and I always wondered about that too... if you could just switch off, being an assassin and all." he commented thoughtfully. "I'd have problems separating my personal life from the professional, but it sounds like you've found a way."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 04, 2018, 08:58:30 PM**

"Heh, it hasn't been easy," Aw chuckled. "Somedays I find myself wishing I was back on the old job, good paycheck, girls, booze money..." Awe grinned. "But those days are over, now I work for a better cause."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2018, 03:25:49 AM**

A short time later, Emilena groaned softly as she felt consciousness returning. “Erf…” she muttered. “Man, those achylsalts hit hard...and fast.” She tried to sit up, but realized Axel’s body was still draped over her. “Did the others make it out?”

“The others are fine,” Tony answered dismissively. “You’re the only one who even passed out. Probably because of your underdeveloped immune system.”

“My what?”

“You’re a child. An eight-year old baby pretending to be an adult. The others know it. I know it. You’re not fooling anyone.”

Emilena caught something in his tone. “Tony? Are you...mad at me?”

Tony sighed. “Why the hell would *Tony* be mad at you?” He turned around, and with a flash of panic Emilena realized he was really Lily. “*We’re* the ones with unfinished business.”

“Lily!” Emilena tried to scramble out of the car, but Axel’s body was pinning her down.

Lily stared daggers as she climbed into the Model J’s backseat. “I sent you a message. I gave you a location. I *need you*. But you failed me. You’ve let me down, like you always do.”

“I’m...working on it!” Emilena recoiled as Lily moved her hand towards her. “Wait, don’t kill me!”

“I’m not killing *you*.” Lily laid a hand on Axel, and his body started shriveling. Before Emilena’s horrified gaze, the rat rapidly aged into a leathery withered corpse. “We had a deal. His life, for the location of the Purifier HQ. You failed at that too.”

“Stop!” Emilena couldn’t tear her eyes away. “Lily, change him back! I just need more time!”

"Too late. His soul is mine.” Lily brushed her hand lovingly against Emilena’s cheek. “Maybe you’ll try harder for your own,” she whispered mockingly, and her voice grew to fill the car. “*Find me. NOW. Or you’re next.*”

Emilena woke up with a strangled gasp. “*Augh!*” Head spinning, she tried to sit up and smacked her head against the doorside handle. “Augh!” she repeated, this time clutching her head in pain. “Christ…”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 05, 2018, 09:13:34 AM**

"Heh..." Tony smirked to Awe at the revelation. "Now that doesn't sound half bad! I mean I kind of was like that in my younger days... bit more reckless... always pissing my dad off..." he grinned, opening his mouth to continue, when suddenly, a noise from the back seat caused him to jerk upright and whip his head around as Emilena proceeded to strike her own head on the door handle.

"Jeez!" the ferret exclaimed. "You all right? You're safe... in the back of my car... we're underground at the moment." he informed her, hoping she wouldn't panic or anything like that, as there were a few others heading to their cars in the garage, all of whom he kept a close eye on. "You uh... OK?" he asked, jamming a toothpick in his mouth as he began twirling it a bit in the corner.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2018, 02:07:50 PM**

Emilena's dream-awakening had not fully prepared her for how dizzy she'd feel upon actually waking up. Her tongue felt like chalk and cold flashes left her skin feeling clammy. "Ughhh..." she groaned, burying her face in her hands. "I'm...fine." She shivered and elected to stay under Axel just for his warmth. "Considering I should be dead. Thanks, sincerely." She looked at the two in the front of the car. "To both of you. Tony for administering this stuff and Awe for being the only reason we managed to get it in the first place."

She wiped cold sweat out of her eyes. "That being said, I wouldn't say no to, maybe a sweater..."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 05, 2018, 04:08:04 PM**

The sound of voices reached Axel. Dim, far away. *Urgh... who's talking? It's late, just let me sleep!* He groaned as he became aware of a deep, painful throbbing in his head, like a fist knuckling the inside of his skull. Had it been another late night? Too much to drink again? He didn't remember drinking... *Not that that means much, I guess.*

Axel grunted as something moved under him, a warm body. "Lily, what's -" His cheek brushed fur, and he stopped. *Fur?* Creaking open his eyes, Axel looked blearily around himself, blinking as he saw Tony sitting up front. Had they gone out together? But then...

Recollection hit him like a tonne of bricks. Eyes wide, Axel looked up to see who he was lying on, and he froze, mouth hanging open dumbly, when he saw it was Emilena.

"Yargh!" He jerked up, his back slamming against the door in his haste to sit up. "Christ, I'm sorry!" Axel winced as the sudden movement sent a jolt of pain shooting through his brain. "*Argh*, my head..." Taking a second to collect himself, he opened his eyes. "So we made it out? Thanks for getting us out of there Tony, saved our asses..." Axel paused when he noticed the other figure sitting up front.

"Oh... you're here too." He blinked at Awe, one hand still rubbing his temple. "So you came through for us... I, ah, guess I owe you thanks too. If we didn't get those antidotes, that could've been ugly."

Axel glanced across at Emilena, frowning as it only just dawned on him that she had nothing to wear. He hesitated, then unzipped his hoodie, offering it to her. "You can borrow this, if you want. Sorry about the, ah, stains..." As he held it out, Axel looked about. "Wait, where're the others? We've gotta go, if anyone finds out we were here..."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 05, 2018, 04:17:06 PM**

As rat and vulpine came awake, the ferret offered them a small smile, and a nod. "Think nothing of it... when I heard you guys were in trouble... even if it might've been a trap... I decided what the hell? Get my ass down here and bail you out." He watched as Axel provided his sweater to the naked Emilena... which was good, as his dual-cowl phaeton wasn't exactly the most... private car you could be driving about in, even with the windows up.

"The others?" Tony wrinkled his snout up here. "Uh... I would assume back at the hospital. We're really only missing the hounds." he stated, referring to Marita, Rose, and Marie. "I figured the hospital was as safe a place as any for them... and since I figured we needed to get you three off the streets... I took the decision to drive a few blocks away to this hotel, which I knew had a large underground parking garage... perfect to just sit here unassumingly and wait for you guys to wake up." he explained. Pulling the toothpick out of his mouth, he tossed it aside.

"Anyway, we can head back over there if you want... it's only a few blocks away." he offered, resting his right arm on the back of the front seat so he could look at everyone involved.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 05, 2018, 07:09:56 PM**

"Would be a good idea to go get them," Awe noted. "They should be awake soon and will be needing transportation."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 05, 2018, 09:24:58 PM**

Soren muttered something as he slowly began to stir. He weakly pushed the door open and emptied what little was in his stomach out onto the pavement. He rubbed his head. "Fuck me," he muttered. "Anyone got some aspirin? Feels like my brain got reformatted."

He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and spat a few times to get the taste of bile from his mouth. "Ugh, let's hope the others are doing better."

Anne was indeed doing better as the stage of poisoning wasn't as severe as the others. That and she had an IV line that was giving her plenty of fluids. She pressed the button for the nurse. Hopefully she could simply be discharged and they won't be asking too many questions about how she got poisoned.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 05, 2018, 09:28:50 PM**

Marita and marie stirred in their hospital rooms, both slowly feeling the after effects of the drugs used to clean out their systems' Marita sat up in her bed and sent a text to anne and soren " Up in bed. Feeling worlds better. will be needing a pickup. Marie will be getting out a couple minutes after me Will be waiting near the hospital enterance- MArita ' Marita sent the text, then grabbed a small mirror that lay on a tray near her and looked into it. Her arms had returned to their normal color, amd size, and Marita felt her normal energy return- the poison had drained her of much of her vitality and spunk.
-
marie was up in her hospital bed, looking at some magazines left by a previous patient Hmm. those Met gala dresses must cost a fortune" she said to herself.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2018, 09:45:04 PM**

Emilena slipped Axel's hoodie on gratefully, but wrinkled her nose at the prospect of returning to the hospital. "Honestly, can we just call them an Uber or something? We have no way of knowing if they didn't blow their cover. The place could be crawling with cops."

Then Soren's phone received the text and they learned the girls were fine. "Objection withdrawn, I guess," Emilena shrugged. "Let's grab them and figure out what to do next. Were we still planning to follow Buller's tip to the Durwent District? We don't really have any other leads."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 05, 2018, 11:43:27 PM**

"I'm pretty sure they didn't. You guys seem like the type who wouldn't blow their cover from what I've seen of you," Awe noted.
"And besides the cops that are there are busy."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 06, 2018, 03:07:28 PM**

Nodding, Tony winced as Soren's vomit just missed the running board... just. "Ugh... well... at least you're... getting better." He added, wrinkling his snout up at the stench, looking to all three of them. "I have a medical kit in the trunk... might have some aspirin in there." he commented. "Hold on..." Getting out, he moved to the back of the massive car, and undid the clasps on the trunk, throwing up the lid and hmmming as he pulled out the kit and began rooting around inside of it. "Aha!" he exclaimed, yanking out a bottle and replacing the kit, then shutting the trunk before he walked back around towards the front.

"Here you are!" He tossed the aspirin container towards Soren. "Let's get going then. We'll swing back around, pick them up and you said... Durwent District? What's down there?" he asked, sliding back behind the wheel and pulling out the starter button, listening to the straight-eight come back to life with a grumble. No need to choke the engine or advance the spark, as it was a warm start. Pushing it back in, he looked behind him, then shifted into reverse, released the parking brake, and backed the big Duesenberg out into the lane. Shifting down into first, he began rolling, then up shifted into neutral and then second almost immediately.

"So uh... Buller... tipped me off you guys were down here... and he wants us to head to the Durwent District? What are we looking for next?" he asked, spiraling up the ramp and back out into the open air. Pulling out to the main street, he waited before turning left and into traffic, heading back the way he'd come about 30 minutes before. The wind blew his fur back a bit, causing the ferret to smile as he enjoyed the openness of the dual-cowl phaeton. Hospital was only a few blocks away, and it took them less than 5 minutes to cover that distance.

Making another left turn into the hospital parking lot, he cruised down the slight dip and looked for visitor parking, pulling smoothly into a spot and shifting into neutral to leave the engine idling, setting the parking brake once again with multiple clicks as he pulled the lever back. "OK well... someone text or call them and let them know we're out front. Hard to miss red and black Duesenberg Model J." he smirked, tapping a claw on the top of his door. "Durwent... that's uh..." looking up, the ferret thought. "30 minutes or so from here... not too far." he said softly, mostly to himself as he began plotting out their route. "Oh!" he turned around to the three in the back. "There's two jump seats you can unfold back there for them. Should be able to get everyone inside... though one may have to sit on the floor in the back in between the jump seats. Still... should be OK." he nodded.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2018, 04:05:47 PM**

"I can't remember if you met her, but there was this pink-furred teenager tagging along with us before," Emilena replied, extending her hand to Soren as if requesting some aspirin. "Two weeks ago we sent her and Rose to infiltrate a bar where a person of interest was frequenting. Rose blew their cover and things went to hell. Nobody knows what happened to Rose, but the purifiers had a tracker on Flora and our target has brought her to the Durwent District, at the spot on this map," she handed Tony the tourist pamphlet where Buller had circled a warehouse.

She felt a cold shiver trickle down her spine, remembering Lily's warning. But she repressed it. They'd wasted enough time at the hospital, and Lily might have just been a dream anyway. "The target is connected to whatever group has been framing us and the Purifiers in the papers, and sadly that's all we know about them. We're thinking a visit to pickup Flora might fix that."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 08, 2018, 09:28:23 PM**

Marita and Marie were soon discharged from their rooms, and they made their way to the parking lot MArota started as she saw the fancy Duesenburg " well, well Tony Stracci. He always loved his fancy cars.' Marita said a she went to the the passenger seat and opened the door, before seeing the others inside ' Hello everyopne. You all look, better" she stopped as she saw the vomit on the flor " well.. MOSTLY better. Is there room for Marie and I?' She asked.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 08, 2018, 09:31:19 PM**

Emilena leaned over the backseat and setup the jump seats Tony had mentioned. "You'll have to share these with Anne," she replied over her shoulder. "Where is she, anyway?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 08, 2018, 10:02:07 PM**

shes still inside i'd wager, probably getting released" Marita said " so the good news , is we've escaped the worst that poison could have done to us, and we have a lead on where Flora is. I have no idea where Rose is, maybe Flora knows where she is, maybe not. Cant hurt to ask. The bad news, however is we are basically out of money. I think we're down to a few thousand creds."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 12, 2018, 10:31:32 PM**

Anne had opted to discharge herself from the hospital despite, the doctors insisting that she stay for overnight observation. In the end, they made her sign a disclaimer saying that she was doing so against medical advice and Darwin's Hope wouldn't be liable if she died or anything along those lines happened.

A nurse helped her into a wheelchair and a young Dhole slowly wheeled her to the elevator. The young Canine was trying to chat with her but the Shetland Pony's splayed out ears indicated that she wasn't interested.

Soon, she was stationed in the airy reception area of the front of the hospital. Despite the open atrium with the sunlight streaming in, the only attempt at decoration were some potted plants in the corner.

The mare tuned out the volunteer attempting to make small talk and decided to occupy herself by listening to all the phone conversations that buzzed around. While she was listening, she heard the company Brennan Synthetics being mentioned quite often.

Soren chewed up and swallowed the aspirin as there was no water available. The bitter taste of the bills evoked a long stream of profanities as he swallowed repeatedly in an attempt to get the taste out of his mouth.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 13, 2018, 01:01:01 PM**

Smirking as Marita came out, he nodded. "Well hello yourselves! And yep! Two jump seats in the back." he hooked a claw to the backseat as Emilena got them set up (perfect, as seven passengers was ideal for this car). Reaching around, he took the pamphlet from the vulpine and began looking it over, nodding. "Right... not too far then. I think I remember her... yes. Flora... right?" he asked in reference to the "pink furred teenager." Shifting into reverse, Tony released the parking brake and began pulling out, deciding that the wait was over, as they'd been idling a good 20 minutes, and he didn't want to draw further attention to them than was necessary.

Backing out of the spot, he put the car in first and began heading for the exit of the hospital. "So basically... Flora and Rose vanished... Flora we know at least her location... and our target is holding her... being linked to this group that's responsible for framing us and the Purifiers... got it." he nodded, turning right and heading back the way he'd come, but this time blowing by the hotel as they headed for the Durwent District. He rode along easily in second, sticking to the speed limit for now, not needing to shift the big Duesenberg into high gear.

"So money wise... I can assist with that." he told Marita. "Even if the hospital burned up your funds, wouldn't mind helping you guys out. Hey uh..." he looked into the rear view mirror, trying to catch Emilena's gaze. "Shouldn't we uh... maybe get you some clothes?" he suggested, passing one exit after another as they made their way closer to the Durwent District.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 13, 2018, 01:44:16 PM**

"I would appreciate that..." Emilena tugged Axel's hoodie to keep it as low as possible. "I'll pay you back. Someday."

Ten minutes later they'd pulled into the parking lot of a 24-hour supermarket. "I hope they have my size in black," she told Tony, stepping gingerly out of the car. It was very early morning, the sun wasn't even up yet, so there weren't many other cars in the lot.

Still, Axel's hoodie barely covered her pelvic region, and she needed to do something about the dried blood on her legs. "Before we go inside, I need a quick wash," she muttered to Tony under her breath. Slinking to the back alley, she found a spigot and turned it on to create a flow of frigid water. "Cover me, woulda?" She handed him Axel's hoodie and began washing herself off as quickly as possible.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 13, 2018, 01:52:46 PM**

Nodding, Tony took the next exit, and drove a few blocks to the supermarket, pulling in and shut the engine off as he stepped out with her. "Not sure you exactly need to pay me back." he told her, shaking his head. "Still... it's the thought that counts." he admitted, stepping off the running board and beside his car as he shut the door.

Nodding to her again, he accompanied her to the back alley, noting that indeed she did need a bit of a clean up. As he took the hoodie from her, he turned around, holding the hoodie behind his back and clasping his paws back there as well as he rose and fell a bit on his foot paws, pushing up onto the balls before letting himself sink back to flat feet. "Mind if we talk briefly inside the store?" he asked, looking left and right in slow, sweeping gazes, but not turning around. "Just wanted to get your take on a few things while you pick something out."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 13, 2018, 01:58:59 PM**

"Yeah, of course." Emilena shivered violently in the drafty alleyway air as she turned the spigot off. "Y-you've been out of all this for a few months, I'm sure you could use some catchup. I bet that was one confusing hell of a reintroduction at that hospital."

She had to fight to keep her teeth from chattering. Luckily, the draft caused her fur to dry relatively fast, and she was able to take her hoodie back and limp into the supermarket.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 13, 2018, 02:38:09 PM**

"Good... and yes." he felt her take the hoodie, and began walking into the store without turning around, letting her draw even first before looking over to her. "So first off..." he began. "I need to know if there's anyone in the group you don't trust... I assume this isn't the case but... thought I'd know, just in case. Second... do you have some sort of... exit strategy against the Purifiers? I know at the moment our causes are kind of united and singular, but I mean... I assume at some point... you'll either strike back at them or just... quietly leave. So I was wondering about that." he explained, not making much eye contact as he was trying to avoid any curious onlookers picking up on them.

"Third... what exactly has been going on lately?" he asked simply, knowing she'd understand what he meant.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 13, 2018, 03:05:36 PM**

"We don't have an endgame, as far as I know," Emilena admitted, leading the way to the clothing aisle. "We honestly just tried it. Two months ago we all split up and went our separate ways, off the grid. Buller rounded us up without another thought. And I haven't had time to devise a new plan since we were racing the clock surviving his poison."

"As for trust...honestly, with the Purifiers gone, the rest of us have been here for the long haul." Emilena grumbled when she couldn't find a turtleneck in her size. "The Lanthae survivors. Awe's the only newcomer, but he had a perfect opportunity to do nothing and watch us die in that hospital..." She looked approvingly at a black long-sleeved shirt. "Of course, that leaves Lily. Which leads into your third question."

She found a pair of black sweatpants and slipped them on without another thought. "The others don't know about this. Well, Axel does but he's too strung out to care. Lily's been...*haunting* the group, for lack of a better word." Emilena sighed. "She's retained some psionic powers from the Lanthae incident. She can heal or kill someone just by touching them, and she can regenerate from any injury. And I mean *any*. One time she threw herself into a wood chipper and I watched her reconstruct herself from the pulp."

Emilena shuddered. "I had to strike all these deals with her to stop her from killing everyone. I don't think she sees people as *people* anymore. I thought I had her under control, but now she's just disappeared. Without a trace. And that...that terrifies me," she confessed. "I can't control her if I can't talk to her. And she's too erratic to control herself. She could show up any minute and do literally anything, there's no telling what her goals are right now." She glanced at the self-checkout stands. She was ready to go, but if Tony wanted anything for himself, this was the time to get it.

Maybe she shouldn't be telling Tony all this...but at this point she didn't care. He was the only one of them with a shot at fleeing the scene and living a peaceful life away from all this. He deserved to know the whole situation he was getting involved in.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 13, 2018, 05:11:05 PM**

Nodding, he pursed his lips. "Hm... perhaps we should devise something." he told her quietly. "Best to have some sort of exit strategy. Buller... he was that aggressive... what was he? A doberman?" he asked now, taking something off the shelf. Why not? This might be the only opportunity to get some food after all.

"All right... all trustworthy... that's good... I just wanted to make sure... just in case." he commented, moving to the self check out and scanning everything, then paying for it. But as Lily was mentioned, he paused, and then outright narrowed his eyes. "Uh... that doesn't sound like she kept 'some' of her powers..." he commented, moving for the exit. "That sounds like... she became a fucking god." He commented. "Perhaps it's best we avoid her... she sounds totally uncontrollable, and extremely dangerous... wrap up the mission, then hunt her down if you want." he suggested, exiting out into the cold morning air. "I just think something like that could severely compromise us or... kill us." he commented.

"And Axel is strung out?" he inquired, raising a brow as he once more got behind the wheel, and started up the Duesey. He didn't mind that the rat was now in earshot. He didn't realize his old pal was... strung out. Backing out of the spot, he got the Duesenberg rolling again as they began to head back down the road. Only about 10 minutes to go now... and they'd be there. The headlights cut through the predawn gloom, and the instrument panel lights gave out a gentle glow so that Tony could see everything on the stately metallic panel, bathing his face in a yellowish light as he drove along.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 13, 2018, 06:28:30 PM**

The ink-filled capsules attached to the pants and shirt beeped and detached when the clothes were scanned through the self-checkout.

Before they reached the car, Emilena lowered her voice and explained one last thing about Lily. "We don't need to find her. Lily sent me a message while I was in the hospital," she whispered. "She wants me to visit her in our old hideout. But it's on the complete opposite side of the city, hours out of our way, and we don't have that time at the moment." She gulped. "And, frankly, it's something I should do alone since she's probably going to kill me."

With one last forced smile, she climbed back into the Duesenberg, swapped Axel's hoodie for her new longsleeved black shirt and returned it to its rightful owner. "So," she asked the group, "when we reach Flora's safehouse, who's coming in with me and who's keeping the getaway car warm?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 13, 2018, 07:32:00 PM**

"I'll go with you," Awe said. "If you need someone in a fight I'm your man."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 13, 2018, 09:11:14 PM**

As Emilena shared that last bit of info, Tony stared dead ahead as they moved down the highway, that anxiety in the pit of his stomach rising. She would go to find Lily... to be killed? But then... that... would just mean Lily would continue to exist... and potentially destroy everything... what kind of a solution was that?

It left him feeling unsettled as he moved onto the exit and towards the Durwent District. "I'll go." he said. "There isn't anyone in this city that would know how to even drive this car if they tried to steal it so... I think we're good. I don't mind leaving it alone." He commented. "I can show whomever stays behind how to start it as well... since it'll be a hot start... won't be complicated." he assured them.

Moving the little knob on the steering wheel downwards to switch off the headlights as the car approached the warehouse, the sun was just starting to rise. Tony also turned off the dash lights, and steeled himself as he bumped the Model J along the uneven road and pulled up to the correct one. "OK... here we go." he said, not switching the car off just yet as he waited to determine who was going in, moving the massive shift lever down into neutral and setting the parking brake.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2018, 12:01:02 AM**

(Durwent District)

While warehouses stretched in every direction from the block the Model J was currently parked in front of, this particular street contained what few luxury houses sat in the dead center of the industrial section. Due to being surrounded on all sides by factories, they were dotted with the heaviest air purifiers on the market, and the unmistakable architecture of the ultra-rich permeated the structures.

These houses were only affordable (or even desireable) by owners or high-ranking employees of the Durwent factories. Getting in or out would not be easy, as these residents were almost certainly protected by the best security systems money can buy.

"*It's a lonely life out here, I won't lie. Usually Emile and I won't see anyone but the other farmers for months…*"

Flora groaned sleepily as a documentary on the television began infiltrating her dreamless slumber. She hadn't been wholly aware she'd fallen asleep after her afternoon romp with Bianca (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d9V0zeKk-G3mqRbmXH2Yx4eHS8nYanCx8iU6WeuCJlQ/edit), but now that she looked over she saw that it was almost 4am, and her partner was no longer in the bed next to her.

"*So are you saying your polyamory is normal for people out here in the Lanthae Wastelands?*" the reporter on the TV asked, pressing his microphone towards a pair of dirt-streaked vulpine farmers.

"*It takes an unusual sort to even want to live out in these deserts,*" chuckled the husband. "*No internet, no entertainment, no contact with the civilized world...you get to know your few neighbors REALLY well.*"

Flora clicked the TV off. "Bianca?" she called out, tentatively climbing out of bed. "You...still here?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **bushwacked** on **October 14, 2018, 10:24:35 AM**

Axel stared at the properties across the street as the Model J slowed to a halt. He blinked, coming to the same conclusion as Emilena - there was no way whoever designed these houses didn't account for any intruders.

"Don't count me in for a fight like this guy," he said, waving a hand in Awe's direction. "But they'll have security systems coming out the ass over there. I should be able to see where they are, help get around them. And I could do with the fresh air."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 14, 2018, 12:49:22 PM**

Biuanca came in the room, her eyes bleary ' Hi Flora, got called out for a late night craving by one of the guards. Cheap git, gave me just 3 creds more than the food cost. " She sighed. " ah well, I got him his food, and hes happy. You've been sleeping for hours. Out like a light. And I had my evening chores to take care of. " She said, taking a seat in front of the large screen TV.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2018, 07:44:11 PM**

(OOC: I posted a character sheet for Kintoki in the discussion thread)

Emilena nodded and glanced at Soren, the last car occupant to decide on his post. "Looks like we're breaking into a residential house, not a warehouse. This might be a good thing for us. Once we've found the right house, I think the first thing we should do is cause a power out. Few people would notice this late at night, and we'd have a few minutes to enter the building while the systems switch to the backup power supply. Soren and Awe, you're the professionals in this matter, what do you think?"

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Flora smiled and gave Bianca a quick kiss while she walked by. "So you just gonna live here now?" She asked, even while walking to the kitchen to make herself some food. "I mean, you know I'd love that, but I don't want you to get in trouble with your bosses."

She clicked the light on in the kitchen. She hadn’t done the dishes in a few days due to hanging out with Bianca, and she certainly didn’t feel like doing them now, so she opened the windows and pushed the curtains aside to get some airflow. She turned on the stove and started boiling a pot of water for ramen, not even noticing the old-fashioned car sitting a short ways down the street.

Kintoki was sleeping in his bedroom-slash-security observation room.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 15, 2018, 03:57:08 PM**

Anne was slumped against the seat and currently asleep.

Soren was pondering over what Emilena said. "That'd work but we have to keep in mind that there may be a battery back up system that can instantly switch over to keep things going until the generator kicks in." He rubbed his chin. "I saw we take out all three of these at once. And then we get going." He then noticed the faint golden bands of the sun peeking through the dark, glassy towers of the industrial buildings. "But we have hurry. Those guys might be starting work soon and then we'll be in *real* deep shit."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 18, 2018, 12:34:26 AM**

"An simultaneous attack on both the backup and main could cripple them," Awe noted. "Do we have a map of the area of the area and locations of the generators?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 18, 2018, 01:43:29 AM**

"We don't even know which house is the right one, so that's the first step." Emilena unbuckled her seatbelt and climbed out of the car. "Everyone split up and start checking houses. Look for a building that doesn't have a sticker advertising the security company, since I doubt Brennan would trust a third party with their security. Might be other clues too."

She headed west down the street, eyeing the closest house. This one had a lot of used lawn equipment and looked to be halfway through finishing a garden renovation, so she doubted it was the safehouse. She continued onto the next one.

Unfortunately, the house with Flora visible from the kitchen window was eastward down the street...

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 18, 2018, 08:48:08 AM**

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well i've bneen told to keep an eye on you, so you'll see quite a bit of me ' i wont be ' living' with you per se, but i'll be a regular presence.' Bianca said going over to the window and loking out as shree scanned upward and down the street she noticed a number of people walking around, loking at the houses ' Flora! get away from the window! there's.. weird-looking people coming up the street! could be thugs, Purifiers, Gods-know-what!' close the windows! pull up the shutters! Now!' she hissed ' closing the window and shuttering it., then heading into the kitchen.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 18, 2018, 03:48:31 PM**

Shutting off the Duesenberg, Tony exited, and began walking down the street after locking the car. He went east, while Emilena was going west it seemed. He wasn't immediately sure if others were following him just yet. As he strolled along, looking nonchalantly at the houses, he saw Flora through the kitchen window of one, and suddenly, before he could react much, one of the windows was shuttered up and closed off to him.

"Hey!" the ferret whispered loudly back to Emilena, hoping she hadn't gone too far as he half turned his head to see her. Snapping his claws twice, he subtly pointed to the home, not raising his arm from his side to do so, but thrusting it forward just slightly to point in its direction before resting it at his side again. He then kept walking, not wanting to break stride lest he arouse suspicion.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 18, 2018, 06:48:30 PM**

With a bang, the door to the back room swung open and Kintoki stomped into the kitchen, causing Flora to squeal in surprise. "Where are the Purifiers?" he snarled. He was already wearing his heavy metallic exoskeleton, but his youthful face diminished the fear he hoped to provoke.

"There aren't any, Jesus!" Flora exclaimed, spilling boiling water on the stove and causing a hiss of steam. "Bianca's just paranoid, it's probably the neighbors!"

Kintoki saw the Great Dane and blinked in confusion. "...Who are you?"

"Oh please, she's been here all day. As if you weren't on your cameras watching us have sex a few hours ago," Flora rolled her eyes.

"I did nothing of the sort!" Kintoki protested, flushing red. "Is that why you're naked in the kitchen at four in the morning?"

"I woke up for a midnight snack! Is that illegal?" Flora snarled.

“Yes! I have to report everything you do to Coxon.” Kintoki suddenly noticed the wide open window. “Speaking of which, you can’t leave windows open like this! This is a safehouse, not a hotel!”

“But it’s stuffy in here,” Flora protested.

He quickly shut and locked the window, then drew the curtains shut. “Too bad. Now go back to bed and don’t make any noise until I’ve confirmed the perimeter is secure.”

“OK, but don’t shoot Bianca, she’s allowed to be here!” Flora called after him as he marched to the front room. Grumbling, she re-opened the curtains and took a look for herself at the intruders. The only one she could make out was an unfamiliar ferret minding his own business. “*Secure the perimeter*, godsakes, what is this, a war zone?”

Then a very familiar vixen approached from further down the sidewalk. She stopped in front of the house, and she and Flora locked eyes.

Flora felt a cold flash wash over her. “Errr, maybe I'll put my clothes on, just to be safe,” she stammered, darting to the bedroom as fast as possible.

Outside, Emilena quickly gave Tony an affirmative nod and rushed back to the car. “We've IDed the right house,” she jabbed her thumb surreptitiously. “Let's move it. Awe, Soren, Marita, if you got any tricks now's the time.”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 18, 2018, 07:41:30 PM**

So you've seen Flora?' Marita said coming up to them, she had been looking on the other side of the street. She looked at the house, noticing a pair of security cameras over the front door. ' hmm ' twin

camera, which doubtlessly feed into a main control room, and i would imagine the interior rooms all have cameras. this doesn't look like the hardest security system i've gotten into. first off, blinding these outside cameras alone would alert security, so whoever is watching would get forewarning. There are two options. we do a domino, where we progressively blind and overload the system, which would, also kill all power in the house. then theres the tidal wave option, where everything is shut down at once. we would have, maybe 10-15 mijinutes to get flora out, by my calculation, before power would return sand security would send out a trigger warning. . less than that with the domino, maybe 3-5 minutes"
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Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 23, 2018, 09:44:23 PM**

Soren turned to Anne. "Can you help us with eavesdropping?"

The mare's ears swiveled back and forth as her tail swished. She shook her head. "Transmissions are encrypted. I have an older model implant so I can't break them. You're on your own for this. All I can do is detect signals and electromagnetic fields. I won't be able to listen in to the contents."

"Good enough." Soren licked his lips as he tried to still his pounding heart. He looked at the door. The door was flanked by two security cameras and he suspected that the door was probably reinforced. He then turned to Anne. "We'll take out the back up battery."

Anne nodded. "Sounds fine to me. Unfortunately, I don't think we have any weapons."

"Hopefully some gardener left some tools lying around or something. We'll make do." Soren then nodded. "Let's do it."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 23, 2018, 11:05:33 PM**

"Soren's right," Emilena revealed a trowl and handed Soren a pair of shears she'd swiped from next door. "Next house to the west was working on his lawn, these were the most concealable options but anyone who wants to rummage, they're still over there."

She glanced at Awe. "This is your forte, just let us know what to do and we'll get to work."

Kintoki walked into the bedroom, where Flora was just fixing her newly-donned shirt. "I don't see any evidence of intruders," he reported.

"I'm *shocked*, shocked I tell you." Flora rolled her eyes. "Can you stop blocking the TV?"

Kintoki folded his arms. "Well, aren't we in a good mood. You know that if your girlfriend causes any more false alarms, I'm going to expel her from the premises?"

"You could try. What, are *you* going to go buy groceries? Walk around Target dressed like the Iron Giant?" Flora scoffed. "You wanna threaten Bianca, go do it to her face. She's on your payroll, not mine."

Kintoki grumbled as he walked into the kitchen. "What exactly is going on that caused your outburst?" he asked Bianca. He glanced out the window. There was indeed a car parked further down the road (Duesenberg Model J, if he recalled his old silent movies correctly) but it was too dark to make out the occupants. And considering its anachronistic and well-kept appearance, he assumed it was simply one of their wealthy neighbors returning from a vintage car show.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 23, 2018, 11:30:14 PM**

"I'll take out the security systems," Awe said. He looked to the others. "Once the system and lights are off go in and start clearing rooms. As for weapons, take them off the guards after you've taken care of them."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 24, 2018, 09:53:09 AM**

As Tony wandered nonchalantly back down the street, crossing over to the other side to avoid suspicion, he approached his Duesenberg with his paws thrust in his pockets. "I've got a Glock 19 on me." he said softly as he padded on up. "I did bring a laser rifle as well if anyone wants to use it." he looked around him. "It's in the trunk..." Walking around to the back of the car, he popped the latches and opened up the literal trunk attached to the back of the Model J on the luggage rack, revealing some spare clothes, the med kit from before, and the laser rifle in the bottom, just poking out from underneath the clothes.

Glancing to the house, he looked back down again. "Just act like we're coming back from a long trip." he said quietly, pretending to root through the trunk as he actually moved some of the clothes out of the way. "They're looking over here but not in what I'd say is a suspicious fashion." he commented, not looking back up. "I wouldn't mind taking part in the assault... covering anyone who needs it... helping protect the withdrawal."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 27, 2018, 04:53:26 PM**

I saw a bunch of people walking up and down the street looking in at windows ' Bianca said. " they arent there NOW, but they were there. i'm not known for overreacting Kintoki, I've been here long enough for that reputation." she sighed ' flora is shall we say a touch lax about security, leaving the window open where anyone can see her." then turned to kintplo ' shouldnt you be handling outside security? that is your job. my job is to be the meal gopher." bianca said. ' speaking of which its almopst time to go on a early breakfast run. i'll need about 100 creds or so. you want something specific, better tell me now.' Bianca said.
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Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 27, 2018, 05:34:57 PM**

Kintoki's face softened. "I'm sorry, Bianca, you're right. I shouldn't let Flora get under my skin like that." He handed her a 100c chip. "Get me one of those alcoholic energy drinks they sell at the gas station. I don't need any food."

He glanced out the window again. Besides the neighbor's fancy car, he couldn't see anything out of the ordinary. "If you saw creeps peeking through the windows, we need to heighten security. You should take this as well." He handed her a lightweight silver pistol with a snub barrel. "This brand fires cartridge-free bullets with self-contained propellants. Thirteen shots, no recoil whatsoever, perfect for untrained users. If anyone bothers you, come back inside immediately and warn me."

He pressed a button on his arm. "Also, let one of my Tactical Defense Roombas escort you to the car." A compartment opened up and three small black discs came rolling out from under the sink cabinet. "I'll have two patrolling the outside and one in Flora's room. They're armed with heat-sensitive optical scanners and can fire 200 armor-piercing rounds a minute."

One of the TDRs buzzed obediently to the front door and waited for Bianca. Another left out the petflap on the backdoor and began its route around the house. The last one rolled into Flora's room, who looked at it curiously.

Emilena quickly passed Axel the trowel and grabbed the laser rifle. "Positions, people. Awe, we'll be waiting for your signal."

She crawled to the hedges separating the safe house from their neighbor and crouched behind them, out of sight. Checking to make sure the laser rifle was loaded and cocked, she kept her eyes on Awe, ready to open fire to defend him if he experienced any trouble.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 27, 2018, 07:18:03 PM**

"Got it." Awe approached the outside power source and placed a small charge on it. He took cover and gave a three two one countdown on his fingers before pressing the button. The security cameras went offline. Awe rushed to the door taking position next to it and signaled the group shooting out the lights above the door with a silenced pistol. "now all we need is the power to go off for the building."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 27, 2018, 08:07:13 PM**

Bianca pocketed the credit chip and turned to head out ' i shouldnt be long . 15 minutes tops." she finished and headed out of the door, just as the security cameras went dark.
_ marita was typing away on her computer, and beginning the overload prgran. ' 30 seconds to imput ' Marita said. the lights will be out in a few seconds"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2018, 12:21:42 AM**

Bianca's roomba whirred as it escorted Bianca down the front porch.

Inside, the lights died on cue. Kintoki cursed and set his arm cannon to charge up. "Flora!" he shouted. "Come to me, quickly!"

"Give me a gun!" Flora pleaded, as she saw Kintoki sprint into her room. "Something to defend myself!"

He shook his head. "Can't, Bianca has it." Fiddling with the Roomba, he sent it rolling out if the room. "Let's hope they don't get this far," he muttered. "This house has more than a few tricks up its sleeve..."

"Who? Are you sure this isn't just a regular powerout?" Flora asked anxiously, brandishing her bedside lamp.

Outside, Emilena darted across the neighbor's side of the hedge and started vaulting over to enter the backyard. She didnt get far when she heard something robotic priming itself, and several rounds of machine gun ammo sent her scrambling back where she was. The automatic fire ended the second she'd left the safe house premises. *What the hell was that?* She peeked over the hedge. Whatever spotted her, it was either too dark or too small to see.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **October 28, 2018, 10:15:55 AM**

Tony moved to cover Emilena on the right, closer towards the front of the house, but he stayed more towards the middle, then drifted left towards the back as he watched Emilena head over the hedge of the neighbor's yard. As he moved to the right angle of the back corner of the house in order to cover her in the background, he heard the same powering up whine.

As he scanned the predawn darkness, the barest hints of light splitting the sky, he narrowed his eyes when gunfire erupted, driving Emilena back over the hedge, and it soon ceased shortly after. As Tony looked to the ground, having noticed the trajectory of the bullets as they buzzed the hedge, he saw a... was that a Roomba? A small vacuum puck on the ground? There looked to be an opening for a gun barrel, and he raised his brows, then took quick aim and fired off two rounds at it from his Glock, the bullets glancing off the armored surface with whirs.

Quickly ducking back behind the hedge, he panted. "Robotic drone guard! Looks like a Roomba!" He whispered to the vulpine. "Armored shell, but the laser may be able to take it out!" he told her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **October 30, 2018, 04:34:00 PM**

Soren and Anne had taken out the battery backup by the time Awe planted the charges. It was a simple task with Anne and Soren ripping out the wires that connected the rest of the house to the battery shed and its . He hadn't taken the weapon Emilena offered him as he couldn't separate the pruners to turn them into a crude dagger. Instead, he opted for a large rock that he picked up next to the battery housing.

The lights suddenly going out inside the house indicated that Marita's virus had done its work and knocked out the power.

In addition to the robotic guards, two guards, a Human and a Komondor exited and swept over the backyard. The large canine sniffed the air and scowled. "Intruders," he said. His voice had a thick, Hungarian accent, hinting at his homeland.

The Human flipped down his eyepiece and scanned the spacious backyard. There, he saw two hot spots that stood out against the cooler grass. "There!" he said, pointing at a clump of bushes near the backup batteries. He raised his pistol and fired before the Komondor shoved his hand down. "No! Shoot backup power and big fire happens! We get in close!"

The two then ran towards the battery shed.

Soren bit his lip and softly cursed as one of the bullets scraped his arm. "Go!" he growled at Anne.

Anne nodded and they both padded behind the power shed. "Now what?"

Soren held up his rock. "Let's give them something to *really* worry about!" He gently opened the door and saw the batteries connected to the power grid. The control panel inside was indicating that the wires were broken. He then smashed open one of the batteries, its plastic casing yielding to the rock. Soon, the air was filled with a distinct sweet metallic odor as the clear electrolyte leaked out from the crack. He saw it begin to smolder as it started reacting with the air.

"Hurry!" Anne replied as she heard the footsteps of the approaching guards.

Soren said nothing as he ran after Anne. Hopefully, the fire that was going to erupt would get the guards' attention.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 30, 2018, 04:49:12 PM**

Bianca walked down the street with the roomba in front of her , she had missed the commotion by literally seconds and had no idea of the goings on behind her. The roomba had acciompanied he before on previous food runs, as a security measure, in this sort of neighborhood, no one was stupid enough to walk out of their house without some security and the sight of roombas leading or trailing people was common. " Bianca was looking at a list of food places within walking distance that were open this earky and had good food.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 31, 2018, 10:36:28 PM**

Emilena gritted her teeth. With Tony's help, she targeted the ground and fired her laser rifle. It missed completely, but the light helped her draw a bead on her target and the next shot blasted the Roomba into a charred husk. Vaulting over the hedge a second time, she smashed her rifle butt against a window and cursed when it proved to be shatterproof. "Bastards. Can you get me some light?" she muttered, fishing a bobby pin out of her pocket and trying to pick the lock. She heard Soren having adventures in the front yard, but she trusted him to keep himself alive.

Nobody had heard from Awe in a while, she wondered if he'd infiltrated the building. But with stealth thoroughly compromised, there was little reason not to try and break in as soon as possible.

Kintoki clicked a flashlight attachment on the upper receiver of his rifle. "Bastards think I can't take them?" he muttered aloud, trying to psyche himself up and sound macho in front of Flora. "Those Purifier thugs are gonna have another thing coming!"

"Oh please," Flora rolled her eyes dismissively. "I've seen these particular Purifiers murder an entire convenience store full of cops. In seconds from now, they'll be on you like flies on honey."

"Shut up!" Kintoki snapped, hitting his radio. "Kranz, Áder! Status report!" he barked. "Do you see anything?" He swung the flashlight beam wildly around the hallway leading out of Flora's room.

"You don't want your last words to be that dumb question, right? Say something poignant, before its too late." Flora smiled, knowing she was agitating him and hoping it helped Emilena's team gain the upper hand.

Bianca's Roomba detected bodies in the Model J and chirped angrily. It readied its machine gun but waited to see evidence of hostile actions. Decades of AI research had managed to create surprisingly versatile defense drones that could detect most ranged weapons and knew to air on the side of caution. However, if Bianca shouted the code word ('*Rochambeau*') it would treat any nearby humans as hostile threats.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 31, 2018, 10:56:02 PM**

Awe by this point had infiltrated the building and was clearing it room by room. He hadn't run into any significant resistance so far but he had a feeling that he would soon. He soon came across a guard and crept up behind hind before covering his mouth and jamming his silenced pistol to the guard's head. "You're holding a woman here you're going to take me to her or I'll be the last thing you ever hear."

The guard however decided to play dumb. "What woman?"

"Wrong answer." Awe replied shooting the guard in the foot who let out a muffled scream but due to the tightness of awes hand was barely audible. "Care to try again?"

"She's on the second floor." The guard moaned.

"There, was that so hard?" Awe replied before pistol whipping the guard who fell over unconscious. "She's on the second floor guys." Awe signaled the rest of the group.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 31, 2018, 11:07:42 PM**

Good work " Marita said ' By my estimation, we've got about 10 minutes before the power comes back on, and whoever owns the place will have security called in, of the 'break your legs and/or neck type. So get up to the second floor, grab Flora and lets get the hell outta here' Marita said .

_ Come on Roomba!' Bianca said " motioning the device to move in front of her " I dont want to have to wait in line at the Breakfast Hole like last time. Last time it took me 20 minutes and the guards reamed me out because the food was cold. I dont want that to happen again, not least because I'll lose my tips." she sighed. " sometimes being a meal gopher sucks " she grumbled as she continued walking down the street, she had reached a crosswalk which led north, the Breakfast Hole was 3 blocks north of her current location, normally this was a quick back and forth kind of job.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **October 31, 2018, 11:22:16 PM**

"Copy that." Awe replied before aiming at a guard who was rushing at him firing two shots into him.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 01, 2018, 05:44:46 AM**

Bianca’s roomba chirped and gave up on the Model J, following her past it and down the sidewalk.

Emilena similarly gave up on trying to pick the lock and instead melted the hinges off with the laser rifle. “Keep an eye out for movement,” she warned as she and Tony entered the house, “but make sure it’s not Awe before you—“

She broke off as they came across the body of the guard Awe had knocked out. “Oh sweet, dibs on his gun.” Returning Tony’s laser rifle, she frisked the body and nodded approvingly at his silenced Glock. “Holy crap, this pistol has select fire,” she remarked, turning the selector. “Next bitch I see gets to help me test the full-auto.”

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“Not another word, Flora, you hear me?” Kintoki warned, pointing his rifle at her to prove he was serious. “Boss says he needs you alive, but but he didn’t specify anything about your *kneecaps*.”

He then regarded the door, relishing the stunned silence his threat had earned from his ward. “Whoever’s out there!” he called out, anticipating his foes were approaching. “Maybe we can talk this out? I think we might be able to help each other, settle this like gentlemen...”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 01, 2018, 08:05:45 PM**

Awe was creeping up on the room from the ceiling. Where he saw guard he knocked them out taking the rifle off of one. He approached a room with a single guard out side. Awe dropped down silently grabbing the guard and covering his mouth. "Nod your head is the woman you're holding in this room?" Awe asked. The guard nervously acknowledged awe's question. Awe put the guard in a sleeper hold and silently set him on the ground before getting a flashbang out. Awe checked to see if the door was unlocked from the side so he wouldn't be in the firing line.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 01, 2018, 09:00:40 PM**

" marita heard Kintokis voices through her control of the Security systems ' Awe ' Hes willing to negotiate. Remember, we dont want bloodshed if we can avoid it . Tell him, we only want Flora. If he gives her up, We let him go, no harm, no foul. Parley, if you have to. " Marita spoke into her communicator.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 01, 2018, 09:08:04 PM**

As Emilena fragged the Roomba, Tony moved to follow her in, and as they encountered the unconscious guard, Tony was handed the laser rifle back, and gladly took it, putting his Glock away, as he figured it was too small caliber for this operation. Good back up but right now... he needed firepower.

As he covered their backs, moving up to the second floor, he fired off a burst of red light that cut a surprised guard in half who moved around the corner to pop him, having utterly failed to do so as he was now in two pieces, a look of utter anguish and shock on his features as he collapsed cleanly in two. That squishy sound they made when they hit the floor... still drove Tony's stomach in knots.

Backing up the stairs, they arrived outside the door where Flora was being held, Awe joining them out front. Sighing as he heard Kintoki yell from inside, Tony took a knee, aimed the rifle high, and shook his head. Giving one glance to Emilena, he whispered to the vulpine "Fuck talking it out; I could fire one blast through there and likely take his head off." Though the ferret wasn't exactly sure where Flora was, and didn't want to accidentally hit her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 01, 2018, 09:21:41 PM**

Awe put the safety on the flashbang. "What are your terms?" he called back to Kintoki.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 02, 2018, 06:30:19 AM**

Emilena was covering their rear; she saw movement coming up the stairs and attempted to scare it with a short burst of suppressing fire, but she wasn't expecting her pistol's insane cyclic rate; it burnt through her entire magazine within a split second. Cussing quietly, she switched it back to single-fire for next time. But this meant she couldn't participate in any firefights Tony and Awe started against Kintoki.

"I can guess why you're here," Kintoki called through the door. While talking, he tapped his helmet and it began scanning their heat signatures. His sensors take a while to penetrate these thick safehouse walls, but in sixty seconds he'd know exactly where his conversation partners were standing, which would give him the advantage if they pushed through the door. "You see this girl as a loose end, and are here to silence her. Well, she's under my protection and I can't let you hurt her. Also, we've had her for months, she's already told us everything of value. You should just walk away, you have nothing to gain from taking this innocent young woman's life!"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 02, 2018, 07:34:03 AM**

As Kintoki spoke, Tony began lining up a shot against where the voice was coming from, trying to triangulate it and keep him talking, but not for too long. The laser beam could easily cut through the door and decapitate him, but he'd need to get the height correct. He'd keep this incredibly brief, so that they wouldn't be wasting time so that the other could get the bearings of their opponent.

"We're not here to kill her! We're here to retrieve her!" Tony called back, keeping his rifle leveled. "Enough of your men have died today! Let's prevent any more senseless bloodshed! She was a part of our group you might say awhile back, and we're here to simply take her back with us. What'll it be?" he asked, keeping his intentions vague; if he gave the speaker a timeframe, that'd just tip him off to when they prepared to storm the room, so Tony held up two claws and then formed a zero with his paw, mouthing the words "seconds" to Awe, to indicate they'd go in in 20 seconds if this guy didn't answer.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 02, 2018, 05:42:36 PM**

The guard attempted to scale the staircase again, so Emilena took advantage of the lights being off and vaulted downward, hitting him in the face with both boots. She didn't see that there were two of them until they were all tumbling down the staircase in a dogpile.

She was seeing stars by the third time her head smashed into a stair, but her element of surprise still helped her recover faster than her targets when they all finally hit the floor. Pinning the one directly underneath her, she dug her teeth into his crotch and ripped out a chunk of flesh, then pounced the other one. He swung a knife and left a large gash in her cheek, and she retaliated by raking her claws through his neck. As he clutched his throat, she wrestled the knife away from him and finished him off, then stabbed his equally-incapacitated partner to death.

Panting in terror, she tried to extricate her from the bodies and slipped on the blood. Hitting her head on the ground a fourth time, she blinked dizzily and gave up on standing right away. She just needed a second to...get her bearings...

"Is there any way you could prove to me that you have her best interests at heart?" Kintoki asked, stalling for time. "I care deeply about her safety, and--"

He broke off suddenly as Flora swung her bedside lamp in a wide arc and smashed him directly in the face, breaking his nose and sending his helmet flying off with a loud THUD. "How's *that* for innocent, you prick?" she snarled as he hit the ground in a daze. "Gonna shoot me in the kneecaps *now*!?"

Rapidly changing plans, Kintoki decided his best chance of surviving was to pretend he'd been knocked unconscious.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 02, 2018, 07:02:39 PM**

Awe heard the ruckus going on and broke the door down. He saw presumably the man who they'd been negotiating with and a single woman inside. "You Flora?" He asked as he went to check Kintoki out lowering his pistol.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 02, 2018, 09:01:47 PM**

"Who the hell are you?" Flora asked bluntly, cocking her head to the side. She kept the bloodstained lamp brandished and glanced behind Awe, hoping to see a familiar face before she assumed this newcomer was on her side.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 02, 2018, 09:09:01 PM**

"Name's Awe. Your friends hired my to help them with their problem and I agreed to accompany them to rescue you." Awe kicked Kintoki to make sure he was unconscious.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 02, 2018, 11:23:04 PM**

Just before Kintoki was knocked unconscious, Kranz had reported that the backup battery bank was on fire. Áder was busy trying to put out the fire. He had called for some additional guards to help extinguish the creeping, bluish flame. Thankfully, the battery shed was concrete so there wasn't much risk of the fire spreading. But even so, they wanted to minimize the damage. To make matters worse, the ionic liquid electrolyte was an excellent solvent and dissolved firefighting foams. Water was the most effective but for obvious reasons, it was not a good choice around live electrical equipment. That left sand and dirt, which was currently being heaped on the fire.

Soren and Anne entered through the open back door. Thankfully, the little bits of sunlight filtering in from the windows let him see how ornate the kitchen was. It was a classic Old World style kitchen with wood and granite making up the majority of the counters. The dining table that served as the centerpiece was a sleek glass and chrome construct that oozed modernity. "Shit," Soren muttered. "This guy's loaded."

"Yeah," Anne said, her ears swiveled around as she tried to pick up any sounds. Her ears suddenly pricked up as she heard footsteps. "Soren! Get a weapon!"

The Human quickly snatched a large filet knife from the knife block and kept it by his side.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 03, 2018, 11:23:49 AM**

As the room was stormed after the scuffle within, Tony moved in, scanning around with his rifle at the ready before lowering it, and then looked to Flora. "Hey... you ready to get out of here?" he asked, grinning, keeping his rifle only slightly lowered, but still at a ready position. "We're here to retrieve you. Emilena's behind me, Soren and Anne are somewhere downstairs... this is Awe... our newest member. I think I met you awhile back; Tony. Tony Stracci." he offered his name, still looking about just in case, but confident Emilena could protect their backs.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 04, 2018, 03:59:53 AM**

Flora relaxed when she saw Tony; she remembered him from outside the strip club, plus he knew the names of her old teammates. "Flora Hapsburg. Though I guess you probably already know who I am." She dropped the lamp. "Yeah, let's fucking bail," she muttered, glancing one final time at Kintoki, who unbeknownst to her was still emulating a coma patient as well as he could.

Emilena had just staggered to her feet when Flora reached the bottom of the stairs and cursed in surprise at how much blood the vixen was covered in. "It's okay!" Emilena assured, leaning against the wall for support. "Most of it is theirs. Just...come on." Shaking her head to clear her vision, she limped back towards the backdoor to leave the same way she and Tony had entered.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 04, 2018, 08:56:40 AM**

"Yep... kind of remember you." The ferret nodded, allowing her to pass by him before backing out of the room, rifle still at the ready in case some freak was hiding in the closet or something (he'd seen enough horror movies to know, plus, he now had to watch everyone's back as the positions had been reversed). Backpedaling out of the room, he began to head down the stairs, keeping a close eye on everything in case someone decided to come barreling out one of those doors to his left or right.

As they reached the ground floor, Tony glanced briefly behind him. "You OK?" he asked Emilena, noticing the gratuitous amount of blood she was covered in, and hoped most or all of that was not her own. As he heard stomping footsteps to his left, Tony swiveled the rifle and fired, his energy beam lancing through a surprised guard as he froze on the spot, dropping his gun with a clatter before he too fell to the ground. Checking the charge on his rifle, Tony sighed as he was relieved to see it still held 70% battery life, the green bar emitting a healthy glow and bathing his face in a slight aura.

"Clear back here! Let's go!" he called to the front, ready to make a dash for the Duesenberg as soon as they were outside.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 04, 2018, 11:41:10 AM**

Have you guys got Flora?' Marita said through her communicator " if so, get her in the car and lets get out of here.'

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 04, 2018, 07:01:52 PM**

"We're on our way out with her now." Awe replied. Awe raced out of the room placing the unconscious guard sprawled in the hallway so anyone chasing them would trip over him.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 04, 2018, 10:23:23 PM**

Emilena grimaced. "We'll talk about it later," she replied to Tony, touching the new hole in her cheek and wincing.

Flora suddenly tripped over Awe, sprinting for the backdoor. "*Gogogo!*" she hissed urgently. "Roomba!"

Emilena ducked outside, and Flora quickly followed, but the Roomba didn't even enter the room. "We're okay," Flora breathed as its robotic whirring faded down the hallway. "Sorry, false alarm. Guess it's headed for the kitchen."

Emilena nodded. "Awe, tell Marita to recall everyone. Let's blow this joint." Flora helped her climb awkwardly over the hedge. Neither of them knew the Roomba was headed for the room where Soren and Anne was...

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 04, 2018, 10:56:39 PM**

"Marita, we're getting out of here. Regroup with us and get everyone over here now!" Awe shouted urgently into the radio.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2018, 08:27:20 AM**

I'm in the dusenburg' Marita said ' just finishing downloading the data from the safehouse security system. theres a lot, and it looks like the location of Brennans headquarters is on there as well. I'll need to plug the coordinates into a mapping grid, but we can do that once we are in a safe and secure location.

Tony, can we crash at your place for a bit? we need time to rest recover and Debrief Flora. also she needs to call Bailey, let him know thats shes safe and sound, and that he can get off my back about the matter' Marita said. Just get in the car, and lets floor it out of here. Nice work everyone"
-
Biamca reached the checkout line and paid for her meal. the roomba turning around and following her as she headed out the door.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 05, 2018, 12:39:28 PM**

"I don't mind! Nobody else is using my house but me!" Tony radioed back, barreling out the back of the house and leaping over the fence, performing a clumsy roll as he sprang back up to his foot paws and began charging across the intervening lawn and into the street, running diagonally across the pavement, listening to his shoes *slap-slap-slap* the asphalt as he moved.

Reaching the Duesenberg, he threw the driver's side door open, piled in, and pulled out the starter knob, listening to the straight-eight turn over and roar into life as he gave the throttle a little gas to get the engine going. As he looked around, he did a quick head count, and slapped the wheel. "Shit!" he uttered. "Are Soren and Anne all right? Anybody see them?" he asked, whipping out his Glock as he scanned the street in front of the house. He kept the car idling, not releasing the parking brake or shifting into gear yet, as they didn't quite have everyone.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 05, 2018, 07:07:47 PM**

The noise was a butler who had gotten up early to prepare the kitchen for a dinner party. As he entered the kitchen, Soren leapt out from behind the pantry door and held his knife to the man's throat. The man started to scream, but Soren gently drew the knife across his neck, leaving a thin red line.

"W...what do you want?" the man stammered out.

"Nothing. You never saw us." He then turned to Anne. The Shetland Pony mare grabbed the man and shoved him into the pantry. She forced the door shut and tied the knobs together with an apron hanging from it.

It was then that the squat "Roomba" guard rolled into the kitchen. "Run!" Anne exclaimed. It came not a moment too soon as several plates exploded as it fired at the duo. Soren swept his arm and knocked over a glass jar of flour, hoping it would obscure their escape somewhat. He wasted no time in following Anne out the back door.

"Damn, looks like they got the fire under control," Soren said as a bullet from the guards who were previously fighting the fire nicked his cheek. He sprinted towards the front yard where he knew the rest of the crew were located.

Anne sent a message out to Marita and the others.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2018, 07:46:44 PM**

The flour did the job; the Roomba's sensors were blocked, its treads got clogged and it swiveled back and forth blindly as its targets escaped.

Back at the Model J, Flora couldn't help but whistle in appreciation when they reached the ride. "Damn, you traveled in style," she complimented as someone inside opened the door to let them in. Emilena grunted as Flora ungraciously shoved her rear end through the car door to make room for herself. "There's Soren, let's book it!" she shouted, covering her head as the Hungarian guard and his buddy fired at the car. "This old car was built with protection around the engine right? I don't wanna explode..."

Kintoki staggered to his feet, clutching his broken nose. Stomping to the bathroom, he assessed the damage in the mirror and whimpered as he saw his nose bent out of shape. Taking a deep breath, he tweaked it back into place with a painful wince. Washing his face off and grabbing a towel to stem the bleeding, he retrieved his helmet from the bedroom floor and paced quickly down the stairs to see whether his men were able to stop the rescue party from getting away.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2018, 09:07:42 PM**

Hello' flora' Marita said, moving over so Flora could grab a seat" Good to see you're still in one piece.' She said as she finished downloading the data from the security systems. " They didnt rough you up, did they?"

_
Hi Flora " Marie said from the back seat " Glad you seem to be ok. Having to serve as a decoy isnt fun, but better than having to break into a heavily guarded house. Not my strong suit. I ended up grabbing a pair of garden shears as a weapon. Just in case Poison Ivy decides to drop by, or something " marie shrugged.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 05, 2018, 09:22:43 PM**

"Let's hope Soren and anne show up soon." Awe remarked. "They will be on us in a hurry when their power comes back on."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2018, 09:30:26 PM**

We have 5 minutes before that happens " marota said. " she turned as an blurb popped up on her computer " they're on their way. Should be out in less than a minurte. have the car ready to go" Marota typed a response message and sent it to Anne ' Have Flora. get in the back seat if you can. we're moning out as soon as ytou get in Marita"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 05, 2018, 09:46:23 PM**

As Soren and Anne moved out of the house, Tony covered them, firing to their sides with his Glock as the two guards opened up behind them. "Yep! Modified it! Most of my cars are bulletproof... had them rebuilt to withstand problems like this one!" the ferret exclaimed, squeezing off another round as he dropped the guard standing next to the Hungarian, the fellow spinning about like a top before hitting the ground.

As human and pony filed into the vehicle, Tony smiled at Flora's compliment. "Yep! Only way to travel! Best of the best of the 1930s! OK... let's get the hell out of here!" he threw the car into gear, released the brake and off they went, Tony almost immediately shifting into second so he could floor it. Moving the big lever first into neutral, then second, the car was off and roaring along, the ferret firing off a few more rounds from his Glock at the Hungarian as he took off down the street. "We aren't sticking around here! Marita I believe suggested we head back to my place to regroup... provided that's OK with everyone else." he spoke up, wincing as a couple of bullets glanced off the Duesenberg's side but otherwise did no damage.

"Heh... love these modifications." he muttered, shaking his head and whipping the big car around the corner and down onto another street that led out of the development, and eventually, back toward the highway. "I'm surprised they had such a force at that place!" he commented, shaking his head again and gripping the wheel. "Was like a goddamned fortress." He glanced in the rearview mirror just to make sure they weren't being followed, but didn't see anything initially. Beginning to relax a little, he focused more on the drive, as driving tended to settle his nerves. "Everyone all right back there?" he asked, turning left and heading onto an on ramp for the freeway. Circling on the ramp about 180°, the big car was soon zooming down the highway at good speed, Tony keeping it around 75 mph for now, though the car could easily do more than that.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 05, 2018, 09:52:20 PM**

"Your place sounds good to me tony." Awe replied. "Mine would be far too small for all of us."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2018, 10:35:36 PM**

Flora wasn't sure why she should be in the backseat, but acquiescently climbed over the middle seats, apologizing to Axel. "Ummm...hi," she said to Marita and Marie awkwardly, the ones currently filling both jump seats. She hadn't seen these two since the incident at the bar, and for reasons she didn't know she had a much more favorable view of them. "Uhhh...sorry for how I treated you two before," she said quietly, keeping their conversation quiet enough for just the three of them. "I'm...glad to see you both. Where's Rose?"

Emilena lay her head tiredly against the window, exhaling with relief as the guards gave up attempting to shoot the wheels out. "That could have gone worse..." she muttered.

"Intruders gone, sir," the accented voice of Mátyás Áder, the Hungarian guard, came filtered through Kintoki's radio. "With hostage. No casualties on their side, far as I can see."

Kintoki took a deep breath. "You did good," he reported back, expanding his channel to radio every guard, living or dead. "All units, report to the surveillance room in the basement. Do not pursue suspects, I repeat, do NOT pursue."

He killed the radio and opened his computer. Checking the security system, he noted that the Purifier team's hacker had downloaded the data packet just as planned. *Operation was a success,* he reported to Coxon on their private instant-messaging system. *They've got Flora and the location of Brennan HQ.* He hesitated, then added: *They have a red Duesenberg Model J and a couple of unexpected teammates. I'll be writing up and sending you itemized descriptions as soon as I've interviewed and sorted out the surviving guards. Good luck, sir.*

Kintoki heard the safehouse door slam shut above him, and a low humming indicated the yard's self-cleaning system was disposing of any outside evidence of the firefights that just occurred. Kintoki knew he'd have to speak to the neighbors and compensate them for any damage to their houses and lawnwork, but he had a more immediate matter to attend to. His remaining guards (and families of the deceased) were entitled to enough money to retire overnight, the agreed-upon compensation for engaging in firefights with targets they weren't allowed to harm. He had a lot of paperwork ahead of him...

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 06, 2018, 09:07:40 PM**

Awe took the time to make a silent prayer for the guard he'd killed. "What's our next move?" Awe asked.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 06, 2018, 10:15:44 PM**

Tony spent the time on the highway maneuvering the Duesenberg around other cars, passing them when he felt they were moving too slowly, and keeping up a steady pace, the big straight-eight giving out its distinctive throaty whine as he drove along. The old gas-burner's noise helped calm him after the infiltration and firefight... never a dull moment with this group... and those firefights were always fights for his life.

But those thoughts faded as he focused on the drive, and the feel of the car moving around him. The engine block was one of the biggest of all time, even by modern standards. Super cars rarely got out of the 200 cubic inch range... his Duesey sported a 420 cubic inch engine. Pumping out 265 horsepower (320 for the supercharged models), it was a beast in its day, and more than adequate now. It made him smile, and settle back into the very comfortable seat, exhaling a little as he guided the car north and east, to where his manor was located.

"Well... regroup at my place." the ferret responded to Awe, looking over to him briefly. "And asses the data we gathered... find our next target..." he commented, keeping his body reposed against the seat. "And yeah... could've been worse... fortunate it wasn't." he agreed with Emilena. "Didn't lose anyone either... so that's good." Tapping his claw a bit on the wheel, Tony frowned at a slow car ahead of him. The Duesenberg moved with authority as he merged lanes and blew by the slower car. "Hate that bullshit." he muttered. "Drivers that can't keep up with traffic." Shaking his head, the ferret appreciated his Model J for its raw power, having nudged it into third for the cruise back to the house. Taking the exit, he eased the car up the winding drive to his large home on the hills above the city, and then down the ramp and into his mammoth underground garage. As the lights automatically kicked on at the car's entrance, they illuminated gleaming painted vintage cars of all sorts and shapes, lined up in two wide rows down the long garage.

As he slowed to a halt, then backed the car up into its slot, he turned the key, killing the engine as he set the brake. "OK... everybody out! End of the line! Elevator is off to your left... it'll take you up into the main house." He explained, sliding out now and beginning to make his way over to the elevator doors at the far end.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 06, 2018, 11:57:42 PM**

Soren touched his cheek where the bullet from one of the guards had scraped him. The blood had dried but it haden't scabbed over yet. He hopped out of the expensive vehicle and looked around the expansive underground garage.

Anne whistled as she looked at the expansive garage. It was practically a museum with exotic cars that ranged in age from contemporary custom built gas-burners to cars that were older than her grandparents. She then headed to the elevator after Soren.

The elevator was surprisingly beautiful with mirror polished walls and ornate brass fittings that gave it the distinct charm of a bygone era. Soren said nothing but looked around. To him, he found the fixtures a bit outdated despite their elegance.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 07, 2018, 12:20:27 AM**

Awe whistled in awe at the number of vintage cars. "Nice collection." Awe remarked. Awe entered the elevator and took a look around. "Nice elevator."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 07, 2018, 01:07:32 PM**

Emilena climbed out of the car. She wished she could stay to admire Tony's garage, but she needed to clean herself up and take care of the long gash in her cheek. "Tony, could you direct me to the restroom? Also, you wouldn't happen to own a sewing needle, would you?" she asked.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 07, 2018, 01:28:06 PM**

Nodding as his shoes echoed throughout the garage, Tony looked to Emilena. "Yeah sure thing." he replied. "I'll show you when we get up there. I have a sewing machine... you could probably take the needle out of it." He explained. Smiling as he entered the elevator, he nodded to Awe. "Thanks... appreciate it. Oh and the elevator heh... had it imported." he commented, rocking on his heels as they arrived in a study style room. A brown leather couch rested up below a window, and scores of books reposed on bookshelves built into the wall. A gun safe was recessed into another wall, and hallways led off right and left.

"Nearest bathroom is second door on the left down the left hallway." he pointed for Emilena. "The sewing machine is in the corner over there. Feel free to remove the needle. Threads should be underneath in the cabinet. Can I get anyone anything?" he offered, shoving his paws in his pockets and rocking back and forth on his paws.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 07, 2018, 11:37:58 PM**

"Scotch double with ice please." Awe said taking a seat on the couch. "Also, do you have a gym?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 06:14:53 AM**

Flora shuddered as the others left the car and, eventually, the garage, leaving her alone with Marita and Marie. Her instincts reminded her what happened last time she was stuck in the back of a car with Marie, but her heart told her that even if that happened again, it's okay because Marie has her best interests at heart. "Ummm, so how are you two doing these days?" she laughed nervously to break the silence. "You're not mad at me...are you?"

Tony's bathroom had a hybrid bathtub-shower that was easily the most luxurious thing Emilena had ever stepped in; she suspected it alone cost more than the entire apartment she'd owned in Lanthae. She'd originally planned on keeping her shower brief in the name of expediency, but she couldn't resist testing every single setting of the adjustable spigot and lathering her fur with scented gels from every single bottle. Tony's bathroom even came with a clothes-washing and drying slot in the wall, a more advanced version of the same model Emilena once owned. (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341.msg380023#msg380023)

After she realized she was falling asleep in the steaming bubbly water, Emilena forced herself to dry off and tend to her sliced-open cheek. She was still carrying her garrotte from the hospital (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.msg469471;topicseen#msg469471), which she hadn't ended up using, but she could now wash and disassemble it to make practical use of the surgical thread. Wincing with every stab, she sewed the hole shut as well as she could and used hydrogen peroxide and bandages from under the sink to clean and cover it from view. Wasn't the finest care she could receive, but it would hold until she saw Lily again.

Which was a coming event she couldn't help but worry about. Now that Emilena knew she shared a mental bond with Lily, she had to wonder how much Lily could ascertain about her situation. Here at Tony's house, waiting for Marita to decrypt files that would take hours to complete, Emilena's first real break started now. If Lily was aware of that, she would almost certainly punish Emilena for not immediately coming to her aid like she'd demanded. *And you know what?* Emilena growled into the mirror, doubting Lily could hear her. *I'm kinda sick of living my life in fear of you anyway. Maybe I WILL come over there and test a little theory I've got on your regenerative powers...*

With a quiet DING, Emilena's clothes returned from the slit in the wall. Sighing, she got dressed and left to find the others.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 08, 2018, 09:47:55 AM**

Nodding, Tony went over to a mini-bar and rooted through the fridge, bottles clinking as he tried to locate some Scotch. Pulling out a bottle, he poured a double shot into a glass after dumping ice in it, and walked over to Awe, holding it out for him.

"So there is... you go through the living room over there...." He pointed to his right. "There's a staircase in the corner. Go down the staircase, and you 'll find a corridor. Around the corner and second door on the right, there's a gym. It's got nice windows that look out over the hills and city so... help yourself." the ferret smiled.

Moving over to the couch, Tony plopped down on it, exhaling. "Quite a day." he stated aloud to no one in particular. Spreading his arms out to rest on the couch behind him, he tapped his paws in alternating patterns until Emilena showed up. "Find everything OK?" he asked. "I guess we have to decrypt our information now, yeah?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 07:50:10 PM**

"That'd be the next step, yeah," Emilena nodded. "I'm planning on letting those of us with more technical backgrounds worry about that. Either way, I doubt we're going to approach Brennan's HQ before nightfall, so for the first time in a while we have an open day ahead of us."

She glanced at the bar. "You wouldn't happen to have Blue Cherry, would you?" Blue Cherry was a non-alcoholic beer she used to drink when she was a cop; Emilena's tolerance was too low for the real thing.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 08, 2018, 08:00:35 PM**

"Heh... sounds good to me." Tony acknowledged, nodding. "I don't mind taking some time off. Damn firefights always get my adrenaline racing far too much." He admitted, getting up and stretching his arms over his head. "I think I might, yeah." He nodded, walking over behind the mahogany counter and opening up a bigger fridge back there. "Hmm... I drink that from time to time... even though I'm definitely more of an alcohol person." he admitted. Pulling out a bottle of the blue stuff, he shut the fridge and walked over to her, holding it out, a vanilla porter in his other paw, which he soon cracked open and took a swig from.

As he looked out the windows to the gathering daylight, he shook his head. "So I guess we got most of the day ahead of us. I took the Duesenberg out around 4 AM if I recall so..." glancing to his watch, he noted the time. "8:45 AM. If we get there by dark... gives us most of the day, as you said."

He rolled his wrist out, holding it in his free paw as he did so. "Do we need any supplies?" he asked, looking to her now. "Things for the coming assault? I could make a supply run if we don't have it here." He suggested. "I've got guns in the safe, but not sure if we'd need anything else." He took another drink from his beer.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 08:20:12 PM**

"It's tough to say before the brainiacs see what we've got in the stolen data." Emilena gratefully took the Blue Cherry and took a sip. Normally, she'd just drink water, but these past days had taken a toll on her. "Guns are a safe bet though. I'd love some 9mm ammo for my new silenced Glock, and maybe a combat knife."

She glanced left and right; only Awe was in listening distance. "Also, don't go telling everyone, but I might be making a short personal trip before nightfall. It's about...that thing we discussed before."

She sighed. "I said I expected Lily to kill me when we next meet, but that's not exactly true. She needs info from me. I have a lead that could reveal the location of the Purifier headquarters. I stop being useful to her once she gets that, so naturally I've been procrastinating on following that trail." She took another sip of her drink. "Of course, if I wait too long without contacting her, she may realize I'm stalling and that I'm just a loose end that will never fulfill my end of the bargain."

She hiccupped, and suddenly remembered why she didn't drink Blue Cherry anymore. "So I was thinking, my best chance of survival might be an unexpected strike," she explained, setting the glass down quickly. "Arrive for our meeting and sucker punch her when she thinks I'm cooperating. Then figure something out while she's dead and regenerating."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 08, 2018, 08:32:09 PM**

Awe nodded his head and took a drink. "Ah thank you Tony." Awe looked outside at the rising sun. "I was always more of a night owl I never appreciated the sight the sun rising could do." Awe coughed a few times before taking another drink.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 08, 2018, 08:33:50 PM**

As held the cold beer in his paw, he frowned a little, nodding as she began speaking about her personal trip. "I can provide ammo." He said softly, taking another swig. "Right... so... she needs Purifier headquarters... if she could wipe it out for us..." He replied in quiet tones. "Might be worth it. But as said... she may be safer dead." he reiterated. He nodded a second time as she mentioned she could strike in an unexpected fashion, coming up with something while Lily was regenerating. "Atomize her maybe... blast her to bits... I dunno... gonna have to be permanent. Throw her in a fuckin' incinerator." he shrugged here.

Tasking another drink, he thought now, looking off to the side. "Won't say anything to the others, don't worry. If you need a ride... I could provide that as well. Hell..." he smiled now, looking back over to her. "Might just go for a spin right now anyway... helps me relax and unwind after nearly having my life snatched from me." he half-joked, chuckling. Growing serious again, he looked right at her. "You think you can do it? End her? In a... permanent fashion?" His snout was down, his eyes intently upon her.

Looking over to Awe, Tony nodded. "No problem. And eh... yeah I guess... I prefer the night too." he admitted, looking at the sun climbing in the sky.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 08:56:53 PM**

"It honestly might," Emilena nodded. "Though I'm a little worried about a Lily who's wiped out her primary enemy and needs to find a new pursuit to occupy her time."

She covered her mouth after another hiccup. "Incinerator won't work, I've seen it. I guess I should explain; for the last two months--at least before the Purifiers found us again--the two of us had been targeting serial killers. Lily would pose as a vulnerable victim, usually a hooker, and I'd tail her john back to his place. If he killed her, I'd knock him out and leave video evidence for the police. Lily insisted I get as much footage as possible, which means I had to see some...disturbing things happen to her."

Emilena shuddered. "This gave me a lot of opportunities to witness exactly how Lily's body prioritizes the healing process. It seems to treat the head as the 'base'; it's always the first thing to regenerate, and the rest of the body grows out from there. One guy had kept her head as a souvenir, and the rest of her body grew back out from her neck stump."

She took a deep breath. "I apologize for having this conversation while you're enjoying a drink. But I was thinking...it's possible that if I beheaded her and trapped her head in some sort of reinforced box--titanium or some very solid material--she wouldn't be able to regenerate. She'd just be stuck in that box...forever...as a partially-regenerated head."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 08, 2018, 09:12:55 PM**

"True enough... as said... probably safer dead." he commented, taking another drink, and smiling as she stifled a hiccup, or attempted to. He then listened intently about the setups... and Lily's regenerative powers. He swallowed, but didn't mind the talk, as he just chugged a bit to force any bile back down his throat. As Emilena explained that placing Lily's head in a box might be the way to go... he raised his brows. "Well first off... that's OK... I don't retch easily." he replied. "Second... that... might work." He frowned, nodding. "What about complete destruction of the head? Throwing it in a tree masticator or something." he suggested. "Those things tend to turn logs into dust." he pointed out.

"Still..." he moved his head slightly to the side. "Head in a box may work. I just hope she couldn't use her powers for anything else if... she's still able to do that while alive." he mused aloud now. "Wouldn't want her escaping after all. But if you think it has a chance... then... I say go for it. I could provide whatever assistance you need... for whatever it's worth." the ferret concluded.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 09:24:52 PM**

"The head regenerates from being completely destroyed, like the rest of her. Leaving it intact would keep variables to a minimum." Emilena bit her lip. "I don't think she'll even feel any pain; she wouldn't have regenerated far enough to even come back to life. I can handle the...unpleasant part, but I would appreciate if you have an appropriately-sized safe or other airtight container. And of course I would appreciate someone to drive me out there. But you're putting yourself at risk if you do that," she warned. "There's nothing stopping her from killing you, though you'd probably be fine if you stayed outside in the car."

The hiccups were dying down, but when Emilena realized it might be her last drink ever, she downed the rest anyway. "But be prepared to leave quickly if she walks out and I'm not with her. Success or failure, our meeting shouldn't take too long..."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 08, 2018, 09:42:37 PM**

Nodding, he stroked his chin a little. "I see... well... I suppose I could come up with something around here. If not, the guy who machines all my parts for rebuilding my cars' engines and such could probably whip something up. He's a master... and has resurrected and recreated engines and parts people haven't seen in over a hundred years." he explained. "So yeah, if I don't have something around here, I bet he could make it."

He thought, closing his eyes, and then reopened them as he took his beer to about halfway down the bottle. "Mm... I could stay outside in the car. Sounds like I'll need something fast if she does walk out... suppose I could run her over to buy myself some time if I needed it but... that won't be an issue. I've got enough cars down there with good power and torque." He smirked. He ran his claws through his head fur after pushing his cap up a bit. "Hm... well... guess the first step is seeing if I have anything here. If not, place a rush order with my guy, but since it's a simple box, he should have it done by the time we even get there." he told her. "When would you want to leave?" he asked, taking his beer down to a quarter left.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 08, 2018, 10:35:58 PM**

We're glad you're alive ' Marie said ' we dont know where Rose is because she was last seen with you when we got separated. we have gotten word rom her for weeks ' MArie Sighed. " truthfully , Bailey's been riding my ass once he found out the Purifiers got you. the deal was we keep you safe and he'd pay us a lot of scratch to keep an eye on you. And, more importantly to keep everything hush hush. Well the hush husg part is long out the windiw, but thees still keepng you alive. " marita said. " We would both appreciate if you'd call Bailey, Tell him you're with us and that you're fine. and well, vouch for our atching you, or something. I'm prety sure tony has a bunch of phones in his house, just ask for one and take a few minutes to call Bailey. I need to work o getting the info I Got from the safehouse decrypted. the security on that computer system was pretty wak, like there were almost letting me have the data ' Marita mused. '

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Why dont we head in?' marie suiggested ' i dont know about yiou girls byt I could defiitely use some food. " hiopefully tony doesnt mind if we grab some stuff from his pantry."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 08, 2018, 10:41:20 PM**

Awe finished his drink and walked to the gym. "let's get some training in." he thought to himself.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2018, 10:56:09 PM**

"So long as you prevent her from touching you, you could beat her in a fair fight easily," Emilena nodded, standing up. "Lily still has no combat skills whatsoever, it's just that she can drain your body of energy or put you into cardiac arrest with the tap of her finger." She crossed to the bar and started washing her glass. "I'm ready when you are, to be honest. I've never been one to delay the inevitable, and who knows? If all goes well, maybe I'll have time to actually enjoy relaxing in your elegant house."

Flora nodded. "I can call Bailey, of course! I wouldn't want him to think badly of you, you two are some of the kindest people I know."

She followed them into the house and, sure enough, there was an old-fashioned rotary phone sitting nearby. After several failed attempts to figure out how to dial rotary, Flora managed to reach the operator and put in a collect call to Nigel Bailey. “You got a lot of nerve calling me up under her name.” Flora was surprised by how bitter he sounded; she’d never heard him this full of barely-repressed rage. “I’m tracking your line as we speak, and you’re not gonna like who I’m sending your way.”

“Uhh, Nigel, it’s me.”

“Flora!?” Bailey snapped in equal parts anger and surprise. “Is that really you?”

“Hi...” Flora answered quickly.

“Flora, I am so sorry for not listening to you,” Bailey started. “You repeatedly warned me not to leave you with those crackpots, and I ignored you. I got distracted by the money, they were offering to shelter you on the cheap. But I guess we got what we goddamn paid for!”

“Umm...I mean, I know I said a lot of mean things about them…” Flora looked back at them nervously. “But-”

“I’m getting you out of there,” Bailey assured. “Where are you? I’m sending my guys, you warn those dykes not to lay another *finger* on you or it’s the last thing they’ll ever--”

“--Bailey!” Flora interrupted. “You’re wrong. They're good people.” Stunned silence answered her. “Rose has my best interests at heart, and so do Marita and Marie.”

“But-but-but they dragged you into multiple shootouts! With *cyberterrorists*!” Bailey stammered. “You told me one of them tried to *rape* you!”

“Marie meant it out of love.” The neurocotics in Flora’s system (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.msg441155;topicseen#msg441155) sent her heart aflutter, and as she gripped the phone she imagined it was Rose’s soft hand. “Don’t send thugs, Nigel. I want to stay with them. I...I think I love them too.”

Bailey whistled. “You’re suffering from PTSD,” he answered. “Some sort of Stockholm Syndrome. You don’t even sound like you. Flora, I got you into this mess, and now I’m getting you out.”

“Bailey--!” Flora heard him hang up on her. “Crap.” She hung up the line. “Um, Bailey’s still not happy. I think we might need to watch our backs going forward…” she confessed to Marita and Marie.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 09, 2018, 02:50:13 AM**

Awe was lifting weights in the gym while listening to music. "Nothing like a good work out to destress."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 09, 2018, 09:39:49 AM**

Tony nodded, thinking on it. "Well... good to know she can't destroy my car." he smirked. "Heh... relaxing... would be amazing. I should really recharge the laser rifle but... it's got enough for a decapitating shot if I need to use it." he stated, pulling out his Glock from his waistband and ejecting the clip. "I think I'll reload this as well." he stated, heading over to his gun safe, pressing his thumb on the reader, then scanning his eye so it would open up.

"So after we leave..." he told her, slapping in a new clip to his pistol with force. "Garage door will lock behind us and go into security mode. So long as there are people in the house, the automated defenses won't activate, but if everyone leaves the house and the system detects nobody inside, security will come online and they won't be able to get back in... so we may want to tell them don't leave unless they absolutely have to, as they won't be able to get back in unless I'm present." he informed the vulpine. "We could just tell them we're making a supply run or something... whatever." he suggested.

"Take what you need." he motioned to the safe, and then whipped out his phone to place a call with his machinist. "Hi Jerry... yes it's Tony... I know you're just opening up, but I need a rush order... willing to pay your usual rush fee. It's easy though; if by the time we arrive, which should be... eh probably an hour and a half from now..." the ferret said, checking his watch. "You could whip up a very small box of your strongest titanium alloy, that would be great! It needs to be smaller than an average human head... I know those are unusual dimensions, but it's what needs to happen... I'd say if possible half the size of a human head." he ordered. "Great! All right! I'll be right over!" the ferret hung up, and smiled. "Should be ready by the time we get there." he spoke to Emilena.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 09, 2018, 03:19:10 PM**

"That's great, thanks again Tony," Emilena nodded. "Honestly, it will be nice having backup at this meeting. That's more than I expected to have, I usually don't involve other people in my business." She gave a rare smile. "It's weird having an ally who goes out of their way to ask how they can help."

She grabbed several 9mm magazines from the safe as Flora, Marie and Marita walked into the room. "Hey you three. Tony and I are going on a quick supply run. Can you let the others know that at least one person needs to stay here to prevent the automated defenses from activating?"

"That shouldn't be a problem, I'm certainly not planning on going anywhere." Flora replied. "Where are you running to, Tony? Could you bring me back a musical instrument? Literally anything, it could even be a kazoo, I just miss writing songs."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 09, 2018, 03:39:24 PM**

"Heh yeah well... figured I've been inactive enough... I have a lot of ground to make up so... may as well start now." he smiled, nodding. "And yeah... I guess that would be odd in some circumstances." he agreed. "I'm just trying to do what I can... not mess up." he stated.

As Marita, Marie, and Flora entered the room from the elevator, Tony nodded to them, and listened to Emilena's brief little explanation, nodding in approval as it was accurate. Blinking, he looked to Flora. "Erm... uh... I'm not sure we're heading to any place really like that... but... I guess maybe if something's on the way..." he kind of trailed off here, not being very musically inclined himself. He didn't really know too many music stores around here.

"Anyway, help yourself to the kitchen, just don't overdo it." He cautioned. "It's very well stocked. We're mostly just getting more ammo, some weapons, and perhaps some food shopping... unsure yet. We're kind of making this up as we go." he explained. "Anyway..." placing the Glock back behind him in his waist, he nodded to Emilena. "Let's head out. Give me a call if you need anything or don't know how to turn something on." he smirked, walking to the elevator. "We'll be back in a few hours." he informed them, hitting the button for the elevator.

Riding the brass elevator down to his garage, Tony exited, the lights kicking back on and illuminating the shiny rows of vastly different painted cars spread out before them. "So uh... I had three ideas for fast cars... you feeling more open or enclosed?" he asked Emilena, smiling slightly.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 09, 2018, 03:46:27 PM**

Now that she was washed and bandaged and hydrated, Emilena could really appreciate the stellar collection of vintage vehicles Tony had accrued. "I say it a lot, but I still can't believe you're risking your life with us," she breathed in awe. You've got it made here."

She thought about his request. A closed car would be more strategically secure, but she'd also like to feel the wind on her face one last time before Lily kills her. "Let's do open," she grinned, only slightly worried at the number of indulgences she was taking on account of her possible imminent death.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 09, 2018, 05:50:45 PM**

((So here's some photos of the Crane-Simplex: https://goo.gl/images/eNKPJk
https://goo.gl/images/q8mXGL
https://goo.gl/images/UfRJt9
Interior front of a different model: https://goo.gl/images/coeVB1
Different model top down with unfolding windscreen: https://goo.gl/images/TTMCrJ
Back with the cabinets and unfolding jump seats: https://goo.gl/images/sDmGMW))

"Aw heheh... well yeah... I guess I do..." He rubbed the back of his neck. "I dunno... I guess there's something to be said for friends... and for the thrill of it all..." he admitted. "But yeah... it'd be nice if someday I could just leave all the gunfights and risking my life behind me." he admitted, wandering over to the Duesenberg to retrieve the laser rifle.

As she suggested open, he grinned. "I was hoping you'd say that! Been wanting to take this baby out for a serious spin for a long time now." He began walking down the rows, stopping at a gorgeous blue and cream colored, massive, older looking car. It was a convertible... a large one, and was the definition of open air touring. "So while this thing may look ancient, you will not see a finer example of automobile ever made in the 1910s." he grinned, patting its hood. "This is an incredibly rare Crane-Simplex... it may even be the only one of its kind remaining... if you were insanely rich around the time we were killing each other in the First World War, you'd buy this... but I mean insanely rich. The chassis alone started at $5,500... which is about $150,000 in today's currency... and the custom coachwork? Pfft... tack on another $175,000 in today's currency... you're looking at the equivalent of an over $300,000 car." he explained, smirking. "Its astronomical price drove away most buyers... making it rare even for its day... but for those lucky enough to own it... well..." He opened the passenger side door now to show off its lavish interior, being all maroon leather seats, nickel plated instrument gauges, and wood paneling.

"The back has a footrest, wooden drawers for storing things, and an unfolding windscreen you could put up for a bit of extra protection if you didn't want the wind blowing in your face." he outlined. "The most impressive thing though... is the engine. 563.7 cubic inches... massive by any standards, 110 horsepower straight-six capable of propelling this beauty at 90 mph... easily! For 1916... that was insane! I have NO idea what in the hell they thought people would be doing back then, considering all the roads were dirt, mostly rural, and pockmarked with holes, but for over 300K in today's money back then... you were purchasing a real super car... a car that could easily put anything it drove by to shame. You have to keep in mind... in 1916, most cars were barely putting out 40 horsepower, and doing about 25 mph. This car was a beast... owned by the likes of John D. Rockefeller and Frederick Vanderbilt. Unfortunately..." Tony climbed in, and began pumping a lever on the dash to get some gas into the engine. "They were only made for about two years before the First World War caused them to shift focus to aircraft engines... and never again were Crane-Simplexes made..." he sighed, turning on the electric switch and sliding behind the wheel.

Pulling out the choke, and and retarding the spark with a lever on the steering wheel, the ferret then pushed in a small pedal on the floor to engage the starter. As the engine began to crank into life, it turned over a few times and then started up with a cacophonous roar, filling the garage with its noise before Tony advanced the spark by moving the lever back up, causing the engine to even out into a smoother, steady hum. Pushing in the choke, he grinned to her. "Well let's go! We got an overpowered human to end!" he called, patting the seat next to him.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 09, 2018, 08:33:39 PM**

Emilena narrowed her eyes at the manual choke, completely unable to guess how it worked. "Uhh, I've never admitted this to anyone, but...I actually never got a legal driver's license," she confessed as they drove through the hills away from Tony's residence. "They gave me a state-issued ID when I passed through the Growth Acceleration program, and nobody ever brought it up while I went through basic training. Lanthae squad cars had an emergency self-driving feature and I just used it until I'd taught myself to drive."

She rolled down the window. "It's pretty amazing what you can get away with by just letting people assume things of you." She glanced at Tony. "Speaking of which, do you think Awe's being completely honest with us? You've had more 1-on-1 time with him than I have. What's his endgame?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 09, 2018, 08:55:55 PM**

Tony put the car in gear, then released the parking brake, and pulled out of the garage, the door opening and then closing behind them. Tony yanked the shift lever down into neutral, then into 2nd as they began heading through the hills, the car lurching forward, indicative of its power. It required double-clutching, but he knew how to do that as easily as normal shifting. "Really?" he asked, looking over to her with a smile as the wind whipped about them, the ferret taking the car into third gear now. "Heh... well... I mean most cars nowadays drive themselves... auto features and all that... driving something like this... it's different. You're... you're almost a part of the car in a way... you control when you shift... how fast you go... and can control it in icy conditions, etc." He explained. "I love it... my electric car... it's great and all... but it just drives itself practically... it's like you're sleeping, you know?" he asked, looking over to her briefly as they merged onto the highway, Tony shifting the Crane-Simplex into fourth gear, the big "land yacht" starting to accelerate into higher speeds, wind rustling his fur as they really got going.

"My dad found this at uh... I can't even remember now... an auction I think. So damn rare... it's the rarest car he ever purchased, and he's acquired some rare ones!" he conceded. "Lots of power, as you can see." he moved the old vehicle smoothly by one of the electrics, the driver staring at them in surprise as they went by, probably not expecting a car well over 100 years old to be faster than a modern convenience. "I have to admit... I much prefer vintage luxury cars... so much more torque and power and appointments but... eh... it's my thing I guess." he shrugged, grinning now. "This is what I really like though..." He moved the second lever on the steering wheel, the one that wasn't the spark advance, and soon, he took his foot paw off the accelerator, and the car was maintaining its speed on its own. "Hand throttle." he pointed to the lever. "It's like a very early and primitive cruise control. So long as it's set, car goes the same speed. If I move it, it'll adjust the speed. Pretty damn nice, really."

"Awe?" he asked, looking over to her briefly again. "Uh... I think he's being genuine. I mean... without having spoken in depth with him... I'd like to think he's sincere... he answered my questions... of course... that doesn't rule out good training but... he was upfront... asked me a few things... and I mean look at it this way... when I was parked with you guys in the Duesenberg in the hotel parking garage... he could've killed me then and there... and all of you, given you were all incapacitated. Could've wiped us all out on the spot... and didn't. That's gotta count for something, right?" he asked now, passing another electric. "Endgame well... I don't know... I need to observe him more but... I suppose time will tell. Your guess is as good as mind." he admitted.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 09, 2018, 09:50:07 PM**

"He absolutely doesn't want us dead," Emilena agreed. "Or arrested. He had a golden opportunity to blow our cover at the hospital, but instead he salvaged the entire heist." She shook her head. "While offering to join our team, he told us that he's primarily employed by a single company to look out for their best interests. I can't help but wonder if he's using us to gain info on Brennan, and whether we'd be letting the cat out of the bag if his employer discovered what secrets Brennan is hiding." She shrugged. "I just can't really trust that a company who employs Augmented freedom fighters for corporate espionage would be any better than Brennan itself, and I don't like how disposable we become after helping Awe infiltrate Brennan's HQ. Am I reading too much into this?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 09, 2018, 10:51:08 PM**

As Tony cruised along, he listened to what the vulpine had to outline, and he chewed his bottom lip, mulling over her words as he kept his eyes on the road. "Um... I don't think so." he replied, shaking his head. "I think you have valid points... if he's out to learn more about Brennan... and his employer is as well... then... it is possible we'd be expendable after that. So... if you don't trust him... that may be the best course. I don't know... it's hard to say right now whose side he's on. We should be wary... maybe keep a gun on him... discreetly... if you know what I mean." he told her, settling back into the comfortable seat a bit as they drew nearer to the machinist's shop, their first stop on this escapade. "Oh and... who is Brennan anyway? What do we know about him?" he asked.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 10, 2018, 11:13:00 AM**

Give me the phone ' Marita said and she redialed the number ' Hello Nigel " Marita said as bailey answered on the other end " Look, Marita I have no idea WTF you girls did to Flora but that shit needs to stop now! shes acting like an Branch freaking Davidian!" Nigel, We just got her back, about an hour ago ' Marota said " and furthermore any claims that we tried to assault her are complete BS. Why would we try to harm someone who has been placed in our care, and who is worth literally millions to us in full health? Further we know you, we know that if we did anything to harm or upset her, you'd turn us into freaking rugs to wipe your feet on!" true' Bailey sighed. " flora hated us, at first and didn't want to be put under our care in the first place. So, this whole slog started because she rebelled. There's only so much you can do if a teenager doesn't want to listen. You know that.'

Wheres Rose? shes the one I trusted of you three , after all. I didnt know this would go so pear shaped. ' We dont know where she is " Marita said " well, shit. ' Bailey sighed. " look, you got Flora back, alive. Good, that shows you're not utterly hopeless. if you want that money I promised you , you make damn sure she doesnt get grabbed again, and you are not to lay a finger on her. Understood? And-and get her back to normal! She sounds like a passenger on the Love Boat!" Shes a teenager, Bailey when they fall in love, its deep and illogical. I was a teenager once after all, I know what thats like" Whatever you have to do to fix her, do it!" bailey snapped. " I want her back to the girl she was when I sent her to you' Well could you send us some of her music videos? that could help. "Bailey paused in thought for a few seconds before answering "Ok.. fine..I'll send you ' Dance All Night" Resist the Urge" And Groove to Me". theres "Twisted All up" too but thats really just a demo. We were still working on it before this happened. Hopefully watching that will help. I'll send the "Live" versions too. The real trick, is explaining my stars absence. Its been weeks." Why dont you say shes working on that music video? it can take weeks for a film star or singer to get a part or a song down. " A whole month , though? most of the music videos we shot took a couple days to get down! " Say shes going Retro" Marita said. " are we talking 2030s retro, or really old school, like Vogue-era Madonna? ' whichever took longer to get done. " Fine Madonna then. check your email. bailey out' bailey said and hung up the phone. Marita sighe then turned to Flora ' well Bailey wuil be sending us some of your recent music videos to watch Flora. Wants you to work on the one you were working on before all this started. Thank you can do that?"

_ Bianca headed up the street stopping as she show the carnage around the safe house ' She rushed inside as best she could while carrying bags of breakfast food " Kintoki! FLora! You there?" She started before stopping as she beheld a pair of dead guards lying in the hallway ' What the hell happened here!' Bianca fairly screeched.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2018, 01:43:23 PM**

"That works for me. So long as at least two of us aren't blindsided if the other shoe drops," Emilena nodded.

She sat back. "Brennan Synthetics is the name of the company. The founder, Richard Brennan, went missing two months ago. (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.msg444482;topicseen#msg444482) All we know is that Brennan was responsible for those Augments blue-screening earlier this year, and they've got enough political influence to scapegoat the Purifiers and sweep everything under the rug. The weird part is, Soren thinks the kill patch was intentionally pushed, but we can't figure out why a cybernetics company would willingly cause a PR disaster this large. Their stocks have plummeted and financially they may never recover."

She shrugged. "Lily thought they were being setup by a third party and the Purifier deflection was a hastily-arranged cover story, but she went AWOL before revealing why she thought that. Me, I'm not sure what to think."

"Yeah, sure!" Flora piped up excitedly. "Will you watch them with me? Or, uh, if you're not into pop, that's okay. We could queue up YouTube and watch whatever music videos you're the most interested in." She gave them a loving smile. "I just like spending time with you, no matter what we do."

"Bianca!" Kintoki came rushing up from the basement. "Voice down, please, don't wake the neighbors!" He lowered his voice. "The Purifiers ambushed us and kidnapped Flora. But it's all right, we're pretty sure she was in on the breakout. They're not going to harm her."

The surviving guards filed out of the basement. Most looked extremely excited or pleased and each was clutching a golden credit chip. Kintoki handed a similar one to Bianca. "Under no circumstances are you to follow Flora, okay?" he commanded. "Let her go. Honestly, you're a good-looking woman, you can do a lot better than her anyway." He motioned to the blood and corpses surrounding the safehouse, which was already being chemically absorbed by an aggressive cleaning solvent being secreted from the lawn and carpet. The walls were also slowly cleansing themselves of blood and sealing bullet holes with caulk. "That there is a million credits. You've earned it. Go retire somewhere quiet, and remember your vows of silence. We'll be in touch if you break them." His tone indicated she wouldn't want that to happen. "Now if you'll excuse me, I need to leave as soon as possible to reach Brennan HQ before dark. If you want to stay here and make sure the self-cleaning subroutines finish their job, I'll wire you an extra 500 credits for every photograph of a safehouse room looking spotless."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 10, 2018, 02:24:19 PM**

As Tony slowed, pushing the hand throttle back up and taking manual control of the car by pushing his paw back on the accelerator, he took an exit, pushing in the clutch and brake as he began to roll to a halt on the off ramp. "So..." as the Crane-Simplex coasted to a stop, and Tony shifted back into first gear as he took it onto a smaller road after waiting at the light, he looked over to the vulpine. "How about we have each others' backs on that? I watch him as you do... if he moves against us 'unexpectedly', we'll be ready for him. Two guns on him are better than one, right?" he asked, smirking as he shifted through neutral, and then second, then neutral and into third as they got rolling into a higher speed.

As she outlined what had happened to Brennan Synthetics, he tried to process it all, and figure his way around it. "I see... so... basically... they get blamed for blue-screening Augments... their stock is tanking... Brennan is gone... and Purifiers were blamed... but Lily thinks there's more to it than that." the ferret commented, following along as he downshifted to turn onto another road. "Well... perhaps you could ask her before you end her." he suggested. "And... we need to think about who has the most to gain from this... it's neither the Purifiers nor Brennan Synthetics... Purifiers are coming under heavy fire... the company is in the toilet... who's left? Augments?" he asked, looking over to her now. "Some...

competitor to Brennan Synthetics?" Turning right, Tony took the Crane-Simplex down the final road that led to his machinist.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2018, 02:38:58 PM**

"Well, not to beat a dead horse, but Awe's employer would greatly benefit from a powerful competitor going belly-up," Emilena pointed out. "Plus it would explain why Awe knew enough to find us in that bar." She shrugged. "If you're comfortable finding a way to work this into an innocent conversation, I'd love to learn the name of Awe's employer. I'm sure he'd be suspicious if I asked, but you two have already shared several male bonding discussions. He might trust you enough to just tell you the truth."

Emilena glanced out the window, trying to ascertain where in Seryet they were, but the area looked unfamiliar. "I'll try to get more info from Lily as well. It's usually pretty easy to get her talking."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 10, 2018, 02:58:53 PM**

Alright I'll stay here for the rest of the day and make sure they complete the job. i'll email you the pictures' Bianca said, as she slipped the million creds into her pocket, " then i'll join you at HQ , i won;t have a place lined up for a few weeks. Shame about Flora, I was starting to like her too " Bianca said handing some of the food she had gotten to the guards, who grabbed whatever they wanted as they funneled out of the basement, soon the food was gone., and both the gusards and kintonki had gone, leaving bianca alone in the slowing self-repairing safehouse. Well alone, wasnt exactly true: the rooma that followed her efvverywhere was still there. bianca sighed as she began walking around the safehouse ' way to ditch me flora ' she said softly to herself.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 10, 2018, 02:59:13 PM**

As he thought about it, it made far more sense, and as the massive convertible bumped its way into a parking lot, he exhaled. "Right... well... they could be behind it then, if they stand to benefit. That makes the most sense to me too...it's not the two parties suffering... it's whomever is gaining the most out of this." he stated, trying to be logical. "I could try and ask him but... if he's trained... he may not be so loose as to volunteer that information but if he does..." Tony paused, bringing the Crane-Simplex to a halt in a parking spot outside a nondescript concrete single story building that spanned the whole block. Shifting into neutral, Tony pulled the brake lever back and turned the electric switch off, shutting off the mammoth car.

Closing his eyes, Tony thought back to the conversation he'd first had with Awe, searching for the name, then reopened them. "When we first spoke, he mentioned to me that he was a 'former' employee of Werner Industries... but that now he's 'freelance' mercing. You think he's being honest?" he asked. "Or you think he still actually works for Werner Industries? I know a bit about them... weapons manufacturer... arms trade. Did some running for them back in the day." he explained, putting his arm over the seat as he looked across to her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2018, 03:21:24 PM**

"Its possible," Emilena replied. "Though most freelancers I know peddle their trade to get paid, and he's working for us pro bono." She nodded thoughtfully when Tony revealed he knew Awe's former employer. "I don't know anything about Werner off the top of my head. I'll do some digging tonight, when we get home." Assuming she gets home...

She noticed they'd pulled into a parking lot. "Anything I should know about meeting Jerry?" She asked. "'Don't make eye contact, let you do the talking,' that sort of thing?" Even without his business connection, Tony was naturally far more charismatic than her, and she was prepared to give him the limelight no matter what sort of person Jerry turned out to be.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 10, 2018, 03:42:24 PM**

"That's true... which to me doesn't make any sense... why work for free? And also... why leave a cushy job with a ton of benefits, as he claimed they had, to go freelance it with no benefits and unsteady pay?" he inquired. "I think he may have just switched roles in the company... but we'll see." Opening his door, he stepped down onto the running board, and then the ground. "He's a nice guy... he's got no tics... really admires my old cars so... you don't have to guard yourself or anything." he assured her, as Jerry, a zorilla dressed in overalls emerged from the front door, spectacles perched on his snout as he broke out into a wide smile.

"Tony Stracci, as I live and breathe! What the hell is that?" the zorilla asked, pointing behind the ferret to the Crane-Simplex. "Is that REALLY what I think it is?"

"1916 Crane-Simplex my friend! Might be the only one left in existence!" Tony spread his arms wide.

"Son of a bitch... I didn't know you owned something like that! I've tooled a lot of engines for you but nothing of that caliber!"

"Heh... yeah well... it's the rarest in my collection so... it rarely gets to see the light of day." he confessed, giving the zorilla a nod. "Anyway... I've directly debited the amount into your account. You have what I ordered? This is Emilena, my associate." the ferret introduced the two, hooking a claw over to the fox.

"Pleasure to meet you." Jerry nodded to her, and produced the box from behind his back. "Strongest damn alloy I have... slightly smaller than a normal human head... will this suffice?" he asked, holding it out to them. Looking over to Emilena, Tony raised his brows and put his paws behind his back.

"Well... what do you think, Ms. Echo?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2018, 04:29:58 PM**

(Ooc: haha I had to Google zorilla, and I'm glad I did, at first I thought you meant a zebra-gorilla hybrid (https://www.deviantart.com/pixel-pushers/art/Zebrilla-Gorilla-Zebra-Hybrid-722610059))

"Pleasure to meet you!" Emilena shook his hand warmly. "If you think the car's nice to look at, I hope you get the chance to ride in it one day. Purrs like a cat and faster than a bullet." She flashed a warm smile. "Stay on Tony's good side and you never know!" she joked.

She took the box and whistled approvingly. "Oh, this will do just fine," she nodded, testing its corners and finding it airtight and unyielding. "Perfect size too, you certainly know your craft. Thank you so much for finishing this on such short notice."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 10, 2018, 05:02:27 PM**

((Hahah definitely not! We are talking about a striped polecat!))

At Emilena's description of the Crane-Simplex, the striped polecat's eyes lit up. "Oh! I don't doubt it at all! That was the world's first super car in a way! I'd love to tinker with it at some point but... heh... to get a ride in it would be an honor and a pleasure!" he admitted, nodding.

"You might someday! And if it needs work, you know you're the first one I'm coming to." the ferret informed him. As Emilena inspected the box, and approved of it, Tony nodded gratefully.

"Oh of course!" Jerry responded. "Tony is my best customer, and relies on me for very unique requests so... this was fortunately relatively simple. Won't ask what you need it for, but I'm glad you approve; I know it's definitely not for one of your cars, but hey! Wish you luck with it all the same."

Shaking Jerry's paw, Tony gave him another nod. "Well thank you very much, friend. We should probably roll, as we have a prior engagement, but as usual, your workmanship is high quality."

"Of course! And you open it with a push of the button on the side, and can lock it with your thumb, if you want." Jerry explained, pointing his claw to the thumb reader on the side. "It can be reprogrammed, but you need to be bring it back here." he told them.

"Right! Well... excellent work, as always. Can you direct me to Lily's location?" Tony asked, starting to head back to the car. Opening the door, he slid back behind the wheel, Jerry intently watching from behind his glasses as Tony pushed in the starter pedal on the floor, the engine turning over and coming to life with a nice roar that caused the zorilla to grin. There was no need to choke the engine or regard the spark, as it was a warm start.

"OK so... what neighborhood is she in? Section of the city." Tony asked Emilena, looking over to her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2018, 10:00:44 PM**

Emilena waved politely to Jerry as they got back in the car. "It's in the cellar of one of the co-ops between the Warren and Zolyiak Districts," Emilena explained. "Basically just turn into Carriage Hills once we hit 8th street and I can direct you from there."

She kept looking at the box. She briefly wondered whether she should come up with an excuse for carrying it, but Lily honestly probably wouldn't even pay attention to anything beyond getting what she wants.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 11, 2018, 09:09:22 AM**

"Ah yeah... OK! I know where that is roughly." Tony nodded, shifting into reverse so they could back out of the spot as he released the brake. "Sounds like not a great place... but it's certainly not the worst either. There are plenty of worse locations than Carriage Hills." He pointed out, putting them back into first gear to get rolling by sliding the shift lever from all the way forward to about midway back.

As the Crane-Simplex began conveying them back to the highway, he tapped the wooden wheel with a paw. "So what's your plan?" he asked, merging back into traffic and increasing speed. "You going to go in while I wait outside and try and kill her without her anticipating it? Or something else?" He set the hand throttle so he could take his foot off the accelerator, moving the car along at about 75 mph now as he stayed in the middle lane, passing by slower traffic in the right.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2018, 02:38:15 PM**

"Yeah, it's a lower-middle class area," Emilena replied. "This particular co-op's been empty for almost a year, landlord went bankrupt and government's been dragging its feet on doing anything with the house. I'm pretty sure somebody had been cooking meth in the cellar before we showed up."

Emilena watched cars zip by at an insane rate; nobody on the road could keep up with the Crane-Simplex' raw horsepower. "I have to play everything by the book, or she might suspect something's up. Crawl through the hatchpiece, get her into a dialogue, and shoot her at some point before she can tag me."

The last complication Emilena kept to herself; she had no way of knowing if their mental bond allowed Lily to read her thoughts. If Lily knew everything she had planned, her gambit wasn't going to get very far. Just to be safe, she mulled over the details from her old sleeper agent training (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=13105.msg423268#msg423268) and tried to shield her mind from outside interference.

Flora poured herself a bottle of the most expensive whiskey she could find. "So wait, do we actually have to work on a music video? How are we going to do that? Do you have a camera?" She thought, and supplied her own answer. "We could use your cell phone, modern phones have killer cameras, with all the megapixels. This could be fun!" Truth be told, she was just looking forward to an opportunity to spend time with Marita and Marie. *Too bad Rose isn't here,* she thought wistfully, *especially since she's the only one with an acting and dancing background...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 11, 2018, 07:38:53 PM**

Even Tony had to admit, he was surprised at the good clip his Crane-Simplex had, passing electrics on the right hand side with minimal issues, whilst a few passed him on the left who were pushing close to 90... which he could easily do, he just didn't feel it necessary right now, as there was no need for that kind of speed at present. The leather seat was rather comfortable, and he nodded as he listened to her explanation.

"OK well... doesn't sound like a horrible neighborhood, then. Not that... anyone could drive this car, even if they wanted to steal it." he smirked. "Shift lever is way different than your standard H pattern after all." he explained.

"All right." he nodded again. "Just be careful... take nothing for granted... and if you need the backup... I will provide it." he told her, exiting down another ramp into the Carriage Hills neighborhood, slowing to a halt, then shifting into first and then second as they started moving down 8th Street. "OK so... where are we going from here? You direct and I'll get you there." he told her resolutely, having pushed back the hand throttle to nothing, going back to the accelerator pedal to control the car. He had left the top down for the entire journey, having loved the feel of the wind in his fur, but now... it was time to get serious... time to... end Lily.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2018, 09:56:59 PM**

"Right there," Emilena gulped, pointing out the two-story house at the end of the street. It looked identical to every single other house on the block save for the *Forclosed* sign. Emilena realized it had been less than three months since she and Lily had hidden here. *Jesus, this has been a hell of a few months…*

She took a deep breath as the car rumbled to a stop. "Remember, if she comes out and I'm not there...floor it and don't look back." Unbuckling her seatbelt, she crossed to the fence and pushed aside the decorative boulder covering the crawlspace into the cellar.

“Lily…?” Emilena muttered under her breath as she squeezed through the crawlspace. There were their boxes, and Lily's laptop plugged into the far wall, but her nose was the first thing to realize something was off. Instead of being hit with the familiar musk of a dusty suburban cellar, the safehouse smelled like formaldehyde and aged blood.

It didn’t take long for Emilena to locate the source; Lily’s old planning desk had been converted into an operating table, and Lily herself was shackled to it by hands and ankles. She wasn’t breathing, and as Emilena got closer she could make out a very familiar pattern of scars and needlepricks across her body, the exact same phantom wounds Emilena had developed the past few months. The freshest incision was the seven-letter word carved into Lily’s thigh; the same one that had brought Emilena here in the first place.

Emilena suddenly realized she wasn’t alone and whirled around to see someone behind her wielding a frying pan. “Get back!” Emilena gasped, preemptively kicking them in the stomach. Her assailant had slow reflexes and took the full brunt of the kick, and with a flash of surprise Emilena recognized their cry.

“Lily?” she stammered, stumbling backwards. “What the…?”

“Oh my god, Emilena! I didn’t realize it was you!” Lily lowered the pan, wincing in pain. “I’m so sorry, you should have announced yourself!”

“I didn’t, I...I saw the table! Who the hell is that?” Emilena leaned against the wall for support, catching her bearings. She’d dropped Jerry’s box, and couldn’t see where it had fallen in the dark.

“Are you alright?” Lily stepped forward to help, but Emilena motioned her away. “The body on the table is why I called you. It’s the psionic monster that possessed me in Lanthae.”

Emilena glanced at the body again. “Wait, really? I thought that thing was long gone.”

“I did too…” Lily sighed. “Until it came after me. I left the others to keep you all safe. I...knocked it out with my powers, but now I don’t know what to do.” She looked pleadingly at Emilena as the vulpine walked over to examine the body. “Nothing I’ve tried will kill it, I can only keep it sedated. Please help me.”

Emilena narrowed her eyes. Lily wasn't acting like the dangerous sociopath she was expecting. “No offense, but you seem a little more…polite? Than the last few times we’ve met?”

Lily turned away in shame. “You don’t have to mince your words. I was insane. I’m really, really sorry about what I’ve put you through.” She looked back to see Emilena hadn’t lowered her defensive stance. “Seeing this beast again was...humbling. I realized I’d abandoned those I truly cared about. You, Soren, Axel...” she gulped. “I was becoming just as bad as it.” Her lip quivered. Emilena couldn’t believe what she was hearing. “Which is why I want to kill it,” Lily finished. “Turn over a new leaf. Finally put the past behind me.”

The two stared at each other for several strained seconds. "Please, Emilena," Lily whispered, cheeks flushing red. "I need you."

Emilena looked from the monster's body, to Lily, and back. She sighed. "This isn't how I thought this meeting would go... but okay."

Lily teared up. “Emilena...it means so much to hear you say that.”

“Yeah...” Emilena pointed her thumb across the cellar at their old boxes. “Did you try my old katana? It can cut through anything, especially with the micro-vibrate setting.”

Lily’s eyes brightened. “Oh! Why didn’t I think of that?” She quickly sprinted over and rifled through the boxes. After a few seconds of fruitless searching, she realized what was going on.

She turned around to see Emilena wielding her pistol, while standing to block both the exit and the operating table. “Lily was there when my katana got destroyed…” Emilena narrowed her eyes at the imposter. “Plus I know Lily wouldn’t have used a frying pan when she can kill someone with a touch.”

Lily’s clone sighed.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 12, 2018, 09:14:17 AM**

As Tony pulled up to the house, he shifted into neutral and then set the parking brake, listening it to click back into place. Relaxing, he looked over to her. "All right... good luck... and if neither of you come out... I may head in after you... we'll see. If I see her come out..." he twisted around to reach into the back seat, pulling the laser rifle up and resting it on his lap. "I'll cut her head off then floor it." he nodded.

He'd parked far enough away from the building that anyone coming out probably wouldn't be able to react in time and race over to his car before he took off, and briefly considered heading up a house just in case, but figured he was OK. He was technically parked in between the lot the house was on, and the next house over, favoring the next house over in fact. He watched as the vulpine exited, and bit his lower lip, producing a toothpick that he promptly jammed his mouth as he watched her head inside. "Fuck..." he whispered to himself. "I hope this works."

As he left the Crane-Simplex idling, he impatiently drummed a claw on the wooden wheel, hoping everything was going all right in there. The rumble of the car was almost agonizing, but he had to keep it running, as he didn't want to risk a rough startup just in case things went south. He needed to be able to drive and drive quickly if it wasn't Emilena exiting the property.

An idea struck him, and the ferret undid the clasp on the passenger side of the split windshield, moving the glass upwards 45 degrees. This was normally to provide fuller ventilation to passenger and driver but now, Tony had an unobstructed line of fire to the house, and wouldn't have to shoot through the windshield if he did need to open up.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2018, 02:06:46 PM**

“I don’t want to fight you,” the fake Lily started.

“What, now that I can fight back?” Emilena snarled.

The imposter nodded. “I won’t lie. I’ve read your file,” she dropped her pan and raised her hands. “I know you would kill me in a fair fight.”

“Then you should have read it harder, because I’ve killed surrendering opponents before…” Emilena swiped the scalpel from the operating table before her opponent got any ideas. “But first I want to know who you are and why you lured me here!”

“I’m a clone. The Purifiers grew me using the same pod and the same DNA you and Mr. Whent used to create the Lily you know.”

“Are you working with the Purifiers then?” Emilena demanded.

“No, I abandoned them first chance I got. I’m only in this for myself.” She motioned to Lily’s body on the table. “If I can kill her under the right conditions, conditions I have setup in this room, I can steal her psionic powers. I’ve already worked with Mr. Whent to sever her totem with him, it was preventing her from dying.”

“What’s a totem?”

“A mental connection caused by two minds inhabiting the same body. Lily formed it when she briefly inhabited Mr. Whent’s body back in Lanthae (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341.msg403237#msg403237). Mr. Whent broke that connection after we lured her to an alleyway and tranquilized her.”

“Axel agreed to that?” Emilena asked.

“He was pleased to be rid of her! Wouldn’t even take payment.” The clone balled her fists. “But it wasn’t enough. I performed the operation a dozen times, but she just keeps reviving herself. I’ve spent a fortune on black market sedatives, she’s been clinically dead for weeks, but *she won’t stop healing*!” She glanced at the word carved into Lily’s thigh. “Until you sent that message, and I realized she must have another totem. One even stronger, strong enough that you two were sharing wounds. She can’t die while you live.”

Emilena almost asked when Lily would have had the chance to inhabit her body, but then realized the most likely occasion. (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=12341.msg398629;topicseen#msg398629) She glanced at Lily. “Hmm. And if you had been able to kill me right now, and it had all worked...what then? What were you planning on doing with these powers once you had them?”

The clone shrugged. “Honestly, I haven’t thought that far ahead. I just want them.” Her eyes glinted.

“We’re both clones, she’s no more original than I am. Why should she get them, while I don’t?”

“Because life isn’t fair.” Emilena lowered her scalpel. “But we might be able to come to an agreement. If I help you get those powers, will you help my team? We’re preparing to go on an extremely dangerous mission, and we could really use a medic.”

Lily’s clone raised her eyebrows. “I...why on earth would you trust me with that?”

Emilena tossed the scalpel aside, where it embedded into the woodwork. “If you’re a clone of Lily, you’ve got her brain chemistry. You’ve got her predilections. And, in all honesty, you look and sound more like Lily than she has for these past few months.”

The clone’s hands trembled. “I don’t understand.”

“You could have carried a gun and just shot me when I walked into this room, you could have murdered Axel because he was a totem. But you didn’t. And that makes you more of the Lily I remember than the person on this table.” Emilena holstered her pistol. “I want my friend back, before she became an amoral, narcissistic psychopath. If that has to be you, I can live with that.”

The clone gulped. “But...I’d have to kill you. Your bond is stronger than the one Lily had with Mr. Whent, it’s an outright mental link.”

“You said you put Lily into a state of clinical death,” Emilena pointed out. “Do that to me.”

The clone bit her lip. “I don’t have the tech to bring you back out.”

Emilena sat down. “Then the millisecond you get those powers, you know what to do.”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 12, 2018, 02:27:35 PM**

As Tony tapped his claw on the wooden steering wheel, his breaths were coming out in something that resembled pants, the ferret's anxiety rising with the passing minutes. He kept glancing to his watch, then shook his head. "Stop it! It'll be fine!" he whispered to himself, but the tension didn't dissolve. As he kept his gaze on the house, he figured he'd head in there in 30 minutes if no sign of anyone emerged by then. So far it had only been... glancing to his watch again, Tony could see 10 minute had elapsed. OK... 20 to go.

He ran his paw over his facial fur, matting it down and then pushing it up in an awkward fashion. He had half-expected the house to explode in bright beams of light or... something; some sort of epic battle, but there was nothing. As he sat in the comfortable leather seat, he felt the idling Crane-Simplex continue to rumble a bit beneath him, the straight-six still running as he still impatiently waited for something to happen; the house to explode... beams to shoot out... the ground to rumble... Lily to emerge... Emilena to emerge. But it was quiet... if he didn't know what was going on in that house, he'd say it was just a normal day in this neighborhood.

Rubbing his nose, the ferret glanced to his watch again... only a minute had passed. "Dammit..." he whispered. "I need to calm the hell down." Gripping the wheel with his left paw, he sat in the big car, and continued his vigil. The fact that no sounds emanated from the house... good or bad sign? Emilena was either very efficient... or something had gone wrong. But either way... he'd wait... give it the full 30 minutes, and then head inside. That would be more than enough time for someone to emerge, after all.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2018, 02:40:28 PM**

The minutes dragged on. The sun reached the top of the sky and began slowly ambling towards the horizon.

Right on the thirty-minute mark, someone suddenly emerged from the crawlspace. Lily winced at the sunlight, but it didn’t stop her from creeping out to the sidewalk. Without even a glance at Tony, she began sprinting away from the house at a breakneck speed. Reaching a nearby fence leading to Carriage Park, she vaulted it and disappeared from view.

Emilena’s first feeling of resuscitation was a series of electrical shocks that sent her body racking. Her adrenaline levels were going into overdrive, and she wasn’t causing it.

She gasped, a deep ragged gulp of air that made her chest feel like it would pop. Emilena pressed her palms into her eyes and ground her teeth in pain as she rolled onto her hands and knees.

“...Fuck…” The vulpine reached under her shirt and grasped the vasculator she’d stolen from the hospital (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.msg469268#msg469268). “I’d really hoped it wouldn’t come to using this thing. What the hell happened?” She tried to stand up. “Thought your dumb ass was going to revive me!”

She slowly realized she was alone. Other than the entrance to the hideout hanging open, there was no sign of where the Lily clone had scampered off to. *Bastard left me for dead...maybe she’s not as different as I thought.*

Emilena checked on the corpse on the table. It had gone into rigor mortis, and its eyes were glassy and lifeless. And still, Emilena felt a need to check for a pulse. She’d seen Lily die so many times before, after all…

But after every check she could think of, plus more than enough time for Lily’s healing powers to have restored her to life, Emilena was forced to conclude that her old partner was finally dead. She sighed, finally feeling the gravity of her actions. “Lily…” she couldn’t resist confessing aloud. “I’m sorry. I don’t know if I made the right choice, but you didn’t leave me much of one.”

Morning was almost over. The team would be waking up, and she needed to leave. After shutting Lily’s eyes for the last time, Emilena squeezed out of the hideout entrance and sealed it shut behind her. "It's done..." she gritted her teeth as she slipped into the car, clutching her chest. "She's dead." She looked pale, almost as pale as when Tony saw her in the hospital alleyway.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 12, 2018, 03:03:31 PM**

As Tony gripped the rifle and prepared to head in, noting the time was now up, he tensed, seeing Lily emerge from the house. "Shit!" he whispered, getting it ready to fire through the windshield. As he raised it up, he prepared to fire, but she took off running, not in his direction, fortunately. Watching her go and leap a fence, he cursed. "Dammit!" That meant that Emilena was dead... and a freaking psionic psychopath was now on the loose!

Opening the door, Tony was preparing to hop out of the car to retrieve Emilena's corpse, still gripping the rifle, when he saw her emerge, and froze. "What the... hell?" he asked quietly, getting behind the wheel, and hoping this wasn't some trick... though Lily wasn't capable of those kinds of things... or so he thought.

As she reentered the Crane-Simplex, he kept the laser rifle in his lap, though this time, it was pointed at her, and his paw was on the trigger, even if it wasn't raised. "What the hell are you talking about?" he asked, looking to her with confusion. "No she's not! I just saw her leave the house and head into the park! What the hell happened in there?" he asked, his eyes searching her for answers, and ready in case they were suspect. He noted the very pale demeanor... like when she'd come out of the hospital, poisoned. What the hell had taken place in that house?

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 12, 2018, 03:17:30 PM**

Actually Lilly' Marita said as there was a popup message on her computer" " Theres am email from Bailey . i'm to shpw these videos. ' you made them, prior to this current slog ' MArita said " She turned on the video for ' resist the urge" and turning the settings to full screen ' This was one of your rearky videos Flora " she said asan image ogf of a very young flora appeared on stage, dressed in what looked like green spandex of some kind.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 12, 2018, 05:05:37 PM**

Soren thanked Tony for the ride and safehouse and soon got to work analyzing every scrap of data he could lay his hands on. Of course, the news about the deadly augments had spread and in many cases went out of control. Brennan Synthetics was a shell of its once successful self.

Anne looked over the news and papers that were scattered over the elegant wooden table. "So, while I was in the hospital, I overheard someone mentioning that a bunch of of removed augments had been stolen."

Soren shrugged. "Big deal. Happens all the time. They're cleaned but it's illegal to reuse them them without complete disassembly, cleaning sterilization or recycling them for raw materials. OF course, people don't give a shit."

Anne continued. "Yeah, but I overheard some cellphone calls to Brennan Synthetics about 'picking up the evidence'."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2018, 06:54:20 PM**

"That wasn't her. Things...didn't go according to plan. " Emilena rested her head against the window, exhausted. "The Purifiers cloned her, same way we did back in Lanthae. The clone had Lily captive and unconscious, and a plan to finish her off once and for all. I cooperated with her, and now Lily's dead." She took a deep breath. "I can guarantee it, checked the body myself. But I think I screwed up trusting that clone. There's a chance she stole Lily's powers for herself."

She glanced at Tony's rifle, still pointed at her. "The only good news is, she seemed a lot more sane than Lily. And I don't think she expected me to survive. So we've got that going for us if she bothers us again."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 12, 2018, 08:47:22 PM**

Awe returned to the living room with a towel around the back of his neck and covered in sweat. His long sleeved shirt was over his shoulder. "Where'd tony go?" Awe asked getting some water.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 12, 2018, 10:02:02 PM**

After considering Emilena's words, Tony relaxed, and released his grip on the trigger, picking up the rifle and tossing it back into the rear of the car. "All right... though I fail to see how this improves our situation any." He commented, shifting into gear and releasing the brake to get the car rolling. "I mean if that's a clone running around... haven't we just substituted one for the other? The fact she'd leave you for dead doesn't bode well for us... it's a rather callous act after all." He pointed out, shifting into second.

"Still... I'm glad you made it out of there alive... and that you yourself aren't an imposter... I wasn't sure at first when I saw her leave... I don't think she has abilities like but I wasn't sure." He explained. "If we see her again, we'll deal with her then... if not... whatever I guess." He sighed, shaking his head.

"Heh... gave me quite the fright though." he smirked. "When I saw her come out first I figured you were dead... was going to head inside to retrieve your body but... fortunately that wasn't needed. Anyway...

you made it, and that's really what I care about most." he concluded, moving up the on ramp to the highway now to take them back to his place. He figured they could stop at a supermarket or something... pick some things up to make it look like they'd gone on this supply run. "Do you feel like you at least accomplished your objective?" he asked, looking briefly over to her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2018, 11:00:30 PM**

"She acted like she wanted to join our team. Said she'd heal us, like Lily used to." Emilena shook her head, disgusted. "I let my guard down. I shouldn't have trusted her," she admitted, rubbing her forehead and leaning back in the chair. "But in the long run, I think we're still better off with Lily dead. At least her clone isn't actively haunting my dreams and threatening to murder Axel in his sleep."

She sighed, looked over, and gave Tony a rare smile. "You were a huge help today, both at the hospital and here with Lily. I owe you one. It's weird to think we hated each other's guts back in Lanthae. I certainly never thought I'd one day consider you a trusted teammate, much less a friend."

"He went on a..." Flora trailed off, distracted by Awe's chiseled abs. She shook her head to regain her focus. "Um, supply run. Said he'll be back soon."

She sat down and watched her old music videos on her phone. "Oh, god, not this one," she felt horribly embarrassed. "Our original plan had been to use a green screen to swap my body out with that of different animals. But the guy we hired was awful, and it looked terrible. We couldn't afford to reshoot or scrap the project, so the record company made us ship it with me just wearing a green bodysuit for no reason. I'm so glad the internet almost immediately forgot about it."

She scrolled down to her unfinished current project. "Actually, we might be able to finish this with Tony's house as a set. It's one of those music videos that tell a story constantly spliced with footage from a concert. Bailey's already got the concert footage, so we just need to film the frame narrative." She glanced over at Awe again. "You know, buddy, you look like you just walked off the cover of a romance novel. Want to act in a music video?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 13, 2018, 12:25:21 AM**

If Awe did notice Flora staring at his abs he didn't say anything of it. Though he chuckled at flora's question. "I never really thought myself the music video type." He took a drink of water. "Plus there's also the fact this bailey might not like an ex corporate assassin in one of his videos."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 13, 2018, 09:07:35 AM**

As Tony drove along at higher speeds, he moved over to close the windshield so Emilena wouldn't have the wind blowing right in her face. There was enough of that with the top down, after all. He nodded. "Yeah... probably best she is dead... maybe not so good her clone is running around but... I guess I can't entirely blame you for trusting her... I know you and she had history, after all. It's hard not to when you feel like at some point... there may be a chance to regain what was lost." he admitted. "I know that feeling all too well."

As she thanked him, he looked over to her. "Sure... yeah... of course." he replied, surprised. "And I'm not sure I necessarily hated you... I don't hate many." he pointed out. "But dislike? Sure... still... I knew this was important to you... I had nothing better to do... and it seemed like the right thing to shoot for." he smiled back. He hesitated at the friend bit. "Well... that's good to know as well. It used to be I trusted Axel the most but now... given his... vacillation, to put it mildly... I think you've risen to the rank of most trust on the team with me. And someone I'd see as a friend." he informed her, smiling once more.

"I'm sorry you didn't get what you wanted out of this... I don't blame you, as said, for hoping otherwise." he shook his head. "Sorry about the rifle thing back there as well... my mind was going a million miles a minute... when I saw her emerge... thought it meant you were dead... I honestly wasn't expecting to see you come out so... I didn't process the situation correctly." he confessed, moving by a slower car as he stuck once again to the middle lane for now.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 13, 2018, 06:43:04 PM**

"Don't even apologize about the rifle," Emilena assured. "I'd have done the same. I'm glad you kept your head about you." She watched the white lines in the center of the street zip underneath their car. "The others probably won't ask, but if they do, you think we should be honest with them? I was hoping to just kill Lily and put this behind us without bothering anyone, but the clone's existence ruined any chance of that."

They rounded a corner, and she listened to Tony turning the car's wheels and leaning on the brakes. She realized that, for the first time, she genuinely cared about whether one of her teammates survived. Beyond tactical or personal benefit, she wanted Tony to survive this and enjoy a quiet civilian life, more than she wanted that for herself, or Axel and the others.

Axel. She remembered something the clone had said, and suddenly her demeanor shifted. "Actually, you know what? I'm probably going to talk to Axel either way. The clone said he helped her kidnap Lily, I want to find out what he knows."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 13, 2018, 08:31:24 PM**

Tony cracked another smile at her words. "I'm glad you won't hold it against me. I... honestly thought you'd be dead when I saw her emerge so... my brain was scrambled when I saw you but... I'm glad we worked it out." He nodded, moving into the residential area near his home now. "As for what to tell them... heh... we *could* do some shopping if we want to keep up the pretense of supply run." he smirked. "I could give you my phone so you could order some stuff from the massive mart that is close to my home. I have an account there, and they get it ready for you so that by the time you get there, you just load it into your car and go!" he told her.

But as she brought up her final point, he paused. "Mmm... damn... Axel... helped the clone kidnap Lily? The actual hell? Then yeah... we have to ask him... forget shopping... we'll just come clean with the group." He nodded, turning down the road that led up to the manor. Determination was on his features, though the ferret was currently unaware of Emilena's thoughts on him, and hoping he'd make it. Downshifting through neutral into second as they made their slow way up to his home, Tony meandered the big "land yacht" closer to the house on the hill.

Heading down the ramp into the garage, Tony drove down the row of cars to the Crane-Simplex's vacant spot, before he came to a full stop, shifted into reverse, and slowly backed the big car in, looking behind him to make sure he didn't hit anything as he did so, leaning out over the door to get a clear view. Once satisfied with the back up job, Tony put the car in neutral, set the parking brake, and killed the motor by flipping the electric switch. "OK... home again!" He declared, opening the door, retrieving the laser rifle, stepping onto the running board, and then hopping to the ground. "I have to say... really enjoyed taking the Crane-Simplex out... first time I ever drove it for any real length of time and... it really exceeded expectations." He smiled widely, admiring his car for a moment, then looked over to her.

"Well... feel free to confront Axel... I'll be backing you up. You know the way." He smiled again, giving her a nod and putting his paw out towards the elevator.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 14, 2018, 06:43:49 PM**

"Well, in that case, thanks for letting me ride along on its maiden voyage." Emilena, smiled, climbed out and walked inside.

"You're no fun," Flora muttered when Awe politely declined. "Hey! Did you get my instrument?" she called out when she heard them return.

"We forgot, sorry." Emilena poked her head in. "Anyone know where Axel is?"

Flora rubbed her jaw in thought. "Actually, now that you mention it, I havent seen him since we all got out of the car."

When nobody could offer up Axel's location, Emilena sighed. "You know what? Maybe that's a blessing in disguise. I really dont want to have this conversation with him anyway." She collapsed on the couch, exhausted. "For the first time in months, I'm just going to relax and forget about all this crap until the tech people have decrypted the files."

"Oh yeah..." Flora looked at Marita. "Do you need to go help with the files we stole? We can put off the music video if we need to."

"The music what now?" Emilena muttered sleepily from the couch.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 14, 2018, 07:01:36 PM**

Awe put his shirt back on and sat near the bar. "Flora was gonna make a new music video, she offered me a role but I politely refused."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 14, 2018, 08:16:57 PM**

Bailey wants us to finish up a music video Flora was working on. Tony, do you mnd if we use your house as a backdrop for it?' Marita said , looking over from her computer.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 14, 2018, 08:35:23 PM**

"Was my pleasure." he answered her. As they reached his living room, Tony waved to everyone. "Hey guys... what's up?" He stuck his paws in his pockets, then sauntered over to one part of his big, L-shaped couch and plopped down on it, listening as Emilena asked for Axel, but he hadn't been seen since exiting the Duesenberg. Odd... where the hell was he?

But still... the fox quickly shifted into relax mode, and the ferret had to admit, that sounded awfully good. Reaching for a glass, he got up and poured himself a Scotch, then sat back down and closed his eyes, taking a sip. "Heh... not a bad idea." he responded to her. "I may go for a swim in a bit..." he cracked an eye open, and checked his watch. Not even noon yet... perfect. He had a pool out back on his balcony, which was propped up on stilts embedded in the hillside. Taking another sip, he appreciated the feeling of not having to do anything, and the relaxing drive back he'd had, which had helped him otherwise calm down from an intense situation.

As Marita addressed him, he cracked an eye again and frowned. "I suppose... just don't mess anything up... no rowdiness, all right? And maybe upstairs... because I need some peace and quiet for the moment." he told her.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 14, 2018, 11:11:41 PM**

"You got a library tony? I do enjoy a nice book after a mission." Awe said getting another drink.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 15, 2018, 04:46:31 PM**

"Yeah it's uh, upstairs. It's quite expansive because I like my books... mostly nonfiction though, but there is some literature in there as well... mostly some of the greats." He informed Awe, pointing to a staircase off to the right that led up. "It's uh... make a left at the top, then two doors down on the right." He explained.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 15, 2018, 05:42:56 PM**

Emilena had fallen asleep on the couch.

Flora led Marita and Marie upstairs. "So, what sort of plot were we thinking for this music video?" she asked. "Remember, no dialogue because the music will be playing over it. Some sort of romance storyline is the standard fare for this sort of thing, cause no offense but you two are a bit old for a 'wild girl's night'-style party video. Unless..." Her eyes lit up. "Oooh, want to do a kidnapping plot? I could meet one of you on Tinder, arrive at your luxurious 'house' for a date and you drug me, tie me up and we do some crowd-pleasing sexy bondage shots. Then we end with a plot twist, like I pay you money and show that it was completely consensual and preplanned."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 15, 2018, 08:06:49 PM**

Or we could pay yiou upfront then whisper in your ear, then go some close face close ups, before we get into the ' over 18 subplot" and we can wear stuff to make us look younger too" Marita said. i'm sure there's stuff in our makeup kit that can make us look like teens ' Marie said. eyeliner, hair styling, things like that."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 15, 2018, 08:44:42 PM**

"But then there's no twist. Look, who's got years of experience making these, you or me?" Flora rolled her eyes, then realized she was being rude. "Sorry, sorry, you're the boss," she amended hastily. "We'll do it your way. And yeah, if you got makeup, I'll see what I can do."

After a few hours in the bathroom working on both ladies, Flora nodded approvingly. "That turned out better than I expected," she confessed, stashing the eyeliner. "I think with some creative angles you could pass for teenagers. Now what are we filming first?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 15, 2018, 08:45:35 PM**

Awe went to the library and got himself the book The Complete Works of William Shakespeare before returning to the living room and fixing himself a drink. He sat at the bar and started reading King Lear.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 16, 2018, 03:08:16 PM**

As Tony heard Awe reenter the room, he opened his eyes, and noticed he was carrying his two volume "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare" in its leather bound edition. "Oh... didn't know you were a Shakespeare reader... would've pegged you for something else." the ferret smirked. still sitting back on the couch, his arms up and resting on the couch's top portion.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 16, 2018, 06:58:10 PM**

Awe chuckled at tony's comment. "My adoptive father is a huge fan of Shakespeare. I spent every free time I have reading his works while I was training." Awe cracked a smile. "Shakespeare's always resonated with me."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 16, 2018, 07:37:47 PM**

"Interesting." Tony commented, nodding. "You're a learned man, Awe. I didn't expect you liking Shakespeare... but kudos to your adoptive father for bringing you up with it... I'm impressed." he remained where he was on the couch as he spoke, tapping it with his paws. "Heh... what's your favorite play?" he inquired.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 16, 2018, 07:47:42 PM**

"Hamlet for sure." Awe replied taking a drink. "A story about a man getting back at his wicked uncle."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 17, 2018, 07:06:45 AM**

we film the beginning of the ' party. this will interspersed with already filmed dancers so it looked like we're at a big party' Marie said. " we could go for a ' Great Gatsby sorta vibe. "
Marita looked at hersrelf in the mirror, at the all the world she looked like a 18 or 19 year old. " Great work Floor. " i look like i'm just starting college.'

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 17, 2018, 11:41:50 AM**

"Well he does, but he also loses his life." Tony pointed out. "Not many survive that play but... then again... I suppose in his position... I'd do whatever it'd take to get back at my uncle too." He nodded thoughtfully. "Hamlet's probably my favorite as well. Did like the Taming of the Shrew, and Coriolanus." He commented. "Hamlet is rather hard to beat though... it's... one of the best things in English ever written, in all honesty." he confessed, nodding.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 17, 2018, 01:08:54 PM**

Flora shrugged. "Okay." She took Marita's phone and filmed a sample shot. "This thing has great quality," she nodded approvingly. "I bet its got all the megapixels."

Leading Marita and Marie out of the bathroom, she turned the phone on and started recording them. "So, uh, start dancing I guess?" she directed.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 17, 2018, 08:33:57 PM**

Marita and marie started to dance. the dancing would be edited into the already shot footage so it would seem as though they were not by themselves. " maroe swayed to and fro, like a teenager would at a prom. Marita spun and twirled, making tight circles as she moved. the girls moved in and out of view, as Flora held the camera.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 17, 2018, 08:39:33 PM**

"Yep." Awe replied taking another drink. "I also enjoy those two as well. He really was a good writer."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 18, 2018, 01:03:38 AM**

"Okay, awesome," Flora nodded. "That's great." She reviewed the footage. "So did we want to film actual story scenes now? And what's the story gonna be? Since you dont want to do the kidnapping plot, we need dramatic tension from *somewhere.*"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 19, 2018, 06:51:22 PM**

Well. i was thinking we move from room to room, as we do so, you come in, looking for someone to hang out with for the evening' marie sugggested. " so we;ll e\ shoot in this room, here-" she showcased a fine looking library' For a few shots. marita will be playing the daughter of a 'Big game hunter" Marie suggested. " I want action that doersnt come out the barrell of a gun.' Marita said with a smirk.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 19, 2018, 07:01:04 PM**

"Sounds good to me!" Flora continued filming as they moved from room to room, getting plenty of shots of the extremely photogenic house. When they had enough transitionary footage, Flora handed Marie the phone. "It's all set to record, just tell me when to come in."

Flora stayed out of sight until she got the signal, then walked into the room, looking around shyly as if for a date.

Emilena woke up with a jolt once she realized she’d fallen asleep. Looking around, her brain oriented and she remembered she was in a completely safe location, surrounded by people who weren’t going to shank her. *I don’t normally fall asleep like that...need to get ahold of myself.*

She noticed Tony was talking with Awe and wondered if he was learning any useful info about Awe's possible allegiances. “Tony, you mentioned something about a swim, is there a pool?” she yawned, stretching on the couch. “Nothing like cold water and a few laps to wake yourself up…”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 20, 2018, 04:16:33 PM**

"He was... one of the most prolific of all time for English speaking authors." Tony commented, smiling as Emilena jolted awake, the ferret smirking over to her. "Heh... welcome back." He greeted her. "And yes... so... basically... you go through this room." he pointed to his left. "Which is like... part of the library, and then make a right into the kitchen, and straight ahead if you keep going is the sliding glass doors to the back balcony... pool is out there. Just don't fall over the edge. I have a railing but the balcony itself is extended out over the cliff on stilts." he informed the vulpine. "I may join you now that I think about it." he commented, stroking his chin.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 20, 2018, 05:10:47 PM**

“Sounds great. You’re welcome to join as well, Awe,” Emilena offered, dragging herself to her feet and away from the warm spot on the couch. She left the room was halfway to the balcony when she spotted something more important than the pool; Axel was standing in the conservatory, smoking and looking at the exotic plants.

Emilena doubled back to the garage, fished Marita’s laptop out of the backseat of the Model J, and joined him. “Axel, you’re good with computers, right? Marita’s focused on some stupid thing involving a music video, so I think it falls to you to sift through this safehouse data. She mentioned it contained the location of Brennan’s HQ, where we were hoping to head next.”

Axel scoffed. “Yeah? Whatever, sure. It’s not like I had anything better to do anyway.”

Emilena didn’t hand the laptop over right away. “Hey. We’ve been through a lot, and I hope you know that if you ever need to talk, I’m here.”

Axel took a long drag of his cigarette and blew it in her face. “Don’t you worry, only thing bothering me is that Tony’s got the zinnias right between two racks of succulents.”

“Well, that might be more true than you think,” Emilena replied, wrinkling her nose. “I just visited Lily today. Now she’s dead.”

Axel inhaled his next puff too quickly and coughed for several seconds. “What, really?” he gasped.

“Yup. Less than twenty minutes ago. Tony drove me to our old safehouse for a meeting, and she was all chained up and drugged out. By a woman who looked just like her.” Emilena studied him, looking for a reaction. “She used me for some voodoo magic, stripped Lily’s powers and stopped her heart. Lily never even felt it.”

Axel flicked his cigarette stub into a bird-of-paradise. “Well, thank god. Didn’t think anyone could do it, but if she’s really dead, I owe you one.”

“Axel, have you met this doppelganger of Lily?” Emilena pressed.

Axel rolled his eyes. “She told you something, didn’t she? Look, when I followed Flora into that alleyway, nobody told me what was going on. I just did what I had to do to leave in one piece. To be done with Lily and all the bullshit around her." He threw his hands in the air. "Which is how I’d like things to be, even right now. Just consider me removed from that whole little sordid affair. Case closed.”

Emilena sighed. “OK, Axel. If you don’t want to get involved, I won’t tell you anything else.” She allowed him to take the laptop from her hands and stride out of the room.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 20, 2018, 08:11:35 PM**

Awe finished his drink and closed the book. "Think I'll take you up on the offer. Just let me take to book back to the library." Awe took the book back to the library and walked in the direction of the pool.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 21, 2018, 12:43:28 PM**

Tony pushed himself up off the couch, and headed for a changing room to slip out of his clothes and into his swimming trunks. Having accomplished this whilst Emilena was talking to Axel, he emerged out onto the back balcony, gazing out over the city, the sun framing everything as his house faced west out the back. Padding over to the pool's edge, he smiled, gazing down at the fluid surface, before placing his paws above his head and launching himself off to dive in. As the water encased his body, surrounding all aspects of him, he paddled briefly under the surface, then swam for the top, breaking the water and inhaling as he looked about him, filling his lungs with a hearty and audible gulp.

Running his paw over the top of his head fur to smooth it back, the ferret smiled, then kicked his body sideways to start enacting the sidestroke.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 21, 2018, 02:12:27 PM**

Anne had found her way out to the pool. She lay on one of the chairs and inhaled the cool dusk air as she took a pull from her bottle of beer. She rather enjoyed the dark, malty flavor of the beer. Framed by the sun were the featureless towers of Seryet City. A faint oceanic scent hinted at the algae farms in the outskirts of the city.

Soren was busy poring over his notes in the study which looked and smelled like a library from a monastery. A glass of seltzer spiked with some lemon juice served as his refreshment. He rubbed his forehead. The music video that Marita and the others were doing did not interest him at all. That and he *really* didn't want to appear in a music video that would certainly be seen by thousands if not millions.

He got up to walk around to try and clear his head. He decided to head to the outside for some fresh air...which was easier said than done, given the sprawling layout of the house. But the Human managed, finding his way to the conservatory and taking a seat next to the open window that let in a fresh breeze.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 21, 2018, 09:17:32 PM**

Emilena finally reached the balcony. "Turning into quite the party out here," she remarked, stripping down to her knickers and diving into the pool.

After holding her breath as long as she could, she came up on the other end gasping for air. "You know, Tony," she panted, "I expected this to be more hot tub-sized when you said it was on the balcony, but you actually managed to fit a whole pool out here. This property continues to amaze."

She started swimming underwater laps, only taking breaths when she tagged the other side of the pool. Thirty minutes of this and she'd have met her daily exercise regimen for the first time since this ordeal started.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 21, 2018, 10:04:15 PM**

Awe arrived and stripped to his shorts before diving into the pool. "Nice pool Tiny." Awe remarked after he surfaced.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 21, 2018, 10:22:00 PM**

As Emilena and Awe joined him, the ferret blinked, not quite expecting Emilena to have nothing to wear save for her undergarments, and as she dove in, he found himself slightly admiring her form a bit more than he wanted to before she dove in. But as she broke the surface, he smirked. "Heh... yeah well... that comes from having a shitload of money and not knowing what to fully do with it. I think some actors have similar setups or... something." he rolled his eyes. "But thank you." he smiled, nodding to them both. "I'm glad you approve." He then pushed off from the wall and began doing some laps as well, doing the front crawl as he began heading back and forth, kicking off one end and moving to the other fluidly, being well versed in the different forms of swimming.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 21, 2018, 10:39:47 PM**

Awe lay floating on his back on the surface of the pool. "I'm also a student of history as well as a fan of Shakespeare." Awe's athletic physic was a bit of a pride symbol for him. But his missions for Werner Industries had left him his fair share of scars mainly internally.
"I mainly study the second world war."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2018, 02:07:33 AM**

Axel reached the study and, noticing Soren's notes were already occupying the desk, selected a plushy armchair and opened his laptop. Sorting by recent, he found the info dump and began decompressing it.

He sighed as he scrolled through seemingly infinite files, all with unintelligible numbers and letters for file names. There was a lot to sift through...

———————-

After thoroughly waking herself up, Emilena dragged herself out of the pool and joined Anne on the reclining deck chairs. She noted that Awe had almost as many scars as herself. "Awe, if you don't mind me asking, did you ever serve in the military or law enforcement?" she asked. "That's an impressive scar collection for a corporate hitman."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **November 24, 2018, 12:18:51 AM**

Nodding, Tony smiled slightly. "Heh... same here... my library is mostly non-fiction as it's a lot of books on history. Used to be big into the Second World War myself... still kind of am, but then I took a greater interest in the conflicts around the late 19th and early 20th centuries... technology was really exploding at the time, so yeah... Sino-Japanese, Spanish-American, and Russo-Japanese are some of my favorites... but I really do like history in general." He pulled himself up out of the pool now, his fur matted and water dripping off him as he moved to a deck chair.

Settling back in it, he placed his paws behind his head, and gazed up at the sky. As Emilena asked a question of Awe, Tony's ears pricked up a bit and listened, as he was curious about the answer.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 24, 2018, 01:02:58 AM**

Awe showed off the scar of a rather nasty gash on his right thigh after swimming to the edge getting out of the pool. "I got this from the mission that gave me the name Awe. A piece of pipe from the refinery came flying at me after it exploded." He showed a cut across his left arm. "This was from a training accident with my trainer. Though I will say I haven't served in the military or police... at least officially..."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 24, 2018, 03:22:53 AM**

As Awe recounted his battle scars, a mischievous smile played across Emilena's face. "Hey, Awe, you up for a friendly spar?" she asked. "I bet I can take you. First to knock the other in the pool wins!"

She leaped out of the chair in case he was open to the idea.

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Axel lit another cigarette and sighed as he clicked through yet another file. Most of these contained records of encrypted messages, messages he couldn't read but he could tell where they were being sent.

If he could just reverse-engineer the actual location from the numerical coordinates the computer used to connect to the other computer...

And then suddenly divine providence offered him an opportunity. For a single message, the safe house sent somebody else a picture. Pictures were loaded with alt data, and far easier to track than text. He’d be able to extract the reciever’s MAC address at absolute minimum.

Axel didn’t expect to care about the photo itself, but nevertheless his jaw dropped open when he reverse-encrypted it. *Oof. The others are gonna want to see this...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 24, 2018, 11:49:32 PM**

"What'd you have in mind?" Awe asked scratching his chin as his tail twitched.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 25, 2018, 03:38:25 AM**

Emilena assumed a defensive stance and the tested the wooden balcony floor with her paw pads; it was sturdy and provided more than enough traction. “Simple and straightforward. No weapons, no using augments, no permanent damage. If you can get me in that pool, I’ll owe you a beer.”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 26, 2018, 12:48:24 AM**

Awe assumed a similar defensive stance. "You're on." Awe rolled his tail up so he wouldn't be able to use it.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 26, 2018, 02:51:55 AM**

“Gonna make me make the first move, huh?” Emilena murmured. She dropped to one knee and attempted to sweep Awe’s leg out from under him, angling so a fall would send him into the pool.

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Axel stood up, having found the data they were looking for. Finishing his glass of scotch, he began the slow walk up to find the others and report on the location of the Purifier base.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 26, 2018, 09:54:25 PM**

Awe did a side flip dodging Emilena attack placing her between himself and the pool. "You'd be surprised. I am quite the gentleman."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 26, 2018, 11:46:51 PM**

Emilena narrowed her eyes and darted sideways, realizing the dangerous position he'd put her in. "You'd better not just dodge the whole time," she growled, keeping her center of balance low and going for an open-hand strike into his shoulder. "This is a spar, not a ballet!"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 27, 2018, 02:10:08 AM**

Awe blocked the strike and delivered one of his own to Emilena's shoulder. "I don't plan on dodging the whole time. Only when you are on the offensive."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 27, 2018, 04:48:20 AM**

Emilena grunted when she wasn't able to dodge the strike in time, but recovered quickly enough to scramble back to her starting position. Since Awe appeared to use a very defensive combat style, she hung back, both to recover from the hit she took and force him to go on the offensive.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 28, 2018, 12:31:09 AM**

Awe delivered another strike keeping a close eye on Emilena for any tricks. He also made sure not to reveal any clues as to what his next move would be.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2018, 12:36:53 AM**

Emilena deflected it with her forearm, simultaneously dodging to lessen the impact. It still sent shockwaves rippling up her arm; Awe had strength and size on his side, and Emilena realized she’d need to change her strategy. Maneuvering herself so she was between Awe and the pool, she kept her stance wide hoping to bait him into rushing her so she could dodge around him and use his own momentum to force him nearer or into the pool.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 28, 2018, 12:50:18 AM**

Awe knew while he had strength and size on his side he knew Emilena had speed on hers. He thought about how to effectively beat her. "Your move." Awe commented.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2018, 01:32:28 AM**

Emilena grumbled when he didn't fall for the bait. Her gut warned her to stay back, but her impatientness got the better of her and she jumped forward, attempting a stunning kick to his solar plexus.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 28, 2018, 01:53:17 AM**

Awe grinned seizing the chance and used her own momentum against her to send her flying into the pool. But awe admired Emilena since she had fought well.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 28, 2018, 05:41:33 AM**

Emilena hadn’t expected him to act so quickly, and before she could even figure out what happened he had counter-striked her kick and sent her flying head over heels into the pool.

She came up spluttering and quickly grabbed the edge of the pool to orient herself. “You’re...faster than you look,” she finally admitted once her head had stopped spinning. “I concede defeat.”

Axel, meanwhile, saw Soren in the conservatory and decided to tell him first. “Hey, I found out where we’re headed next.” He handed Soren a paper printout of the Google Maps result from inputting the coordinates of the IP Address.

(OOC: Serris, if you or bushwhacked had ideas/plans for the locale/setting of the HQ, wanted to leave that in your hands. Bushwhacked didn’t say anything particular about the location Brennan Hq was)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 28, 2018, 08:50:08 PM**

"You fought well." Awe complimented. Awe offered Emilena a hand out of the pool. "Haven't had a good sparing match like that in a while."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 29, 2018, 06:20:56 PM**

Bianca was walking out of the the safehouse, after waiting a full four hours foir the entire place to be clean ' she had sent at least 50 pictures to Kintoki, which would net her a 25000 creed bonus. ' the roomba beeped as a car pulled up alongside the street and a lioness climbed outof the drovers seat. she was very fetching, with bright green eyes dark red lips, and golden hoop earring in her ears. she wore the uniform of a tennis player, several racquets resting in the passenger seat indicated she had just come from playing a match. ' Can i help you?Bianca asked. " Actually i was going to ask you that. i noticed you walkingh down the street earlier, and was going to ask of you needed a ride. Outside of this part of town, things get really dicey really quick.'

Yeah, hence why I have this roomba following me around' Bianca said " And you are?" oh, forgive me. I'm Zula. I work part time at Mr Jiangs augment repair ship on downtown Seryet, when I'm not instructing kids on playing tennis. its a 75-25 breakdown or there abouts. Tennis 75% Jiangs 25%. You look sorta familiar. ' I'm Bianca' Bianca said quickly. ' Could you take me to 35th and Green? I need a change of attire, and well I dont look all that hot in this getup. Zula is it? for some reason your name rings a bell. did you work as a receptionist somewhere? " Yeah I did at Jiangs old place. the pay was lousy, and that's when patients actually paid their bills.' Zula sighed. 'Just hop in back, your roomba can come too. ' the roomba climbed in before Bianca and settled on one of the seats ' Do forgive the clutter, ' I'm just handed back from my latest tennis instruction. We have a tournament against Bright Falls next week, and some of the kids have very weak serves that will get them killed in a match. " Zula said. Bianca buckled herself in. the car smelled like tennis balls but otherwise was very nice. " I hate to impose, but do you have anything to drink? I'm rather thirsty and haven't had the chance to get anything to eat this morning. I've been.. running errands. ' " Oh, of course! There's Diet Coke in this cooler. there's mini-cans regular cans or liter bottles, help yourself.' Zula said with a smile. Bianca flipped open the cooler, which had several cases of Diet Coke in it, along with 6 1 liter bottles. ' Bianca took one of the bottlers and found an empty cup in a container. the soda was ice cold to the touch and tasted great. Zula pulled away from the curb and began driving down the street.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **November 30, 2018, 11:31:08 PM**

Anne's ears were splayed to the side as she drifted between sleep and wakefulness in the cool sea air. She bolted up right as she got an incoming message from her horn.

Her frustration soon turned to excitement as she realized who was calling her. She turned to Tony. "Hey, Tony, I just got a call from my cyberneticist." She was of course, referring to a black market one. "My parts came in. So you got a discreet car that I can borrow for an hour or so?"

Soren accepted the piece of paper and looked it over. His eyes widened as he realized where the location was. The Human blinked a few times and took a sip of his now flat seltzer. "The fuck!?" he blurted out.

He sat on a stone that made up the wall. The pungent scent of the exotic flowers in the greenhouse was making his nascent headache worsen. "Axel, are you absolutely positive you got the right location? Because according to this printout, the IP address is originating from *several miles offshore*!" Soren didn't mean to raise his voice but the situation did rile him up a bit.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 30, 2018, 11:50:13 PM**

"It's pretty clear, feel free to double-check but there aren't many ways to slice this sort of signal." Axel shrugged. "The guys in that safehouse kept chatting with somebody on, like, I guess a houseboat or something, I dunno." He looked at the paper again. "Or I guess a boat would be moving around, so like, an ocean lab?" He glanced at the balcony, where some sort of scuffle had been audibly going on for the past minute. "We should probably let the others know."

Emilena accepted Awe's help to climb back out of the pool. "You gotta teach me how you countered that kick," she remarked, shaking her head to help regain her balance. "I had all my momentum behind it, and you just flipped me on a dime."

She heard Anne's question and glanced over. "You're sure your contact's not compromised, right? We've made a lot of enemies, any of them could be using him to lead you into a trap."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **December 01, 2018, 12:05:14 AM**

Awe chuckled in response. "Sure I'll teach you. You may find it in handy one day." Awe sat down on one of the chairs by the pool.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 01, 2018, 12:58:41 PM**

Tony had been resting, having retrieved some sunglasses, and placed them over his eyes. He'd watched the fight a bit, but had kept his eyes closed during some of it, mostly drifting in and out of his thoughts. As he heard Anne address him, he looked over to her, swiveling his head to do so. "Oh uh... discreet? Not really sure about that.. most of the cars I own are all vintage... I have my electric... which I guess looks just like everyone else's... it's a nicer model, but still pretty run of the mill." he explained. "You can take it if you need to. It drives itself, so you really just have to sit back and let it take you to whatever destination you program it with... that is... if you think it's a good idea." he added, noting Emilena's words.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 02, 2018, 03:32:03 PM**

"Works for me," Emilena grinned at Awe's offer, before Axel walked somberly onto the balcony.

"Hey, people." Axel passed out printouts of the same data he'd given Soren. "So, good and bad news. Good news is, I figured out where Brennan's HQ is. Bad news..."

Emilena squinted in surprise at the data. "Wait, you mean that circled coordinate set in the middle of the ocean?"

"I mean, 'middle of the ocean' is overstating it, but yeah," Axel yawned. "It's about three miles off Seryet's coastline. There's no publically-registered buildings out there, and I didn't see anything too exciting from the bluffs on Google street views, which makes me think they're in some sort of submerged lab."

"We have to break into an underwater lab?" Emilena repeated. "How exactly are we supposed to do that?"

"That's up to y'all, my job was just to find it," Axel shrugged, leaving and heading for the bar. Now that his work was done, he wanted a drink.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 19, 2018, 02:29:41 PM**

Anne nodded. "I'll take my chances. The guy's someone who owes me some favors." She didn't specify what the favors were but from the way she spoke, it was pretty obvious said favors were probably spectacularly illegal.

She then turned to Tony. "Anyways, thanks for the electric, just show me the way to your garage and I'll be on my way."

Soren watched Axel leave the poolside area to go get a drink. He examined the map more closely. "Well," he said. "Looks like we'll have to get a boat or something. A fishing trip should work as a cover story." He brought up his cellphone and checked out the location. A frown crossed the Human's face. "Or not. Looks like that particular area is listed as a protected offshore zone." Protected offshore zones were locations that were off-limits to public boat traffic. They usually marked mining, power generation or other industrial zones and were usually protected by autonomous drones as well as crewed patrol boats.

He checked the surrounding areas for anything that could help them get to said lab.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2018, 06:01:13 PM**

"If we abandon all notion of a cover story, we could still try to get there by boat," Emilena suggested. "Paint it black, go by night, feign ignorance if we get discovered. Maybe even confess to a much-lighter crime like fishing in a protected space, I think the penalty for that is just a large fine."

She grabbed a towel and dried herself off. "That still won't help us actually get in. Even if Tony happens to own a half-dozen sets of scuba gear, what would our plan be for even gaining entrance? We cant exactly shatter a window. Awe, you got any gadgets that could get us into an underwater lab?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 19, 2018, 08:47:18 PM**

Marita smiled as Flora entered the room. ' hey there! some kinda party huh/' she said kindly as she came up to her. " what are you here for?' she said. the laud music made it hard to hear at times. "I'm just here for the music, really. " Marie was enjoying a drink at the "bar" and was scanning the ' crowd." shots of various dancers were shown.

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Zula continued driving, As Bianca slowly drank her soda in the back seat. ; As the Drive continued Bianca felt herself beginning to nod off, she didnt realize how truly tired she was (She had been up since 4 in the morning , after all)." you Ok?' Zula asked as Bianca stifled a yawn ' sorry< I worked really late last night, and Am paying for it now " Bianca said. " well, I'm headed back to my place, if you need to crash on the couch , thats fine. We all need our 40 winks, right?' zula said. " you can hekp yourself to whatevers in the pantry. i think i have some granola bars and crackers in there."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 20, 2018, 12:27:47 PM**

Tony had been semi-listening in, chewing on his bottom lip. Yeah... his father had owned a ship... but it wasn't something that would be capable of being moved easily... plus it'd be ridiculously conspicuous. Oh well...

Hopping off his chair, he shoved his paws in his pockets, still dripping moisture a little. "Sure... this way." he waved his paw for the pony to follow, and headed back into the house, weaving his way through the rooms until they got to the old brass elevator. Hitting the button for a descent, he began whistling a little as he rode down into the garage, the lights kicking on automatically as they arrived. "First one on the right." He pointed to the sleek looking electric car.

Walking over to a panel, he pushed his paw against it, causing it to slide back, revealing the key fob. "Here you go. Just don't wreck it. Door will open automatically for you when you reach the end of the garage, and upon your return." he explained.

He went over to a locker, pulling the door open with some spare clothing so he could change, having mostly dried up in the sun. Keeping the door so it blocked his body from view, the ferret went about slipping out of his bathing suit and into something more akin to an Edwardian motorman's outfit. Shutting the locker door, he sighed, and went over to his vehicles, walking down the row until he came to a beautiful brass era red painted 1910 Elmore. Pulling himself up into the driver's seat, he rested his arms against the big wooden steering wheel. Exhaling, he looked ahead.

Should he go on this mission? Risk his life again? Risk drowning or worse out at sea? Pursing his lips, he tapped his claws rhythmically on the old car's wheel, turning the options over in his mind.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **December 21, 2018, 08:07:29 PM**

"not really. But I do have the training to get down that far." Awe scratched his chin. "I could call a contact of mine to get a submarine to take you guys there. He owes me a few favors."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 21, 2018, 08:25:57 PM**

"Uhhh, doing...good, I guess?" Flora shrugged helplessly. "I'm sorry, I just don't understand," she admitted, breaking character. "There's no talking during a music video, the song is put on top. And if Marie's drinking at the bar, and you and me are here, who's filming?"

"A submarine ride? Well, that'd certainly be one to check off the bucket list," Emilena nodded approvingly. She glanced around and noticed that only herself, Soren, and Awe remained on the balcony. "Maybe we should rekindle this conversation once everyone's in the same place," she remarked, putting her clothes back on now that she was sufficiently dry. "Give everyone a bit of time to marinate and then regroup. Actually, speaking of marinating, dinner's always an easy way to get everyone in the same room. Either of you two interested in helping me cook up a big bowl of pasta and garlic bread?" It was one of the few things she knew how to cook since she once went undercover at an Italian restaurant during her police career.

(OOC: If anyone's interested in reading that story, PM me and I'll send you a link!)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **December 21, 2018, 08:47:51 PM**

"Sounds good to me! I could also make some ginger snaps for dessert." Awe said smiling.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**

Post by: **Nick22** on **December 21, 2018, 09:57:20 PM**

I have a couple security cameras filming ' Marie said " We can edit out the part where i talked or reshoot it. Why dont we take a short break? the lights are making my eyeliner start to run ' she suggested. " she pullred out her phone and dialed a couple commands on it. the cameras returned to their normal posiotions, and marota sighed ' normally you have a director and extras for this thing. Don;t you normally have the same director for your videos?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2018, 02:41:31 PM**

Yeah, his name was Skyler Blake," Flora shifted her feet. "He was okay. He and Bailey knew each other from back while they were nobodies, so Bailey did most of the talking and I never really interacted with him except when he told me what to do. I don't think he'd be available to come film this though."

Flora took a deep breath. "I think we can get this done. Let's film it your way. Take two." Flora left the room and returned, looking chipper. "Hi!" she smiled. "Always nice to see a friendly face! What's your name, stranger?"

Emilena poked her head into the garage. "Tony, there you are. Awe and I were thinking of cooking dinner for everyone, mind if we use your kitchen?" She noticed the withdrawn expression on his face. "Is everything okay?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2018, 03:44:44 PM**

Tony jerked his head upward at Emilena's voice, his arms still resting on the wheel as he looked out over his sea of cars, the Elmore fortunately riding much higher than most of them. Inhaling, he slumped a little, using the wheel for support. "Yeah that's fine." he responded softly, not exiting the car just yet. "Hm?" he blinked, realizing she'd asked him if anything was wrong. "I just..." He began to reply haltingly, pondering how best to word this. "I don't know about my merit to this upcoming mission." He slid out from behind the wheel at long last, stepping onto the running board and then down onto the floor as he began making his way forward slowly, eyes wandering over the line of cars to either side of him. They all gleamed in their different ways, having unique facets and points to them.

Trailing his claws over a teal 1948 Delahaye Type 135, Tony smiled slightly. "Putting your life on the line over and over again can wear you down... and I have reservations about... other things as well." he shifted his gaze up to her here, coming to a halt a few cars away from the elevator. "Either way, I guess I just... came down here to think." he concluded, offering her a little shrug as he spread his arms out to either side of him before letting them fall back down.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2018, 04:15:27 PM**

"Well, let me know if you'd rather be alone, but I'm here to listen if you want it." Emilena rested her hand on the other car door but didn't enter until she received more of a signal that he didn't just want to be alone. "Just know that you're not obligated to do anything, the whole team is already in your debt. Hell, we were in your debt before you let us stay the night in your huge awesome mansion." She smiled. "That goes double for me, since you listened to my problems and even helped solve them. If there's a way I can help you in return, I'll do it."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2018, 04:39:28 PM**

The ferret returned her smile, giving a smaller one in return, and nodding a little. "Heh, I couldn't consider any of you in my debt." He responded softly, tapping his claws lightly up and down on the fender of a blue and cream 1925 Locomobile. "Well I'm glad I was able to do that for you." He nodded again. "I really am." He narrowed his eyes, looking off into the distance, as if thinking. "Heh... I wouldn't even know what to ask for." He confessed, looked back to her at this juncture. "But if I can ask you something... why the sudden change?" he asked. "I mean I know I've been kind of out of the loop for awhile, and I hope this doesn't offend you but... I don't remember you being this kind and well... concerned over others' well being, my own most of all. I do distinctly remember you being... well different, let's just say." he informed her, curious as to her answer.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2018, 05:39:54 PM**

Emilena grinned. "You know I was a police investigator, right? I can play any role I want." She broke eye contact. "It's just that for the longest time, I didnt see any of you as important enough to put on an act for. Originally I planned to arrest Mr. Almaya, immediately get my badge back, and never see any of you again."

She sighed. "I must admit, and I know this will sound odd, but another reason is that eveybody's turned into even more of an asshole than me. I'm not used to relying on other people, but the truth is that we're going to need this team intact if we hope to get through this alive. In the past, Axel and Lily were the sane and compassionate ones that kept us all held together, but now that they've taken my job as the self-centered asshole, I'm adapting for the survival of the group."

She climbed into the car and sat down. "You've changed a lot too, you know. Consider that when you first met us, you were a Purifier grunt who betrayed them on a dime just to save your skin. And before that, you abandoned your family to join them. Now, dozens of firefights later, you're the only person on our team who isn't prioritizing their own self-interest. You've turned your family business into something legitimate, and you're spending time, money and your own safety making things right for a small group of former enemies with nobody else left."

She grinned again. "I can't name one other person who could do all of that, who could change themselves so drastically for the better. So I don't want to hear anything more about whether you have merit. You've earned your merit in ways few ever will."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2018, 06:55:44 PM**

"Heh... of course." he smiled in response to her first statement, even smirking a bit. "That... was my assessment as well." As he listened, he closed his eyes, flashing back to those days... Lily and Axel... the compassionate ones... Lily was a homicidal maniac with too much power... now fortunately deceased; who knew what her clone wanted though... and Axel... poor guy went from being a good friend to a washed up drunk who seemed very self-absorbed. His eyes snapped open as he heard Emilena opening the Locomobile's door. Smiling, he did the same on the driver's side, tugging it back so he could step up onto the running board and settle down on the comfortable, plush, dark blue leather seat.

"Heh... you have good taste." He commented. "This is such a beautiful car. Was very expensive in its time..." He swung the door shut now, and looked down to the blue rug his paws rested on, and the nickel plated dashboard. "I think my favorite thing about this car are the dark blue artillery spokes on the wheels... really gives it a dignified appearance." he sighed, tracing his claws over the nickel plating with almost a sort of reverence.

As she spoke next about how he had changed, he pursed his lips, staring at the various instruments on the dash, and tracing a claw over the Delco starter lever, running the claw back and forth. "Heh... I guess I just... I don't know... inheriting everything and losing my father... was a humbling experience... made me realize I can't take anything for granted... nor should I." he sighed again. "And how about you?" he asked, glancing over to her as they sat side by side in the upscale Locomobile. "You feel you've changed? You mentioned putting on an act earlier... so which is this? Actress Emilena... or more vulnerable Emilena?" he inquired slowly, still running his claw on the starter lever.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 22, 2018, 07:10:22 PM**

"Adult Emilena, to be honest," she admitted, leaning back in the comfy seat. "Pretending to be nice was just...how I thought grownups acted. Or at least, it's how the wardens in the orphanage did." She glanced over at him. "Most people get a childhood to experiment with who they want to be, to figure themselves out. I opted not to have one. For as long as I could remember I'd already been pretending to be an adult, so I decided to enroll in the Growth Acceleration program and make that a reality." She shrugged. "And I still think I made the right call. But a nine-year old is missing a lot of the nuances and experience one needs to function in the real world, unless they choose to see everything in black and white." She sighed. "The police gave me such a simple way to view right vs wrong...I still miss things being so simple."

She glanced at him. "What about you? You've never really mentioned your childhood. Did Don Stracci let you be yourself, or did you grow up living a persona as well?

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 22, 2018, 07:40:42 PM**

He nodded a little at her admission, pulling his claw back to rest it on his lap as he watched her speak. So there was an orphanage and... his head rocked back a little at the Growth Acceleration program she'd been a part of. "Holy shit..." he whispered. "I don't think I knew that about you!" He exclaimed. "Jumping from nine years old to an adult..." He nodded. "Yeah I mean... there'd definitely be some formative things missing there. But yes... I guess the police force would at least give you a... somewhat simplistic view on the world." He admitted. "I just... I never knew... I never knew that." he emphasized. As she paused, and then said she missed things being simple, he pursed his lips again. Yeah... those were true words. He pined for the days where he didn't have anyone threatening things he cared about... where he could just take a car out for a drive... not worry about having to shoot people or using his fists... what happened to those days? And... perhaps reclaiming them was partly why he was hesitating now.

But she had asked him a question, and the ferret swallowed. "Um..." he started out softly. "I... didn't like my father's strict demeanor... and when I found out what he really did... I disliked it even more. I rebelled... did my own thing... but jeez... childhood... it was..." he shook his head, looking out through the windshield. "It was nice... rides in these cars... family outings... my father was generous... strict but generous. But no... he expected me to follow in his pawsteps... and threatened to cut me off from everything if I didn't... so... as said... rebelled. Joined the Purifiers... and now... I guess I settled on a bit of a compromise. Reconciled with my father but... turned his empire into my own vision... not his." He commented, looking over to her now, and resting a paw on the steering wheel, giving her a small smile.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2018, 03:44:59 AM**

“Axel never told you?” she asked, cocking her head. “Yeah, I was the fifth, that’s why my last name’s Echo (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_phonetic_alphabet). It was a government initiative to reduce the underage homeless population. But the program was cancelled after a single run, when all eleven of us wound up with severe personality issues. Now that I think about it...only 3 of us didn’t get ourselves killed within the first year doing something stupid. So, it’s not the sort of past I go around telling everyone about.”

She sighed. “If I’d known you didn’t know, I might not have brought it up. I don’t want you thinking I’m mentally stunted or anything. Trust me, it was a choice of desperation. Not everyone’s childhood has fancy cars and family outings...”

She relaxed her muscles and let herself sink into the chair. “Just make sure you take care of yourself. You actually have something to live for. A business, a family, a legacy.” She chuckled. “That being said, plenty of people have those, and it doesn’t make them happy. Sticking with us might be your only chance to ride in a submarine. Oh, I forgot to mention, Awe says he knows a guy who can get us a submarine.”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 23, 2018, 09:08:09 AM**

He pondered it, but the last name made sense. "Oh... well I don't think I would've judged you negatively or anything... the fact you've survived more challenging situations than most people have ever been in in their lives means you really aren't mentally stunted." He shook his head. "As you mentioned... it was desperation... I might've done the very same thing in your position." he confessed. "Saw it as the easy way forward and the way to get out." he nodded.

As she sank into the seat, he did the same, leaning back and resting now, finding it much easier to do so in one of these cars than anywhere else in his mansion. Perhaps it was the solitude... or perhaps it was the sheer beauty that surrounded him, but whatever it was, he had always had a much easier time down here than upstairs. "Oh?" he perked up, raising his brow. "An actual submarine? Must have a lot of crew manning it... unless it's one of those remote drone type deals." he commented. He briefly considered letting her know about his own ship, but figured it wasn't worth bringing up. "Heh... I guess that's why I partly came down here... you mentioned taking care of myself... that's part one of my musings... part two is well... the merit thing. I mean sure I might be a great guy or what you said but... I only have very basic firearms skills... almost no combat training... I can back you guys up easily enough but... this mission sounds like a whole new level... it's not just me providing transportation to some neighborhood... we'll be out at sea... and I'm not sure if my ability to back you guys up is going to be very useful. Now you might argue an extra gun is an extra gun but... compared to your skills, I don't want to be a liability out there. You guys have been together awhile... fought together... understand each others' abilities and form cohesion." He pointed out.

"Me?" he pressed a paw to his chest. "I don't want to do more harm than good." he shook his head.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **December 23, 2018, 02:02:06 PM**

"See you in bit!" Anne called as she got in the electric. The car's door automatically opened as she got close. She even noted the driver's seat had a hole in the back for her tail. Usually, she'd have to tuck her tail to the side but this time, she could let it naturally go back.

She pressed the ignition button (even though it was an electric, it was still an ignition button due to decades of tradition) and the motor came to life with a low hum. She disengaged the brakes and headed out where the garage door automatically opened, letting in the late afternoon sun.

Soren looked over the area and rubbed his temples. There was a seaport nearby. The Human sighed. Looks like they were going to be breaking into yet *another* industrial facility. Luckily, that was something they were getting quite good at.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2018, 05:48:50 PM**

“Don’t worry about that,” Emilena shook her head. “*None* of us are the right people for the job. It’s a miracle we’ve gotten this far. And you’ve been there from the beginning, so don’t sell yourself short. You’re not an outsider like Awe, you’re a veteran part of this team.”

She closed her eyes. “That being said, this is dangerous work, and if you did retire to a supporting role in our plan, I’d be at least relieved knowing one of us will survive. I can even help come up with a cover story if you don’t want the others learning it was voluntary. But don’t leave because you think you’re letting us down, or that you aren’t good enough to help us.”

She sat up. “And don’t decide anything until you’ve had some dinner; everything seems bleaker on an empty stomach. You have any requests? Gotta be something pasta, that's all I know how to make."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 23, 2018, 10:57:41 PM**

The ferret pursed his lips again, and shifted his mouth to one side before moving it back. "Well... I'd describe myself more as an absentee part of the team. Here and there, in and out." he waved his paw in a circular motion. He considered her words, chewing on his bottom lip. "Thank you... if I do decide to step aside... it's good to know you'd come up with an excuse for me... I haven't decided yet though." he admitted. "I think it's not necessarily that I'm not good enough..." he trailed off, not finishing, as if there was more on his mind, but he wasn't voicing it.

"Heh... all right... deal." he nodded to her request to not decide anything until dinner. "Uh... carbonara is my favorite but... I'm not sure you know how to make it, plus it's kind of finicky. I could show you though... if you want." he smiled slightly. "Or if you just want to keep it simple... I really don't mind. I'm Italian after all... pasta is my blood." he chuckled. He made no move to exit the Locomobile, sitting back in its seat for now as he waited for Emilena's response.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 25, 2018, 03:39:02 AM**

“Carbonara...never even heard of it,” Emilena admitted. “But I’m prepared to learn.” She climbed out of the car. “And Awe likely wouldn’t mind another helping hand. It’ll especially be nice having someone who knows where everything is in the kitchen.”

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Pterano** on **December 25, 2018, 06:02:08 PM**

"Yeah I... kind of figured you wouldn't know what it is." He smirked a little, nodding as he looked down, hearing the passenger door open as she began exiting the car. "Sure... go up without me... I'll follow in a moment or two. I just... want some solitude for a moment, if that's OK." he told her, looking over to her as her head was now even with the car's compartment due to how high it rode off the ground.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2018, 01:46:46 PM**

I'm Anna ' Marita said in character " just here to have some fun. Dance the night away. Gotta do it before the school prom, otherrwise I'm in for it from the other girls. particularly Jenna and her little clique. So, ;lets dance!" she smiled.

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Zula kept driving into the heart of the city, while Bianca downed Diet cokes to keep herse;f from falling asleep completely. " She can drank nearly all the middle sized sodas yet she couldn't shake the weariness that hung over her like a bad omen. ' How close are we to your place?" Bianca asked " 4 blocks away now. Just help me carry in this tennis stuff and then you can crash on the couch. I'm heading to work in a couple hours so we can hang out until then.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2018, 04:30:15 PM**

"Of course, take your time. Awe and I will try to keep the kitchen in one piece until you arrive," Emilena assured, closing the garage door behind her.

She searched the mansion until she found Awe. "Were you able to contact your submarine guy and see if that offer's on the table?" she asked.

"Hi, uh, Anna!" Flora plastered a smile on her face. "Okay, let's dance!"

She tried to follow Marita's lead. It was weird dancing when you couldn't actually hear any music, but it wouldnt be the first time she'd had to do that for a music video.

(OOC: I left a post in the Discussion thread for a possible angle we could tackle the underwater lab infiltration. Let me know what y'all think)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **December 28, 2018, 09:39:55 PM**

Awe was finishing the dough for the ginger snaps when Emilena walked in. "No, I thought I'd get the dough for the gingersnaps ready first." Awe placed the ready dough in the fridge to cool. "And now since t's done I'll call my contact." Awe pulled out his phone and dialed a number speaking in German when he got through.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2018, 01:09:58 PM**

Emilena tried to eavesdrop on Awe's call while she prepped the kitchen for cooking, but she didnt speak German and couldn't glean much from his inflections or tone.

Once a pot of water was boiling and the kitchen was prepared for pasta, she started making the garlic bread and tomato sauce, planning to leave the pasta itself to Tony.

Flora stopped dancing with a tired oof. " That's probably...enough footage, right?" she gasped, wiping her forehead. "So what now? Are we gonna edit it into a video and post it online? I know the password to my official YouTube channel."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 01, 2019, 11:16:02 AM**

hmm we'll need to edit it yeah"marita shrugged ' how long does that normally take? i've never done a music video before, so this will be all new to me." She said, as marie came up to them, having finished filmingg her dancing parts. ' Well, once the editting is done we can seee how we did. I imagine you work with extras regularly." Marie said.

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Zula pulled up in front of a brownstone apartment building, that looked like t dated from the late 1800s. the building stones were weathered and mossy in areas. ' Zula popped the vans rear hatch, revealing, bins of tennis balls and rackets. ' Just carry as much as you can.' the lioness said to Bianca, who soon joined her. Bianca opted to carry the balls which were bright green in color and smelled like they were fresh out of the can. " those balls havent been used yet. They will be, with my next training lesson." Zula said.My room is the second floor Room 210. its slightly towards the center right as you get off the stairs."
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Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2019, 04:59:19 PM**

"Nigel always insisted postproduction take less than a month," Flora shrugged. "Not that I ever touched any of that. We always hired freelance video editors cause they worked for pennies."

She opened the laptop and searched for video editing software. "Is this thing an Apple? I remember using iMovie once when I was young, it was braindead easy."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **January 03, 2019, 10:21:56 PM**

Awe's tone had gotten a bit more excited to give a word. Awe hung the phone up and put it in his pocket. "Sure hope you guys know how to use military style sucba gear." Awe commented to Emilena. "Cause I got us a ride. took some convincing but i got it done." Awe sat down on the couch. "It'll be a bit cramped since it's an older submarine though."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2019, 11:51:13 PM**

Emilena grinned from ear to ear. "Hell yes." She'd eventually put the pasta on herself; it wasn't that fancy dish Tony had mentioned (at least, she assumed there was more to it than assorted pasta shapes with tomato sauce and parmesan) but there were at least enough of these so everyone get their fill. "These should be done in about 15 minutes. I'm gonna start prepping the sauce. Ginger snaps are looking good, by the way."

Flora found the video editing software and opened it. "All right, let's... hey, what's up?" she muttered angrily as the program refused to accept the footage. A quick google search revealed that this software didn't accept .flv2s. "Oh for the love of..." The comment section suggested a free converter, so she converted the footage to .mp7 since it was the only available format that Marita's video editing software accepted. "There we go. Hmmm..." The footage now had a watermark along the bottom. Flora zoomed the footage in so that lower chunk of the video was missing. "It's a bit blurry now, but I mean, who wants to see our legs anyway, right?" she joked.

She watched through the professionally-done half of the music video sent by Bailey's film studio. "Hmm, our new footage doesn't sync up super well," she admitted. "But we might be able to hide that with an establishing shot." By now it was too dark to go outside and record one, plus Tony probably didn't want his exterior in a music video for the world to see, so Flora found a site with Royalty-free stock videos and purchased a time lapse featuring the outside of a mansion. "OK, now let's add some text that says '*The Next Day...*" she murmured out loud...

She slowly got lost in the act of video-editing, working with what she had to sync it together with what Bailey provided. Almost twenty minutes passed before she sat up. "Okay, so Bailey's footage of the concert is unchanged," she reported to Marita and Marie. "And after that, this transition implies it's the next day, I meet you girls at this mansion, and then we dance, and...uh, we didn't have enough dancing footage so I looped it a few times, and stuck the song on top of it..."

Together they watched the new video, which hard cut to black the second the song ended. "I think that looks good!" Flora smiled, setting the project to render.

"Hey," Emilena stuck her head in the room and made Flora jump. "Dinner's served in a few minutes. Head to the dining room if you want pasta."

"We'll be there!" Flora grabbed the newly-rendered video and uploaded it to her official YouTube channel, ignoring the thousands of unread notifications. "Hope people like it. I've never edited my own music video before. This was fun!" She beamed at them. "Especially because I got to do it with you two!"

Emilena, meanwhile, had sleuthed out Soren and Axel to give them the same spiel she'd given Flora.

"Yeah, I'm not really hungry," Axel admitted, taking another swig from a bottle.

"Too bad, come anyway," Emilena's eyes flashed in irritation. "Awe and I put a lot of work into this goddamn food, you're going to at least stare at it. Plus we all need to talk battle strategy, Awe's got us a way into the underwater lab but we need to nail down specifics."

Axel grumbled as the vixen left. "You coming to dinner?" he asked Soren, hoisting himself out of his seat with a grunt.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Serris** on **January 04, 2019, 01:59:20 PM**

Anne had found her location. It was a somewhat decrepit looking electronics store with assorted computers and other electronic goods that were not months, but *years* out of date. That and most of the companies were no longer in business. In fact, she even recognized one of the items: a wearable radio eavesdropper similar to her horn but it relied on a wire coil hidden inside a shirt and a small bone conduction speaker disguised as a bandage.

There was a Tegu sitting on a blanket a few feet away. The reptile's clothing looked to be rather scraggly and they were selling what looked like some bootleg pills. She ignored the reptile and stepped into the shop, which was dimly lit and kind of scraggly looking. A sad looking plant sat in the corner of the shop.

"You see anything you like?" a Chinese man asked, his heavy accent betraying his recent arrival.

Anne nodded. "I'm actually looking for the latest Screaming Wire album." Screaming Wire was a Hong Kong based industrial rock band that was quite popular with the rougher parts of society. Of course, being a store that sold only electronics, it did not sell albums of any sort.

"In back. Follow." Anne followed the man through a door with a tattered and outdated calendar that was clearly a free gift from some company that went under quite a while back.

Soren's stomach growled and he looked at his empty glass. "Yeah, I haven't eaten a good meal in a while," he said as he got up and followed Axel.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 04, 2019, 02:29:10 PM**

Emilena cursed as she scalded herself on a large heat tray while moving the massive pot of pasta into the dining room. "Dinner!" she shouted, dinging a little kitchen bell for added effect.

She set down the parmesan shaker next to the massive platter of garlic bread right as Axel entered the room. "Whoa," he commented. "We expecting company, or are a half-dozen people really supposed to eat all this?"

"I only know how to cook in restaurant portions," Emilena admitted. "And who knows, maybe Awe's a heavy eater. By the way, he's made ginger snaps for after dinner so save some room."

"Well, I don't want dinner, so can I have them right now?" Axel folded his arms. Emilena defiantly served him a large plate of assorted pasta shapes with a ramekin of sauce.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 06, 2019, 10:12:44 PM**

Marita stole a peek at the notification, most of which were connected to responses by Floras fans discussing her ' absence' " the official line is that you are busy working o your next music video" Marita said to Flora " technically, you are, but I dont think any of this fotage will actually get into the final Video. "
-
Let just get something to eat' Marie as she entered the dining room, and took a whiff of the massive pile of garlic bread ' Geez! Thats a TON of garlic bread! give me.. i dont know , about 10 pieces of that. OH1 and i'll try of the pasta too. Do we have any Parmesan to put on it?' she asked.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **January 07, 2019, 01:48:05 AM**

"Eat dinner first, you're gonna need the energy. I find it best to go on a mission with a full stomach." Awe said before eating some of the pasta he'd put on his plate.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2019, 06:54:14 AM**

Right, the mission debrief. Now that Awe had reminded her, and everyone was in the same room, Emilena broke the ice on explaining their situation. "Awe has managed to secure us a submarine and diving gear, so we're probably going to be infiltrating the base from the water if possible. Speaking of which, Axel?"

Axel busted out his phone. "Yeah, I had a couple ideas, but only one that works with going in like Red October. So, a submerged lab needs to vent heat, cause the water around it is basically serving as a permanent insulator. This is normally done through massive dedicated vents. For a lab this size, we'd be able to fit in them no problem."

Flora passed Marie the parmesean and began dipping her garlic bread in tomato sauce. "Where does the heating vent lead to?" she asked mid-munching.

"Probably the filtration room. But we wouldn't be going that far." Axel brought up a schematic of an underwater lab. "This map isn't Brennan specifically, but they'd need to follow the same rules of architecture. Heating vents are treasure troves for microbes and algae, so they're always connected to maintenance hatches for cleaners or repairmen to get into them. We find one of those, we're in."

"Okay, so what special equipment will we need other than the submarine and scuba suits?" Emilena asked.

"An acetylene torch to burn any grates out of our way." Axel racked his brain. "And I guess, like, weapons. You know, the usual." He looked around. "Any other questions? Opinions?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **January 08, 2019, 07:28:23 PM**

"We'll need to keep quiet. Most security at places like this is heavy. Having broken into many myself." Awe noted. "Suppressed weapons and melee weapons, but we should also be ready just encase we loose surprise."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2019, 07:41:12 PM**

Emilena nodded and glanced at the clock. "It's 5pm right now. Ideally, we'd leave under the cover of night." She glanced at Awe. "Where will the sub be, and how soon will it be ready for us to head out? If we could disembark at 3am, that'd give everyone 8 hours to sleep before the mission." Not that anyone had to rest if they didn't want to, but Emilena was feeling plenty tired; she hadn't had a full 8 hours of sleep since Buller ambushed her yesterday morning. *I can't believe that was only 48 hours ago...*

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **January 10, 2019, 07:09:46 PM**

"It'll meet us just off the coast at 2am." Awe replied. "Won't be a comfy ride. Oh and be ready for the smell. It's an old diesel electric submarine."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 15, 2019, 12:26:48 AM**

(OOC: Timeskipping to 1:30am, half an hour before the submarine heist. Feel free to post what your character did during the 8-hour break if you want, but it feels like the RP ground to a halt at dinner)

Emilena's first sensation was the feeling of weightlessness, of being surrounded by a comforting warm gel. She couldn't move, but as she'd just been born, this didn't bother her all too much. Her world was small but safe, letting her slowly learn how to move and stretch while exploring her existence with absolute security.

Her second sensation was the sound of murky voices infiltrating her slumber. "I don't know about this, Rhaegson. We could just store the DNA sample and test it once we've rebuilt in Seryet. It'd be safer."

"Oh come on, it's a piece of fuckin' hair!" The second voice was snide and commanding. "You gonna carry it in a baggie for three months? No. I wanna know who was so goddamn important that those freaks smashed their way in here and turned this place into Pelvanida just to clone 'em."*

She was growing bigger. Her hands and legs were taking shape, hair was growing on her scalp. Light started penetrating her eyelids, and the cloning pod started feeling constricting rather than cozy.

Before long it was done. The pod drained itself of the viscous green goo and the door hissed open, and she took her first stumbling steps into the world.

"Wait," gasped the first voice. "That's...that's the woman Lupis has been chasing! Does he know about this?"

"Feel free to ask him," the other answered dismissively, "we're standing in a puddle of his brains right now."

She groaned as she opened her eyes and saw her surroundings for the first time. She was standing in a heavily damaged laboratory. Bloodstains, bullet holes and burn marks pocked the walls, and the floor was coated in a mess of various bodily fluids. A larger man in a labcoat was staring at her in fascination. The smaller man, in a crisp business suit, wore a look more akin to disgust. "She's nobody I was expecting…" The smaller man narrowed his eyes. "What the hell were they playing at?"

"We'll study it," the larger man assured. "See if we can find out what Lupis was so interested in."

"Nah, we don't got time for this right now." The smaller man drew a silenced pistol. "We're in the middle of a big move and there's too many eyeballs from the feds." He cocked it and poked the barrel into her chest. "We'll clone another one in Seryet."

Something in the man's tone, and the barrel stabbing painfully into her ribcage, warned her she was in danger. In a panic, she whacked the gun with her hand as it went off. The larger man screamed as the bullet ricocheted off the cloning pod and embedded into his leg. "Fuck! Goddammit!" he cursed, glaring at Rhaegson with watery eyes.

Rhaegson was more interested in the cloning pod. "Well, I'll be," he chuckled. "You bitch, you made me shoot the DNA receptacle." She'd stumbled backwards into the pod, and was staring at him in terror. "Guess we're stuck with you." He put his pistol away. "Okay, wash her up and maybe knock her out until we've got her in Seryet."

"You shot me!" the larger man snapped angrily.

Rhaegson rolled his eyes. "Then fucking get some Neosporin and then do it. Jesus." He hit a button and the cloning pod resealed, locking her inside. "She'll be here when you get back."

She heard their steps walking away. A soft light shone from the ceiling of the pod, letting her see her reflection in the metal; a brown-eyed, dark-skinned human.

"Oh, shoot," her reflection suddenly said. "Sorry Echo, you weren't supposed to see into my memories. Don't worry, I'll fix this before you go to sleep again."

Emilena awoke in a cold sweat.

After several minutes digesting everything she'd just seen, she sighed and sank deeper into her pillow. *Goddammit, I thought I was done with Lily butting into my dreams...* Once her heartrate had settled down, she climbed wearily out of bed and staggered down the hall to splash her face in the bathroom.

(*referencing an incident in 2008 where gunmen assaulted and murdered most of the staff in an American research facility)

Flora was sleeping on a couch in the living room, having drunken herself to sleep on liquor from Tony's bar. Hiccuping drowsily as her 1:30am alarm went off, she rolled over and abruptly crashed to the floor with a resigned groan.

Blinking blearily, she remained strewn across the floor as her brain pieced together the plan they had decided on last night. *Sleep for 8 hours, then drive 30 minutes to the coast and meet the submarine...* she yawned. "Fifty credits says someone sleeps in and makes us late..." she bet the couch leg.

Five minutes later her alarm went off again, reawakening her with a jolt. As she swiped snooze, she noticed her own name flashing across the News app notification.

Andy Margolis, Clickpop reporter
Fans of DJ Xyler just received their first cryptic clue as to what happened to the missing icon. At 5:21pm last night, Xyler's YouTube channel unexpectedly uploaded a new music video, though its bizarre production quality has left critics baffled and fans worried for her safety.
The video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucVVikTmg7A) starts out normal enough, with standard Skyler Blake production quality, but by the second half has descended into a nonsensical hodge-podge of camcorder and security footage. Xyler herself appears dancing with several other women who have not been identified. Columbia Records has since taken the video down and has not commented on why or how it was published in the first place.
So, was it a promotional stunt gone wrong? A half-finished project accidentally made public? Or is DJ Xyler being held hostage and this was part of some sort of ransom notice? In any case, at least we can finally put to rest any theories of Xyler having died in the assassination attempt at Topical Amphitheater.

"Wow, geez. Everyone's a fuckin' critic..." she muttered, dragging herself towards the bar. "Well *I* thought it was a good video..."

After taking an Amaretto shot in a futile attempt to wake herself up, she limped like a zombie towards the bathroom to relieve herself.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 15, 2019, 10:55:43 PM**

Marita storred as the alarm went off, and she looked around at the fold out cot she had been given. Marie groaned as she stirred next to her ' And i had such a nice dream. i was at this fine arts school, where i was drawing old buildings to put on postcards ' Marie groaned. ' You, do artwork? Thats more of rose's thing.' Marita said as she stretched , feeling her toes and claws crackle as she did so. ' I miss her terribly. Its been weeks now and no word at all, and.. Marie, I think she;s dead. " Until we find her body somewhere you cant give up hope entirely' Marie said as marita pulled out her computer, which had a clip of the 'video' they had made with Flora, and the comments were running about 100-to 1 in favor of ' this video stinks' " so much for our promising careers in music." Marita said with a sigh. ' what do you expect from a cell phone? its not going to have the same production value as a professionally directed and edited video. '[Marie said as she changed into a fresh outfit.

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Bianca stirred from her sleep and blearily looked over at a clock that hung on the wall which read 1:40. the Tv had been left on, She had been watching.. well she didnt really remember, show News program.

Now there were a trio of people discussing a music video of some kind. the quality of the video was not great.. it was grainy, and blurry,. "it looks like someone went to the " Blaiir Witch " school of camera holding ; Bianca yawned " Either that or its a home movie or some kind.' The roomba that had been guardiong her and the flat, moved back and forth on the ground, beeping every so often as it bumpred into a tennis racket that had fallen on the floor. Bianca decided to see if there was anything in the pantry to eat. she had just crashed on the coach after finishing moving Zulas stuff intoi her room. 'that had been several hours ago, apparently, and now she was hungry. tthe light in the kitchen flicered slightly, the bulb probably needed to be replaced, but that cost creds, and Zula didnt have much in the way of extra creds. Nor, as it turns out, did she have much in the way of food. there was a half container of milk, some thick baloney slices and and a jar of grape jam in the fridge, a quarter loaf of white soft bread and some crackers in the pantry, and a large case of Diet coke in a small space between the fridge and pantry. ' baloney.. and Jam sandwiches" Bianca sighed as she took out the scant food that was available to her.. As She was sliding bologna between 2 slices, Zula entered from the front door carrying bags of food ' Sorry i'm late. Jiang had a augment repair that went 3 times as long as we thought it would. had to remove the part, find out its burnt together, and spent out 6 hours slowly separating them, so we can get a replacement part made ' Zula sighed. ' also forgive me but i borrowed that gold creds card of yours, I spent about 500 creds, to get all this food. ' I'd been living on bread and jam for the last couple weeks. I'll pay you back once Jiang pays me next. Which will be.. lets see .. Friday. Should be a decent sized amount too, what with the double shift tonight." Zula said as she pulled out , milk, cereal granola bars, peanut butter and several other food products. " its ok, you're giving me a place to crash, so we're even' Bianca said, as she took out a box of fruit snacks from the bag.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **January 15, 2019, 11:45:56 PM**

Awe had spent the majority of the time in the gym. One of his augments allowed him to keep going for longer. Awe wiped the sweat from his brow from the workout. Awe left the gym and got a tall glass of water from the kitchen.

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 25, 2019, 02:41:36 AM**

"Hey!" Emilena complained when Flora opened the door to the restroom. "I'm in the shower! You had to have heard the water running."

"I did, but I got to piss really bad." Flora raised the toilet seat. "Why didn't you lock the door?"

"Last time I was in a Stracci mansion, they auto-locked." Emilena focused intently on the far corner of the shower while waiting impatiently for Flora to finish and leave. "Do you know if everyone else is awake yet?"

"I saw the mercenary in the kitchen. Don't know about the others." Flora flushed and washed her hands.

"Ugh. We were supposed to leave at 1:30, that was two minutes ago," Emilena sighed. "Hopefully Awe's contact isn't on a tight schedule."

Flora started washing her hair in the sink. "You know, you still owe me a conversation. We made that deal (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14550.msg432060#msg432060), way back in the day."

"I'm more than prepared to honor it, just there's hardly been a chance." Emilena grumbled as her shower turned lukewarm due to Flora stealing the hot water. "But if you really want it to happen while I'm cornered in the shower, sure."

"Well, to be honest, back in the day I was going to ask you for help cutting and running from this whole ordeal." Flora rifled through the drawers, locating a hair dryer. "But now that I've found true love, I'm invested. I *want* to be a part of Marita and Marie's adventure. I want to keep them safe."

"I honestly don't care." Emilena pursed her lips as she heard Flora testing the hair dryer. "Umm, is there any chance that could wait until I'm gone?"

"I know you don't like Marita and Marie," Flora answered, ensuring the hair dryer was plugged securely into the wall. "You've always said such hateful things about them. So I'm giving you one warning. Don't ever say another rude thing about my girlfriends again."

"'Girlfriends'?" Emilena scoffed. "Look, I've known them a lot longer than you, and I'm not going to tiptoe around them just for your sake. Sorry."

"Oh yeah?" Flora abruptly pulled Emilena's curtain open and brandished the hair drier menacingly. "What if I tell you," she threatened as the vixen recoiled in surprise, "that if you *don't* promise, I'll *throw this in there with you* and--"

Emilena punched her square in the throat. Flora's eyes went wide and she gurgled in surprise as Emilena followed up with a karate chop to the forehead that sent the folf's head smacking against the mirror. Emilena maintained her startled combat stance even as Flora slid to the floor, out cold.

Sixty seconds later, Emilena was dressed, dried, and opening the door to Marie's and Marita's room. "We need to talk," she said simply, dropping the unconscious folf on their bed. "What is the whole story on this girl? How did she get involved with us in the first place, and why does she suddenly love you so much she tried to kill me in the shower just for insulting you?"

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 27, 2019, 08:44:00 PM**

"Our job was to keep an eye on her. We're getting paid a lot of money to do so. As for why she suddenly has a major crush on us, well we couldnt tell you" Marie said " Some sort of love potion, or something, I dont know. Until a few weeks ago or so she couldnt really stand us. So her change is a complete 180. '
So she threatened you for you not really caring for us, and you knocked her out?" Marita said " Truthfully I cant find any fault with you defending yourself, she was completely over the line' She sighed. " she's lucky you only knocked her out. You could have killed her."

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2019, 09:55:21 PM**

"So you didn't drug her or anything?" Emilena furrowed her brow. "Hmm. Well, we're about to break into a high-tech laboratory, maybe we'll get the chance to run some tests on her."

She glanced at the door. "I need to check on everyone else so we aren't too late to meet Awe's contact. When Flora wakes up, can you talk to her and dissuade her from doing something like that again? I don't want to leave her behind, but I also don't want to get backstabbed while 200 feet underwater."

(OOC: I've written an epilogue (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hlkUuGCo5GpJ7R0tlanjJewVEYZfLZfDx5GTUGCP64M/edit) for this RP since it seems to have breathed its last. I got permission from all authors whose characters appeared, and they also chose their characters' epilogues. Serris never sent me his epilogues, if he does I can update the document. Of course, if we ever revive it, I'm more than happy to de-canonize this and we can continue the story as usual, but I don't want the story to forever end unfinished.)

Title: **Re: Blanking the Slate**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2019, 08:45:44 PM**

zula finished putting the food away then moved to the coach to relax' ' is there a place i can sleep ' bianca yawned. ' i mean, i nodded off on the coach here, but thats not something i want to get in the habit of. i just want a room, that i can store some clothes and have some privacy. ' well, this a rather small apartment' Zula said ' theres only 1 shower. so if you want one and i;'m already taking one then well just have to share a shower.' " i'd be ok with that' Bianca said.' alright, then.i usually take a morning shower around 10, and an evening shower when i get home from work. since it is so late tonight, i'll think I'll hold off until tom morning. unless you want one, i suppose." I'm really tired, so why dont we hold off on the shower until tomorrow? right now, if you could just show me to my room. 'I'll just crash onto it most likely ' Bianca yawned ;' Follow me then" Zula motioned with her claw.

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Emilena left Marie and Marita to get ready and found the rest of the team prepping in Tony's garage.

"Hey there," Axel passed her a round of 9mm ammo for her pistol. "Don't look like you slept well. Hope you're ready for this."

"As I'll ever be." Emilena rubbed her temples and changed into one of the wetsuits. "Where's Tony?"

"He ultimately decided he'd rather stay here. Frankly, I don't blame him." Axel was already drinking from a flask of scotch. "This is suicide."

"Suicide's practically our business by this point," Anne responded as Flora silently entered the room already dressed in her own wetsuit. Unlike the others, she wasn't nervous at all; she suspected Coxon had bigger plans than killing her, which was the main reason she hadn't voiced any complaints up till now.

Soren double-checked his oxy-acetylene torch was working; it was his responsibility to burn through any vents or grates that might impede the team's progress once they've breached the base. "If Tony isn't coming, who stays with the submarine while the rest of us are risking our necks inside?"

"We'll figure it out in the ocean," Awe replied, buckling up. "It's a long ride."

Once everyone was prepared, Flora led the way down to the beach. There was nobody on the beaches this late at night, so they were able to reach the docks without incident. Awe was checking his watch and glancing at the pitch-black ocean. "There's the signal," he noted.

Before the team, a massive gleaming capsule suddenly rose from the surf. The moonlight reflected off of its chrome chassis, and a smaller man opened the top hatch and waded to them through the surf. "Perfect," Awe shook the man's hand. "I knew I could count on you."

"You know the deal, Awe," the man cautioned. "Full payment up front, and I need this thing back in one piece."

"It's already been deposited to your bank account, plus a bit extra for prepping on short notice," Awe assured, helping the others scale the side and clamber into the interior.

Soren let out a low whistle. "This is incredible!" he breathed, observing the medley of scientific and nautical observational tools. "We can scan up to 30 miles in any direction, and these floodlights can illuminate all the way to the ocean floor!"

"Enjoy the view while you can," Awe remarked, activating the engine and taking them away from shore. "We'll have to turn these off before we get close to Brennan Labs, or they'll see us coming."

Marita found a refrigerator and opened it to find a medley of sodas and other drinks. "Wow! You pull out the stops, Awe," she noted approvingly, grabbing a diet cola.

"Sorry to interject with more worries, but will we even be able to contact each other while underwater?" Axel asked. He was watching Awe intently as he drove the sub, since they may need someone else to drive home if Awe for some reason didn't survive the raid.

“I highly doubt it,” Anne replied. She was watching the rocks, coral and kelp speeding past their floodlights as they zoomed along the ocean floor. “Maybe if we had military-issue walkie-talkies or something, but we’ve been doing all our communication through ordinary cell phones. I doubt any of us even get signal.”

“Actually, my phone plan covers international waters,” Awe replied. “It’s expensive, but worth it in my line of work.”

“Perfect,” Emilena nodded, glancing at Flora. “You sure you want to come with us? It’s highly unlikely we’ll encounter a situation down there where we need you. No offense.”

“Are you kidding me? We’re about to break into an underwater lab! You think I’m gonna pass up that opportunity?” Flora assured. “I’m getting a boner just thinking of what we’re about to do!” She also secretly hoped that she might see Bianca down there.

It was almost thirty minutes of sailing before they reached their destination, but it still felt far sooner than Anne expected. “All right…” she muttered, donning her oxygen tank and mask. “Everyone get their gear on. Last chance to duck out.”

“I can’t believe we’re doing this…” Axel muttered, putting his flippers on. “I hate swimming.”

“Really?” Marita asked, clipping her laptop to her back; Tony had leant her a waterproof pouch she could hide it in, and she wanted to be prepared in case she needed to hack anything down there. “I remember you and Lily used to go to the pool all the time before you broke up.”

“There’s a difference between the YMCA and a 200-foot dive into pitch-black ocean waters,” Axel shot back. “How do we even ensure we don’t lose each other down there?”

Soren thought. “Let’s tie ourselves together with the yacht’s rope. Axel’s right, we don’t want someone to get lost before we even reach the lab.”

Marie spread a printout of the area. “You’re going to want to swim directly that way,” she pointed east; she’d drawn the short straw and would be guarding the sub.

“We stopped a bit early, just because I figured we’d want to stay out of sensor range,” Awe chimed in. “I’d say it’s probably a 15-minute swim.” Axel groaned louder.

Emilena took a deep breath as Awe tied the rope around his waist and the others clipped themselves on. “All right, before the night gets any younger. Let’s do this.”

In unison, the seven donned their masks and flipped off the side of the boat. Immediately Emilena was hit with a freezing cold sensation as the frigid water enveloped her faster than her body could compensate. *For a coastal climate, these waters sure get cold at night…* But she didn’t spare more than a few seconds of orientating herself before kicking off in the direction Marie had pointed out.

She worried that they’d miss the lab in the dark, but as they swam that proved to be a moot problem; a faint glow appeared on the horizon, first ever so small, then larger and stronger before they finally found themselves treading water and staring in awe at a massive castle-sized structure. Brennan Labs was a vaguely circulare network of reinforced tubes, containing portholes and massive green lights that were currently dimmed to create the illusion of nighttime; a mechanic they no doubt use to help their personnel maintain a day/night cycle.

Awe realized his allies were waiting for his cue. He pointed his thumb downwards and they circled the bottom of the base. The light was worse down here, and Emilena wondered whether she should activate her flashlight. *No, it's probably better that we not broadcast our location to them while we're still in open waters.*

They got their first break when Marita spotted the discharge tunnel on their second pass around the western side. As they suspected, it was blocked by a massive vent that controlled the outlet. Swimming close, Soren activated his blowtorch and slowly cut through the grate bar-by-bar.

The team could finally activate their flashlights once they were inside the tunnel, and Anne gasped in surprise at how unexpectedly beautiful the ecosystem was within the tunnel. Thanks to the extra heat venting from the base, the walls and floor were covered in a medley of multicolored mosses and flora.

Maintaining the lead in their formation, Awe slowly swam down the various tunnels. The water got even warmer as they progressed through the cooling tunnel, but the wildlife disappeared after swimming past a set of fans, signifying the point the lab started worrying about janitorial duties.

After emerging into a turbine, Soren noticed light filtering from above. *An air pocket. Almost there…* Flagging the others, he led the way onto a submerged ladder and climbed his way into an access chamber.

Everyone was panting with exertion from their swim, and Axel was so drunk he needed a bit of help as he reached the top of the ladder and hoisted himself onto solid ground. “Oh man…” he groaned, popping his breather out and rolling onto his back. “You're telling me we need to do something here and then *repeat that swim* on the way out?”

“We shouldn't be long,” Emilena assured. “I can't fathom it'll be hard to find a way to cripple an underwater base. If we just find the control room and start shooting random systems, maybe break a couple portholes along the way, we can let the hundreds of pounds of ocean pressure do the rest for us.”

The hallways seemed to be dotted mostly with scientific personnel; Anne figured the lab probably didn't need to worry much about security 200ft underwater. But the hallways often lacked alternate routes, so the team found themselves backtracking frequently just to bypass the rare scientist or worker.

"God, this would literally be impossible if it were daytime and the staff were out in full force," Marita muttered, massaging her backside after cramming herself into yet another storage closet to avoid being spotted.

"We really need to find disguises," Flora agreed. "None of these rooms are labeled, how are we supposed to find where anything is?"

"I saw one room labeled 'tellectrum,' but we couldn't reach it because that janitor was at the end of the hall," Awe whispered.

"Tellectrum?" Axel exclaimed. "We should check that out, it came up in the papers we stole from Kintoki's safe house. It's important."

"Hmm," Emilena nodded. "Well, the janitor was almost thirty minutes ago, let's see if the coast cleared."

He was gone now, and the team gratefully left the hallways and filed into a currently-empty lab. "Loving how everything's unlocked," Flora commented, swiping a vial of brown powder and examining it curiously. "So what is this stuff?" she asked.

"It's an electrical catalyst, you use it to trigger certain chemical reactions," Axel explained, recalling what he'd read. "It's really rare, which is why Brennan has to mine it from the ocean floor. The problem is, I couldn't figure out what they use it for."

"Looks like they create some sort of gas with it," Awe replied, overlooking a series of mixing stations and incubators.

"Marita, can you figure out what these do?" Soren asked.

Marita hacked her way into one of the computers sitting at the workstations. "Alright, let's see…" she muttered. "The tellectrum is inserted into a pressure chamber with nitrous oxide and ether. When they mix, the tellectrum gives the resulting anesthetic a harmless electrical charge."

"Why would anyone want electrified anesthesia?" Anne asked.

"Because it works better," Soren answered, reading through clipboards of results from tissue and subject testing. "According to these, at least. Anne, you deal with drugs more than me, are these results as impressive as they look?"

Anne accepted the clipboard and checked it. Her ears flared back in surprise. "Holy fuck, that's the best knockout drug I've ever seen. It works *instantly*, it doesn't have side effects, and there's no resulting nausea or disorientation upon waking up. This is actually revolutionary for that field of medicine." She quickly looked around for samples she could pocket to sell on the street.

"Yeah, but Brennan is a cybernetics company," Axel shrugged. "Why are they even fucking around with this?"

"Because they're about to go under," Marita answered, still surfing through Brennan's files. "Even before their product famously killed hundreds of people. They'd already posted record losses for the last four quarters. This delve into hospital drugs is just one of multiple hail-mary attempts to find a new market, and it appears to be the only one kinda working."

Emilena was exploring several workbenches with petri dishes, seal cages, and copious notes about terrrablende's reaction with specimens. "It looks like they've been hard at work trying to make their anesthesia compatible with augments," she replied. "With little success."

"Wait, it's not compatible with augments?" Anne asked.

“Not according to their animal and tissue trials,” she replied. “Apparently the electricity doesn’t react well with any cybernetic implants. In augmented test subjects there’s been a…” she flipped the page and paled, “...*one-hundred percent* mortality rate.”

“Holy shit, that sounds like a colossal design flaw in an anesthetic,” Soren breathed. “A huge portion of the population is augmented.”

“Hey, guys!” Flora called. “Look at this!” She’d crossed through another door into a new lab, one that was surrounded by an intricate web of metal wires. Surrounded by testing equipment was a workstation with something sitting under a tarp.

“This is a faraday cage,” Soren recognized. “They must do some sort of electrical testing in here.”

Flora pulled the tarp off to reveal a humming black box with a button and some sort of reader sitting on top. “Any idea what that thing is?” she asked.

“It looks like either a battery, or a generator,” Soren rubbed his chin. “I don’t see anywhere to plug something in…”

Axel blew a strand of hair out of his eyes. “I think I’ve seen this thing before, but I can’t quite…” he muttered, touching the side and accidentally pressing an equally-black button embedded into its face.

Suddenly all seven of them felt a harmless current pass through them, and Flora yelped and dropped her vial. “The tellectrum shocked me!” she exclaimed.

The pulse dissipated thanks to the faraday cage. “Okay, so it’s a box that releases an electrical charge.” Anne pondered. “Why do they have that?”

But Flora’s tellectrum vial wasn’t the only thing that popped open. Soren squinted as he spotted a tiny capsule that had similarly sparked when the testing box went off. “It’s so they can energize the tellectrum for testing purposes,” he answered, examining the capsule. *Where have I seen this design before?* he racked his brain, and suddenly realized. *Oh, this looks like...the killchip Rhaegson had me install in Emilena.* He pried it open, to see tellectrum inside. *So that’s how it works. And if that’s what Brennan was developing...*

He glanced at the box, then the dropped tellectrum, then the chip in his hand. “Holy shit, I’ve got it…” his eyes lit up. “I figured everything out!” He pointed at Flora’s shattered vial. “Brennan found a mineral that can give off an undetectable electrical shock, one that’s lethal to people with augments. They wanted to kill a bunch of gleamers. So, all they had to do was store tellectrum capsules in all their augments and then, when the time was right--”

“--signal the capsules to release the tellectrum, and anyone with a Brennan augment would be killed!” Anne’s eyes lit up.

“But *why* did they do that?” Flora asked.

“Because augments are the primary reason their anesthesia isn’t the market standard,” Axel explained. “If they could successfully scare the public into banning or avoiding augmentation, hospitals would use their only profitable product significantly more.”

Marita started snapping pics of the emitter and grabbing paperwork from the tellectrum stations. “I don’t think we need to blow the base up anymore. Let’s just get out of here and reveal what we’ve discovered to the world!”

The others followed her back to the room, but Emilena suddenly stumbled. “Um, guys? I don’t feel…” she shook her head, trying to clear her mind, but she felt her body shutting down. “Uhhh…” she looked in alarm as her augmented hand started dripping blood.

“Emi? What’s happening?” Flora gasped.

“I...don’t know…” Emilena looked disoriented, and was instinctively clutching her cybernetic wrist.

Soren suddenly realized what was going on. *The pulse triggered the killchip!* “Lay her down!” he ordered. “Grab me some tools, anything!”

Awe quickly looted a supply closet and brought Soren a full toolset. Slicing the sleeve of Emilena’s wetsuit down the middle, Soren peeled her synthetic skin aside and rooted around in her cybernetic innards. Where had he put it?

There! Delicately pushing a neural connector aside, he unearthed the killchip. But his heart sank. Like the one in the faraday cage, it had broken completely open, and the tellectrum had infected her bloodstream. There was nothing he could do.

“Soren, what’s wrong with her?” Marita asked.

“I…” He took a deep breath. “Rhaegson must have had a killchip embedded in the cybernetic hand he’d given her. And it was activated by the pulse emitter.”

Flora gasped. Emilena’s breaths were growing fainter by the second. Of the team, only Axel was more focused on Soren, since he remembered helping install the hand part-by-part. *Did Soren know that killchip was installed?*

Emilena, for her part, was surprisingly calm, even as her heart beat faster and faster in a hopeless attempt to save her. She’d never feared death, and had been reflecting on its likelihood pretty much every day of this ordeal. It was almost relaxing that it had finally arrived and she didn’t need to worry about it anymore. “It’s okay,” she winced, coughing up blood. “I’m...fine with this. Just...get out there and reveal what they did to the world.”

She shuddered her final haggard breath. *I hope I’m wrong about there being no afterlife*, was her last fading thought. *I’d like to see Nairda again...*

The others were silent as they watched their partner finally grow still. Flora balled her fist over her mouth and couldn’t stop tears from filling her eyes. *I can’t believe I threatened her life in Tony’s mansion,* she breathed, finally snapping out of the neurocotics' mind-altering effects through sheer shock. *She just seemed so larger than life...I thought she'd get through everything.*

“I never liked her, but it's hard to see her go like this,” Anne admitted, averting her gaze from the corpse.

Awe somberly kneeled down and closed Emilena's eyes. “I wish we had time to mourn, but we need to get going,” he reminded everyone. “She'd want us to prioritize the mission.”

Marita nodded. “I've got more than enough evidence to put us on the front page of every newspaper in the country,” she announced. “Let's get out of here.”

But that plan didn't get very far when she creaked open the door to the hallway and found a fully-armed platoon of security guards already training guns on her. “Well,” she remarked, dropping her pistol and raising her arms. “That fell apart fast.”

* * *

Metheun paced outside their holding chamber in the brig. “I gotta admit, I didn't expect the bosses' plan to work as well as it did,” he gloated. “I was sure you were all going to get yourselves killed long before you managed to reach us, but here you are!”

The team had been stripped of everything but their wetsuits and were now handcuffed in the brig. They weren't gagged, but nobody felt like responding as Metheun explained how badly they walked into his bosses' trap.

“We *let* you raid our safehouse and steal that data! We *wanted* you to find us! Heck, when we saw you were gonna get yourselves arrested in the hospital, we sent an anonymous text to Tony so he'd arrive with a getaway vehicle!” he cackled triumphantly. “I love a happy ending. You have no idea how much money I'm gonna get paid; this is golden-parachute level stuff. I'm never gonna work again.”

“So, if you wanted us here so badly, and you're not just killing us, what do you actually want?” Marita asked.

Metheun flagged down a guard. “Me, personally? Couldn't care less about you. But I know the boss has things he wants to discuss. Starting with the pink one.” He snapped his fingers and two guards marched forward.

“I'm *fuchsia!*” Flora corrected hotly as they dragged her out the door and down the hallway.

Five minutes later, she massaged her arms after they uncuffed her and dumped her in a dimly-lit office. “Uhhh...hello?” she asked.

“Flora.” The desklamp clicked on, and she jumped when she realized an old man with a weatherbeaten face was staring softly at her from the other side. "It's been a while, hasn't it, Flora?"

“I...what?” She cocked her head. “Your name was...Coxon, right? It's been like...two months max.”

Coxon smiled kindly at Flora as a guard pulled out a chair for her, helping her to ease down into it. He reached over to pat her hand reassuringly. "No, I suppose you wouldn't remember. It might surprise you but I actually knew you when you were... much younger."

Flora blinked. “Erm...okay. Nice to see you again? This is kinda a weird time for reacquainting, especially since I was here to help destroy the base.”

“Yes, well, it’s not easy to find excuses to bring people down here.” Coxon lit a cigar, offering her one but she declined. “Nevertheless, I’m proud of you for making it this far. You and your new friends are a pretty good team.”

It’s true!” Flora bounced in her seat. “You’re not gonna harm them, are you?”

“That depends; are you interested in helping me out?” Coxon sighed. “I hate to sound unpleasant, but Brennan didn’t get this far by letting loose threads hang around. Your friends need to make themselves useful to us. Luckily, we have just the way they can do so.” He passed a manila folder over. “Do you recognize this woman?”

Flora opened the folder and jumped in surprise at the scowling face staring back at her. “That’s Lily!”

“Yes. We’ve read a lot about her. And we know your friends have interacted with her in the past, especially Mr. Whent and Ms. Echo.” Coxon leaned forward, drenching his face in shadow. “We simply want them to bring Lily North to us. If they do that, we’ll make all their Purifier problems go away.”

“Why would they work with you when you killed Emi?” Flora snapped, flushing red.

“We did nothing of the sort,” Coxon raised an eyebrow. “The Purifiers did that when they tainted her augment. A regrettable loss, I was going to offer her employment as chief of security. Honestly,” he leaned forward, “I’m offering you my support to bring her killers, the Purifiers, to justice. I think their comeuppance is what she would have wanted.”

“You’re only doing that in exchange for Lily. Speaking of which, does she have to be alive?” Flora stammered, a bead of sweat rolling down her brow.

Coxon laughed. “I don’t think there’s any other way. Clearly they didn’t tell you everything about her.” He templed his fingers. “Yes, alive. Or our deal is off the table.” Flora gulped. “You see, Flora, Mrs. North has a most incredible gift. A gift we’d like to study. We think we could revolutionize the world by using her powers to increase the potency and capabilities of our pharmaceutical products.”

“Is there any chance I could persuade you to accept us bringing her dead?” Flora asked nervously. “I don’t think you realize how evil she is. She wouldn’t work with you, and her powers were--*cough*--*are* too dangerous to let her stick around. You wouldn’t be able to control her.”

“Let us worry about that.” Coxon snuffed his cigar. “If you kill her, she’ll merely regenerate to heal her wounds. But if you keep her sedated, you can bring her to us during that time.”

“And if we can’t...you’ll kill us?” Flora fought to keep from shaking.

“Oh no, of course not!” Coxon assured. “I’ll kill *them.* You have a more nuanced offer.” He handed her another file, this one on herself. “There’s a lot your parents never told you about your conception. It’s not a coincidence that you turned out the way you are. Have you ever heard of the Changelings?”

Flora flipped through notes discussing her gestation, sonograms of her unborn fetus, and outlines of gene therapies for which she was one of the filial testing generations. “Yeah, weren’t they like Gattaca hippies?”

“They were an illegal underground community that experimented with prenatal gene alteration to find the ‘biological limit,’ Coxon explained. “They wanted to see what the human body could be capable of, and they used their own unborn children as the test subjects. The Changelings only really stuck around for one generation before increased social awareness got them all arrested and their practises outlawed...though your parents were rich enough to be above the law.”

Flora’s shivers of nervousness slowly shifted into trembles of disbelief. “So...that’s why I can change my colors and body structure?” she stammered.

“Most of the Changeling kids turned out rather the worse for their ordeal. Underground gene experimentation isn’t an exact science,” Coxon replied. “You were one of the rare ones that came out great. They all had such high hopes for you before the police started raiding.” He sighed. “But, if you can convince Echo and her crew to capture Lily for me, we can work together to continue what your parents started. With my company’s resources, and Lily’s power, we can start a revolution the likes of which this world has never seen.”

* * *

“...so, you didn’t bring up that Lily’s already dead and rotting in an attic somewhere?” Anne protested.

“It was the *only* thing stopping them from killing all you!” Flora explained. Awe was scanning their cell to make sure they weren’t being bugged. “If Coxon thinks we can bring him Lily, he’ll release us into the wild, and we’ll have a chance to escape!”

“Right back into the Purifiers’ hands,” Soren pointed out. “If we leave without taking this base out, we’re just changing who ends up wanting us dead.”

“What if we tell the public the truth after Brennan lets us go?” Marita suggested. “Get the media on our side. Maybe we can enter witness protection or something after that.”

“Brennan’s not gonna let us leave with proof, and without evidence we’ll just sound like conspiracy theorists with giant criminal records,” Axel shook his head.

Awe completed his search and, satisfied they weren’t being wiretapped, rejoined the conversation. “Flora, are you sure you’re okay with turning down Coxon’s offer?” he asked. “It sounds like you’re irreplaceable in his schemes. Whatever happens to us, you could stay here and milk his good side for a new life.”

“Brennan isn’t my team,” Flora shook her head. “You guys are.”

“That’s good to hear, Flora,” Marita smiled. “Then in that case, I’ve got a plan.” She turned to Soren. “You said they triggered the Seryet incident with tellectrum, right?” Soren nodded. “And we’re sitting in a lab full of that stuff, right now. So I’m wondering…”

* * *

“I got them to agree,” Flora informed Coxon in a small voice; she still felt somewhat cowed at how the architecture of the room made any visitor the center of attention. Like the furniture was watching and ready to attack her.

“Excellent, Flora!” Coxon beamed. “We’ll release them on the docks. Were you planning on joining them, or would you like to stay here and begin learning about your past?”

“Go with them,” Flora answered quickly. “We’re a team, and I’d rather do my part to bring Lily in.”

“Are you sure? There’s so much for us to discuss.”

“Positive,” she nodded. “We can discuss all we want after my friends are saved from the Purifiers.”

Coxon shrugged. “Not the answer I expected...but that is your right.” He hit a button. “Please return to the brig. And best of luck to your team, sincerely.”

* * *

A pair of guards arrived and unlocked the cell door. “Follow us,” the taller one grunted. “We’ll take you to your stuff, and give you equipment and supplies and get you on your way.”

“And the handcuffs?” Marita asked as the team complied. “We won’t be much use with these on.”

The man acquiescently uncuffed them and marched them into the hallway. After a short walk, they arrived at several lockers, the first of which he opened to reveal their wetsuits and gear.

Soren cocked his head. “Where are our guns?”

“We had them delivered to the dock,” the guard explained. “They’ll be waiting for you when you arrive surfaceside.”

Anne sighed as she donned her wetsuit. “I guess that makes things a bit harder.”

“Uh, why?” the guard asked, right before Awe suddenly smacked him in the back of the head with a punch that could shatter a cinderblock. Simultaneously, Axel grabbed a combat knife from Emilena’s gear and slashed the other guard’s throat with a vicious swipe.

The alarm immediately sounded, but none of the five seemed too fussed. “Things are gonna get heated, Awe, you ready to do your part?” Soren asked, frisking the guard for his rifle and handing Anne the sidearm.

Awe nodded, pinned his oxygen tank and breather to his belt, and leaped onto the ceiling. Prying a grate off the ventilation system, he slithered away into the recesses of the lab.

“Alright, let’s get out of here!” Anne whooped, opening fire on a pair of guards approaching from the far side. The bullets punched holes in the wall, causing water to drain in and forcing the approaching targets to retreat for an unpunctured section.

Retracing their steps from the route they were marched to the brig, Soren shot every porthole they passed, and before long they were wading through waistdeep water. “Our exit’s up ahead!” he urged everyone. “Keep going!”

They threw the door to the access chamber open. “Flippers on!” Marita ordered, but before they could do anything a hatch slid shut, blocking access to the cooling tunnel.

“*What the hell do you think you’re doing?*” Coxon’s furious voice shouted at them from the intercom. “*I thought we were gonna work together!*”

“We’re already being strong-armed into doing one enemy’s bullshit, why on Earth would we want a *second* group lording our lives over us?” Anne shouted back defiantly. Soren and Axel kept their scuba gear on but assumed defensive positions in case anyone tried to storm the room.

“*Don’t worry about defending the door, I’m not dumb enough to send my men down there*,” Coxon sneered. “*You’d have to do a lot more damage to cause this base any problems; we’ve already evacuated and sealed off that section. Your attempted hull breach was simply embarrassing.*”

“Was it?” Axel challenged. “How are you gonna get us?”

“*I don’t have to!*” Up in his office, Coxon was red-faced with frustration at his prey’s games. “I can just wait for you to suffocate in that locked room!” he shouted into his broadcaster. “You basically killed yourselves, for nothing! How did you survive this long if you’re so goddamn stupid?”

“*Because we know our limits,*” Soren’s voice responded, “*and we know our weaknesses.”*

“For example, all of us except me are Augments, which is about to become a serious liability in this base,” Marita chimed in. *“But as a team, we can cover each other’s weaknesses and, if not win handily, at least live to fight another day.*”

“What the hell is she talking about…?” Coxon muttered, and then something suddenly clicked in his mind. He checked his trackers to see where Flora was, then switched his camera view to her section. She was in the filtration room, staring straight at the camera. Empty canisters of their own anesthetic were scattered at her feet. “Hey!” he snapped. “Flora! Step away from that!”

Flora complied with a huge smile, and he realized it was simply because she’d long finished messing with the air supply.

Elsewhere, Awe finished dismantling the faraday cage around the electrical emitter and, after ensuring his oxygen mask was on tight, fired another pulse. Without the faraday cage to block it, the pulse radiated in all directions, covering the whole base before dissipating in the ocean.

Suddenly Coxon felt lightheaded. “No…” he breathed, switching to the global cameras. Personnel across the base were clutching their heads and falling to the ground. “Flora, you didn’t…” he breathed. “Why…?”

“*I dunno if you’re an Augment, Coxon, but in a few seconds you’re gonna be asleep either way,”* Anne taunted. “*I really hope you are one, though, because I think it’s only fair you experience the same terrible death you gave so many people in Seryet.*”

Coxon clutched his head and urgently switched computer windows to shut down the ventilation system, but it was far too little too late. His genius augmented brain wasn’t responding to his hands properly. He felt helpless as he couldn’t force his body to work, he felt terrified as he felt blood leaking from his eyes.

And before long he felt nothing.

* * *

Almost 80% of Brennan personnel had at least one augment, and the anesthetized air killed them outright. The remainder were knocked unconscious, giving Soren and his team full access to the base. Flora, due to her lack of augments, was knocked out by her own incapacitating agent, but her team rescued her after Soren burnt the doorlock open with his blowtorch.

“There we go,” Marita urged her younger teammate as she breathed her first clean breath from the oxygen tank she fit on her. “Feeling okay?” She sounded a bit odd thanks to the oxygen rebreather.

Flora nodded. “It’s a really good anesthetic,” she admitted, impressed. “No nausea or anything when you wake up. Shame it was produced by a bunch of dicks.” She looked around. “Where are the others?”

Marita led her out of the filtration system, stepping over dead or unconscious bodies. “The control room,” she explained. “Figuring out how to contact the Purifiers. Let’s get our rewards and put this mess behind us.”

Awe gave them a curt nod when they arrived. “Was just waiting for you to get here. We can hail them whenever you’re ready. Also I’ve sealed off this room and pumped out the gas, so we don’t have to debrief Rhaegson with masks on.”

“Perfect, punch it,” Flora ordered, and Awe quickly complied.

For several minutes, no reply. Axel cocked his head. “Erm, you sure the frequency is right?”

Awe squinted at the computer screen. “I got it from Brennan’s own files; they DDoSed the Purifiers during the Seryet incident so they could control the narrative. I guess it’s possible Rhaegson changed it after that--”

And then suddenly the connection completed, and the main viewscreen lit up to show Rhaegson’s severed head lying on his bloodstained desk.

“Holy-!” Soren jumped up, and even Awe gasped in surprise. They could hear gunfire, screaming, and the sound of desperate scuffles on the other side...but it all faded away quickly enough.

A bloodstained and very resigned dark-skinned woman walked onto frame, dropping Buller's corpse. Her combat outfit was charred and shredded with bullet holes, but she didn't have a single injury underneath. "Brennan?" she narrowed her eyes. "What on earth do you...wait…" Her eyes widened. "Are you...Echo's team?"

"Is that *her*?!" Flora stammered, pupils dilating. "How? How did she survive???"

"Hold on, just let me do the talking!" Axel said urgently. He stepped forward and addressed the woman on the screen. "You're the clone, aren't you."

"Don't ever call me that again," the dark-skinned woman snarled. "I'm the only one left, and her powers have awoken within me. I've *earned* the right to be called Lily."

"Fair enough," Axel conceded the point. "I understand. Um, congratulations on getting everything you wanted."

The new Lily sighed. "Thank you…" she sighed, glancing around the aftermath of her carnage. "It's funny...in the end, she and I wanted the same thing. The Purifiers treated both of us like objects, like we were inhuman. I guess I felt the need to prove to them I was more than they ever thought I could be." She returned her gaze to the screen. "But I understand I wouldn't have succeeded without you and Echo. Consider us even."

"I am more than happy with that," Axel assured. "No hard feelings, no need to ever meet up...let's go our separate ways."

"Yes. Let's." Lily affixed him with one final gaze, and then the connection cut.

* * *

It wasn't hard to transmit more than enough evidence of Brennan's crimes now that the team had control of all the base's systems. A series of anonymous data packets were sent to every major whistleblowing and journalism site, several of whom responded in real time with breaking articles and public releases of juicy details, and the surviving teammates returned to the submarine leaving a crippled ghost base less than twelve hours after they'd arrived.

The team brought Emilena's body and gave her a short seaside funeral before returning to Seryet. As the team stood at attention on the hull of the surfaced submarine, Marita delivered a final eulogy as the floating pyre drifted towards the horizon.

"We commit Emilena's body to the cleansing fire, that all ties to this world are severed." Marita watched as the flames slowly grew on the small wooden raft. There would soon be nothing of Emilena's body but fine ash. "We remember her as a colleague, someone who, while we didn't always agree, was someone you wanted on your side. I came to respect her over our time together, even though this whole thing came about over her trying to blackmail me." She chuckled softly. "Goodbye Emilena, rest easy, and rest well."

Axel bowed his head. “She was never the most...straightforward ally. Always seemed to have some sort of scheme or hidden agenda. But she stuck her neck out for the team as much as anyone else. Considering most people die for nothing, at least we made her sacrifice matter.”

Soren didn’t say anything.

Several hours later the sub surfaced upon reaching the Brennan docks, and all six climbed out into the surf. Awe was the last to leave; he battened down the hatches and prepped the sub to be returned once he eventually said his goodbyes to his current teammates.

“Welp, we made it…” Axel panted, paddling to the docks. “Doesn’t look like we’re getting those rewards we were promised, though.”

“The Purifiers being dead is more than enough for me,” Soren affirmed, helping the others up the wooden ladder. After that he collapsed onto the boardwalk, the adrenaline from their odyssey in Brennan Labs finally catching up to him.

Flora observed the warehouses, stamped with Brennan’s name and logo. In this day and age, everything within was completely automated, but without the lab sending signals the warehouse machinery was likely shut down. “You know…” she noted, “we are currently standing on a pier loaded to the brim with expensive cybernetics and possibly drugs. That nobody owns.”

“Hmm…” Anne exchanged glances with the others. “We could probably fix that. Without those Purifier rewards, I think we’re all in the same predicament.”

“Having to start again from square one,” Marie agreed. “Let’s split them. There’ll be enough in there for each of us to rebuild our capital and start a new life.”

“One last crime, huh?” Axel sighed. “Why not. After the bullshit Brennan put us through, I think we earned it.”

“I’m actually good,” Flora declined respectfully. “I’m still a world-famous and wealthy pop star, so I’ll settle for just lying low in Tony’s mansion until this all blows over. The rest of you have fun though.”

* * *

And split it they did. Brennan Cybernetics wasn’t in a position to stop them, as its surviving admins were quickly arrested by law enforcement. Before long the company's crimes were thoroughly investigated, catalogued and broadcast to the public. The identities of the whistleblowers who broke the conspiracy open were never discovered.

Soren ___________________________

Axel opened the Whent Foundation, a charity and research non-profit dedicated to protecting Augmented citizens from cyber-attacks and prejudice.

Marita and Marie reunited with Rose and Zula. The four used their new capital to retire early, and now travel the world in luxury and comfort.

Anne ___________________

Awe retired from his shadowy job and went off the grid. The public never heard of him again, but his friends know where to find him if the need arises.

Flora successfully resumed her music career after the media frenzy and resulting government investigation drove Brennan into the ground. One of her comeback songs was about a flawed yet honorable woman she used to know.

The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Unfinished RP's => Topic started by: Nick22 on August 10, 2015, 11:59:56 AM

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 10, 2015, 11:59:56 AM**

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marita crawled to a stop, her tail dragging behind her. around her, large dunes sprawled in every direction. marita fumbled feor her phone and tried to get a signal ' no bars ' damn it ' she muttered. She slowly got to her feet ' ans began calling out ' Rose! Marie! Can you hear me..' she kept calling out, her voice fading into the distance ' before finally she heard a faint response.' marita ran towards the sounds before seeing a figure run towards her over the sand. as it got closer marita recognized the figure, it was Marie. marie reached her and the two girls hugged. Marie pulled away and put her claws on her knees.' where the heck are we? she panted. " i have no clue. I'm not getting any reception on my phone. and its hot. we need to find rose and get out of the desert.' marita said.

_
the girls began wandering through the desert, calling out Roses name. Finally, they found her, sprawled out in a depression between a couple sand dunes. the dunes provided a small amount of shelter from the wind and was cooler than the surrounding area. rose had sand all over her, and looked miserable. ' what kept you girls? She said weakly. I've been trying to text you...' " Phones dont work out here ' marita said as shghe took a seat.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 10, 2015, 03:56:12 PM**

Flora wandered in a dazed stupor from the crash site. The events she had just lived through weighed heavily on her sanity, and she was struggling to keep from hyperventilating and shutting down. Her thirst was the only thing keeping her going.

Then Mother Nature decided to add a sandstorm to help her keep motivated. Tearing a strip out of her nurse's outfit to cover her snout, she squinted her eyes shut and stumbled blindly through the vicious lacerating sand in no particular direction.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 11, 2015, 06:41:51 PM**

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the sandstorm soon blew its way over the desert and towards the deprression wherwe Marita marie and Rose were sitting.' the clouds moved rapidly over the desert and was boring down on them. ' What the heck is that?' Rose cried. " Its a sandstorm " Marita said ' a big one. we're not safe here. the wind will tear up the dunes on the one hand the temperature will drop a lot , on the other hand we'll be scoured by the samd and wind, it'll be like rubbing your face with sandpaper. not fun.. ' marita whipped outr her phone again, praying to whatever deities there were to let her get a signal..' ok. ok! i have two bars..' bringing up the map.. ok.. down to one bar.. theres a town.. about .. 6 miles from here to the southeast. Bus- al' ghar. lets head southwest as quickly as we can..' marita turned off her phone- it had lost connection again anyway.' and she got up off her seat. ' that storm wil be herein a few minutes. we need to move..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 11, 2015, 08:55:57 PM**

Flora continued stumbling blindly, until she couldn't take it and collapsed on the sand. Covering her face in her hands, she tried and failed to keep what felt like gallons of sand from filling her lungs grain by grain.

And then it was over. Flora looked up in shock. Because she stopped moving, the sandstorm passed over her, leaving her buried up to her neck in a brand new dune. "Ahhh!" she gasped in surprise, then grimaced when the course sand filled her mouth instantly. Spluttering angrily she wiggled and thrashed and freed herself inch by inch. She was more sand than folf when she finally freed herself. Her face felt badly sunburned and her nails were splintered raw from clawing free from her burning prison. So she kept walking, wishing with every step she had procured a less-tight outfit in her escape from Kalis' warship.

The trip was survivable only due to it being twilight, the sweet spot between the parched daytime and frigid night. Nevertheless after what felt like an eternity her footpads were raw and her tongue was swollen from thirst. *This might be the end...* her heatstroked brain thought with alarming calmness. *Saved from Kalis only to feed the vultures...will vultures even find me? I'll probably just be a skeleton if they do, there's nobody and nothing for miles...*

These thoughts were suddenly dashed from her mind when with wild shock she realized there *was* something up ahead. Glinting in the fading afternoon light, she made out curved rooftops and gleaming steeples...a town?

Is it a mirage? she thought with wonder. *Is it delirium?* It didn't matter. Increasing her pace with reckless fervor, she sped towards her only hope of getting through the approaching night alive.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 11, 2015, 09:48:02 PM**

Marita and the others had only made it a few hundred feet before the storm had hit them, despite the wind, searing sand and low visibility the trio slowly made their way towards the southwest. the storm blew over finally after what seemed like hours. all three were coverd in sand, blood dripped from scratches in their face, and was absotbed by the sand that clung to their fur. finally, the outline of a city appeared on the horizon ' Bus Al ' gahr' marita said, relief oin her voice. ' we'll just find an inn, there and crash for the night. Hopefully they'll have enough creds.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 11, 2015, 10:01:10 PM**

Flora could hardly believe it when she stumbled into this unknown city and the buildings didn't melt away in the wind. "It's real!" she breathed in shock. "A real city!"

She dropped to her knees, tearing up in relief. Then she got back up almost as quickly because the stone tiles paving the road were still blistering hot.

Hobbling to a cheap motel called *The Oasis*, Flora approached the register and silently hoped the clerk spoke English. "Please, can I have a room tonight?" she begged. "I don't have any money but I just survived a sandstorm and I'm so tired! I'll do anything, I'll wash dishes, I'll work off my debt! Just one night!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 12, 2015, 07:50:56 AM**

the clerk- who was a camel- looked at her and sized up her attire.. ' well you do look like hell. tell you what. ' we will have some guests checking out in an hour or so. once they check out i'll give you a room. For now,the dining room is open. so go grab yourself some food and drink, you definitely look like you need it. i'll charge the cost to your room bill." the clerk said ' your name please?' he said pulling out a book, and flipped it open to an empty page.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 12, 2015, 08:59:19 AM**

"My name is Flora..." She mumbled, only realizing afterwards that she should have given a fake name, as she clearly wouldn't be able to pay her room bill. "Thank you sooo much...I promise I'll work the debt off somehow, just let me know anything I can do around the hotel..." She glanced at his nametag, but it was written in the Arabic alphabet so she didn't know how to pronounce it.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 12, 2015, 09:43:27 AM**

Flora " the camel repeated, writing it down on the ledger. 'welcome to The Oasis madam. i'll let you know when the room is available. Masad over there- he motioned to a parrot perched on a perch. ' will show you around the hotel.'

-

marita and the girls entered the city. leaving tremkks of sand mixed with blood on their wake. ' marie tried to wipe some of the sand off of her, her throat was dry and every time she coughed sand dribbled out of her mouth. 'wh-where to, Marita" Marie wheezed." i dont know' Marita said. " Just look for an inn, any inn will do." rose was wipeng her face fre of the sand, all three of them looked like something out of a zombie flick.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 12, 2015, 10:42:17 AM**

"Thank you..." Blushed Flora, crossing over to the Mcaw. This wasn't the service she expected from an Arabian hotel, she'd always heard that on this side of the world business was full of haggling and nitpicking down to the penny. But she couldn't well be scammed if she had no money. Maybe he had a crush on her...

Or the Mcaw's going to knock me unconscious and steal my organs, she thought, but she didn't care. She needed somewhere to sleep.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 05:36:41 PM**

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follow me please' the Macaw said in a thick Arabic accent " the dining room is this way. sample as you like, your room will be billed once you finish and enter it. Unless you are expecting friends? But no matter, that is between you and them.' the macaw entered the dining room and guided the folf to an open table, the room was about a quarter full of guests, mostly camels altghough there we a few dogs and human families as well, all dressed n local attire. they paid little attention to the newcomer, and NMasad paused at a open table ' please sit here. theres water in that pitcher."

-

marita looked around the street, it was late now anmd she was exhausted . for the last 15-20minutes or so they had been looking for anything that looked like an in, but with no luck.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 06:43:36 PM**

Flora looked with alarm at the food. She couldn't pay for the room and was certainly skipping town, not to mention she was starving, but she suspected that they would hunt her down and kill her if she flaunted her bill before dashing. Not to mention the food was bringing up uncomfortable memories about Titus... "Ummm, maybe I'll eat later, but right now I just kinda want to shower and fall asleep." She rubbed her sunburnt arms and winced. "Also, maybe some Aloe Vera, if that exists out here..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 08:33:50 PM**

after stumbling around the city some more. Marita spotted the sign for the Oasis and led the girls inside. Rose dug into her dress and pulled out her creds card ' a room please' she said looking at the clerk ' If you have rooms available." the camel opened the book, ' how many are checking in?'
-
3 Rose said . the camel swiped her creds car then handed it back to her ' i have a guest who is looking for a room, but has no money. would you mind, letting her stay with you? i cannot afford to eat the cost of a room and meals if she has no money to pay..
-
well.. rose sighed ' it depends on who that person is.. ' Her name is Flora. outsider, looked really beat up. i'm having the bellhop show her around..'
- Marita started ' Flora? wait.. how did she.. nevermind. we'll let her stay with us once we find her. I'm Marita, Thats Rose and Marie."
_
sign your names here ' the clerk said, handing marita a pen. Marita put her name in, then handed it to Marie, who signed, then Rose completed the trio. " room 18 will be available in 20 minutes' the clerk said ' just up the stairs to your right.
_
the rooms should have supplies in the bathroom ' the macaw replied to Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 08:51:46 PM**

"ohmygodohmygod *thank you*!!!" Flora rushed into the air-conditioned, carpeted room and collapsed on the only bed. She sighed loudly and contentedly as she sank into the fluffy covers and a small pyramid of sand trickled out of her dress and onto the floor at the base of the bed. She almost fell asleep right away, but the aforementioned sand was giving her rashes in almost every joint.

Spurring herself back to her feet with Herculean effort, Flora staggered into the bathroom and shed her clothes immediately. Running the bath as hot as it went, she sank into the bathtub and sighed as the water pooled around her and coaxed the grit out of her fur.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 09:05:46 PM**

You're welcome the macaw said before the door was slammed in his face, and he turned to head down the hallway when he saw three female dogs walking towards him. they were silently counting the room numbers. " Excuse me sir" said one of the dog ' we're looking for room 18 , please."
" well its this one. its well occupied. i just had a guest named Flora inside..' Yes.. shes.. staying with us, for the evening " Marita said.' ah.. excellent.' Masad said, unlocking the door with a master key, and letting the girls in.' call downstairs if you need anything. good night ladies ' he said' closing the door behind him, and headed down stairs.
-
the sound of the bath running was audible, but the girls were more interested in settling in. there was only one bed, but it was a large one, enough for 3 people, or 4 if the squeezed in tight. marie brushed off the sand flora had left on the bed as best she could, the three of them were sandy as well. Rose got a garbage bin and place it on the ground and one by one the girls wiped as much sand and grit off their dresses and out of their fur and into the garbage. between the 3 of them, they filled the bin nearly halfway once they were finished. ' yuck ' Rose said looking at the mess in the bin, ' cant believe all that was on me..'
marita took off her dress, and set it on a chair, ashe triered to lie down on the bed but there was still a lot of sand in her fur.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 09:17:53 PM**

Flora used the entirety of the little complimentary bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and body lotion. She scrubbed every inch of her body until it was raw, then lathered herself in soap and shuddered in pleasure as the stinging dulled her nerves and let her mind off the sand rashes. She soaked a towel and pressed it against her calloused feet, scrubbing her paw pads until they were swollen with water. Occasionally she'd change the spigot to cold water long enough to take some long deep draughts; it was the greatest water she'd ever tasted.

Almost an hour later she stumbled out of the bath, took one look at the towels and muttered, "fuck that I'm going to sleep." Opening the door and walking into the bedroom, she noticed with abject shock that were three people on her bed and fell over with a spooked "*Yeep!!!*"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 09:34:47 PM**

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hi Flora' rose said from the bed as she heard the door open and saw a nude hot pink folf come out. ' i see you managed to cross our path again..I'm Rose, if you remember. "
_
could you put a robe on please? Marie said ' not that i dont admire the feminine form- you've got a good sized bust, by the way- but usually you cover your goods when coming out of the shower.
- marita looked at Flora. " hey Flora. dont worry, we're not going to kick you out of here. you'll be sharing this room with us for the evening, which includes dinner. don;t worry, we've got enough creds for all 4 of us to get a meal in us.. since right now I'm very hungry- don't know about you" she said. 'we're just resting for a bit after trekking through that sandsquall. we basically filled an entire garbage can, with sand from out outfits.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 09:47:47 PM**

"I huh I ju uh I whu you whu huh?" Flora babbled, wide-eyed and fur standing on end. "How did where did what did *you doing here?*"

She scrambled to her feet in surprise. "I'm sorry, I just didn't think anyone would be in here!" she stammered, blushing and covering her privates. "Especially not you three!"

She grabbed the towel from the bathroom and quickly wrapped it around her waist. "How did you get here?" she asked, nonplussed. "Where did you come from???"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 10:00:12 PM**

Marita got up from the bed and headed over towards Flora. "we got stuck in the desert, and wandered our way into town. Wasnt fun, AT ALL as for getting in here ' she waved a room key at flora this is our room.. well its your room too, we're sharing it."
-
Rose got up from the bed and headed towards flora." Don't be afraid Flora. You're safe with us ' She said giving Flora a smile.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 14, 2015, 10:09:32 PM**

"I mean of course I'm safe but I just didn't expect I mean I was in a warship and you were all gone and I got the shit beaten out of me and then Lily healed me so I guess I wasn't alone but

I thought everyone else was gone forever and now you're here and--" Flora could not stop babbling, her hysteria from the desert was reasserting itself.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 14, 2015, 10:22:40 PM**

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rose put her claws to floras shoulders' come on Flora relax..' she said softly, and repeated the request as the babbling folf went on and on about torture chambers , and people getting their heads blown off and terminal velocities and explosions and various other ramblings, and rose finally cut her off by kissing her. Roses dark red lips found Floras dark red lips, and the great dane slipped her tongue into Floras mouth. both marita and marie were surprised by Roses move, they hadnt expected her to kiss Flora, on the other hand, the folf had been rambling on and on and on about all sorts of weird stuff and perhaps talking her mind off of - whatever nioghtmare she had been through was a good move.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 15, 2015, 01:44:08 AM**

"--Ulp!" Flora's ears perked and whatever she was saying died as the Great Dane slipped her tongue into Flora's mouth. Her eyes widened as Rose's tongue scraped against her own, and she felt a warm feeling throughout her abdomen as she finally got to experience a genuine kiss. The sudden tonsil hockey was such a surprise that for some time Flora could only stand stock still and reciprocate.

But as Rose explored her mouth, she grew more bold, and reached to cup Rose's breasts. Flora shuddered as she ran her fingers along Rose's soft skin. Without her hands to hold it up, her towel unraveled itself and fell to the floor.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 15, 2015, 09:49:53 AM**

Marie got up off the bed and headed towards the bathroom, giving Rose and flora a wide berth. ' Since you girls are, um, BUSY, i'll go take a shower. Hopefully there'll still be hot water left in there. I'll leave some hot water for you marita, I promise. Assuming theres any..'
-
alright' marita said. ' i'll .. look out the window and try and get a glimpse of where we are.. don't worry about the water, a bath is a bath at this point too me, i could care less if it is lukewarm.."

_
rose felt Flora touch her breasts and she moved her claws down floras side, brushing off dirt and grime floras bath hadnt reached . Floras fur was soft to the touch, and so was her lips. Rose began to massage Floras tongue with hers more forcefully, and moved in to press her body against Floras. tan and pink breasts bounced off each other', and the scent flora was giving iff was becoming more powerful. rose had had many sexual experiences at the electric sheep, and she was starting to get into her routine, firstly subtly rubbing her breasts against her partner - in this case Flora-, the next step would be kissing her partners breasts.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 15, 2015, 11:49:18 AM**

Hands shaking, Flora slid her hands down Rose's dress and dug her fingers into Rose's butt. She pushed her tongue into Rose's mouth, but her legs were shuddering with excitement and she let Rose remain in control of the speed and flow of the foreplay. Her erection, freed from the towel, pressed itself against Rose's stomach, the light brush causing the folf to moan loudly in pent-up anticipation.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 15, 2015, 12:07:50 PM**

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rose felt the soft rub of Floras member against her stomach, slowly she let flora work off her dress and undies, revealing her goods to her. for another few minutes Rose grinded her body against Floras feeling her move her hardening part down towards her privates ' it was then Marita cut in' ok, girls thats enough. don;t want you spreading goo all over each other. she said firmly ;' Rose pulled away with reluctance, breaking the kiss and panting heavily. ' better now?' she said to Flora in between gasps.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 15, 2015, 12:22:34 PM**

Flora's nerves were on fire as Rose let her remove her clothes. She hungrily watched as the Great Dane presented herself to her, the first time somebody met Flora halfway towards consummating. She could hardly believe it, her mind was cooking up a thousand different ways Rose might be about to pleasure her...

Then Marita ground it to a halt. "We're...we're stopping?" She exclaimed. "But I'm...so horny...I feel like I'm about to explode!" Desperately she grasped for Rose's arm as the Great Dane pulled away, but she was too slow and was left alone standing in the middle of the hotel room shaking all over.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 15, 2015, 12:40:49 PM**

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flora, if it were solely up to me, we'd be still going' Rose said ' but i promise you, soon, we'll finish what we started. you're a heck of a kisser, and i enjoyed this little romp.. just.. get your clothes back on, and settle down for a bit. we'll kiss again later, i promise ' she said giving Flora a smile.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 15, 2015, 01:16:01 PM**

Flora felt incredibly pent-up. "I...uh...okay..." As her excitement forced itself to simmer down from the peak of anticipation, her body was racked with a turgid fullness that dropped her to her knees. It was a feeling she was familiar with (after all, her sex life has been an endless series of getting blue-balled at the last minute), but she'd never had it this intensely before. She saw fuzzy shadows in the corner of her vision, and had a brief moment to reflect on how tired she'd been before the events in this hotel room...she realized she was running entirely on rapidly-fading adrenaline right now...

Her vision faded, and before she knew it she collapsed face first into the carpet.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 16, 2015, 05:33:25 PM**

Rose sighed as she bent over to pick up the unconscious folf ' should have let us finish marita the girls been holding back a lot of tension..'' well rose i didnt want to see a hump show- that i didnt pay to see' Marita smirked,' or wasnt involved in.' ' jealous, girlfriend?' Rose said, a smirk running across her face. ' hey, we're not married after all, i can have sex with other girls- and guys if i so choose..' you've had plenty of it Rose, that was your gig after all.' marita said 'you want a piece of this? marita said, holding the unconscious - and naked- Flora up so marita could see all of the folfs features ' wait.. ios that a.. ' yep. she has working breasts AND a pecker. so, conceivably, she could get you pregnant and you would still be a lesbian. course i'm not sure what you call it ' a dolf- or dog -wolf' marita said ' but shes part fox... a fodolf, fox-

dog-wolf..' Rose said.'but why are we even discussing potential kids..?'
- because she has a working male part. she can impregnate us, while i cant get you pregnant or vice versa. cause of that we possible rose.. we'd have had 4-5 kids by now..' ' we'tre not in any financial position to have a family Marita, we barely can afford what we;ve got, and we have marie pitching in. 'if Flora stays with us, that 4 girls helping out.' maria replied.' she sighed ' put her n the bed, i'l go see if theres any smellibng salts in the bathroom.

_
Marie was soaking in the tub, which was discolored from all the sand and grime she was washing off of her ' the bottles of shampoo were empty, so washing her fur and cleaning it out wasnt an option.' theres no shampoo in here' she called out ' So Flora used it all' marita said as she went though the drawers in the counter. 'Is rose still french-kissing her? 'Marie asked "no, i made her stop. it was getting pretty heavy.' rule of thumb at the electric sheep was, you never stop people making out, you let them finish first. To do otherwise was bad form. naughty naughty Marita ' marie said . 'did you ever make out with Rose Marie while you worked together?" no, although we had noticed a mutual attraction between us. i thought she was beautiful, and she admitted to me that she thought i was lovely. we did kiss, though, a couple weeks after we started, after we clocked out for the night, in one of the 'private' rooms. a couple tongue rubs, a few boob squeezes, and that was it. she went downhill really fast and i was switched to bartending. if she hadnt been hooked on biproxytol, i think we would have had sex at least a few times. but her breath was terrible and she owed me quite a bit of money. a quarter of her paycheck, before the place burned down. you rescuing her quite literally saved her life, she was going to get fired if she didnt straighten up. and since had nothing e,lse going on i followed you. You've become quite the friend Marita. I can see why Rose loves you.' Marie said.' so how do you feel about me? marita asked ' well.. I.. love you' Marie admitted."i know you and rose have a history but..' well i think rose is going to be quite busy tonight with flora, so.. theres going to be some you and me time.' marita said as she finally found the smelling salts.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 16, 2015, 05:45:52 PM**

Flora didn't resist as she was placed on the bed. Her passed-out slumber was heavy and dreamless. Her body was a bit slower on the uptake than her mind was, however, and she was still very clearly in the later stages of sexual excitement. Slowly her state graduated from unconscious to semi-conscious, and her mind was filled with lucid dreams of an intensely emotional nature.

Mumbling incoherently in her sleep, she turned her head back and forth and occasionally moved her legs in a running motion, quietly questioning and conversing with unseen entities.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2015, 10:57:51 AM**

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marita came out of the bathroom and came over to the bed . she reached out and reached the smelling salts under Floras nose=- or tried to, as the folf was tossing and turning. ' hold her down Rose, shes half-asleep and moving too much for me to give her the salts..'
_ Ros pinned the folfdown with both paws, her paws sliding up and down her body as the folf turned underneath her ' mariyta finally managed to get a good shot of the vapors under Floras nose.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2015, 11:10:17 AM**

"Mmmm....mph?" Flora mumbled sleepily. She tried to stretch out, and looked with unfocused eyes at nothing in particular as she slowly returned to consciousness. "I uh..." She realized with alarm that she was being pinned down in a bed by two naked women. "Oh...uh...hi...good morning?" She was still rather discombobulated and wasn't 100% sure she wasn't still dreaming.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2015, 01:02:26 PM**

Morning? you've only been asleep for maybe 15 minutes' Rose said a smirk nonetheless on her face. i've.. talked Marita her into joining when we resume our romp.. ' you ever been tag-teamed before? i have, nothing beter then getting frenched by one person and fondled by abnnother at the same time.. so.. whjat do you say?' she smirked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2015, 02:51:47 PM**

"I..." Flora didn't dare herself to speak. Her flytrap was figuring things out quicker than her brain and was quickly rising to the opportunity. "...yes, okay! Let's do that!" She looked with equal parts eagerness and disbelief at the ample supply of female flesh suddenly presented to her. *Is this it?* she wondered in a daze. *Am I FINALLY about to lose my virginity?*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 17, 2015, 03:04:04 PM**

marita and rose got up off of flora, allowing her to rise up off the bed. ' marita i'll kiss flora then you start to fondle her. after 5 minutes, we'll switch positions. do whatever you want to her from behind. we'll be exploring a lot of each other..' Rose said " well i promised marie she and i would have some fun time while you and flora made out. ' alright, i see. we'll just have you kiss her then, maybe some foreplay tops. Maries really interested in you then?" shes interested in you as well rose' marita sad as she moved behind Flora.' she told me that personally."
-
Rose kised flora on the lips and threw her arms around her neck
mArita wrapped her arms around Floras waist and pressed her breasts into the small of floras back.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 17, 2015, 08:59:20 PM**

Flora gasped in surprise as she felt Marita's breasts rub along her back. Almost as quickly she barely had time to react when Rose's mouth was against hers again, causing her breasts to rub against Flora's. *So many breasts...* Flora rubbed her tongue against Rose's, still playing it safe so as not to risk doing anything to cause it to end prematurely. The sensations were indescribable and left her panting with anticipation.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2015, 11:45:29 AM**

Rose and Marita made love to Flora with passion throughout the night and the hours pased swiftly. marita was the first to stir the next morning and got out of bed."

_
Marita changed into fresh attire and wenmt into the tooms kitchen to throw together a quick breakfast.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2015, 09:02:42 PM**

Flora continued snoring loudly from the tangled mess of bedsheets inhabiting the space between the bed and the bathroom wall. Marie, Rose and Marita had been able to get a spare blanket ordered via room service and share the bed for the night.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 22, 2015, 06:15:23 AM**

Rose stirred from bed, and found herself entangled with flora in the sheets. the memory of what they had done l;ast night, the foreplay in tandem, and the exploring of every inch of floras body by her, came back to her in a flash.. Rose had mated with Flora first, or rather Flora had mated with her. rose had sensed that flora was holding in a ton of repressed desire, fortunately finally mating with someone had allowed much of that to ber rekeased. after the first first nervous , unsure of folf and Great dane , Rose had become the partner severeal more times during the night, until finally she had switched to marita. Rose sniffed the air and recignized the smell of cooking food. she looked over at the far end of the bed, Marie was still fast asleep. "Must be Marita cooking them , she said groggily.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 22, 2015, 11:54:50 AM**

When Rose moved, she lightly brushed Flora, and the folf instinctively scooted further away from her and tumbled out of the bed, taking the sheets with her. Her head banged against the wall and she ended in an upside-down pose on the floor that left her neck in a crooked position under the bed. But still her only response was an abrupt snore and some subconscious wiggling to attempt in vain to free her trapped hands from the restraining sheet.

Eventually she finally woke up from the feeling of both arms and a leg having fallen asleep. "Huh?" she muttered, temporarily trying to remember how she got where she was. "How did I...?" She remember the desert, the warship, and lots of painful walking. She had gone through more exertion in the last 24 hours than anything she'd ever experienced in her 17 years of life. Even now, the last night was something of a blur.

Until she remembered that there women involved. "Rose? Marie?" she started, finally succeeding in freeing herself from the sheets and stumbling to her feet. All of her extremities began tingling something fierce. She realized the girls were in the tiny hotel room kitchen. "Hello?" she mumbled, wandering into the kitchen. "What did...how long was I asleep?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2015, 06:01:39 PM**

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look who finally woke up' Marita said turning and looking at flora, and a smile came on her face.' you've been asleep for nearly 8 solid hours, its almost 11. and congratulations, you're no longer a virgin. you did say last night that you had never had relations right/ well now you have, and i'm curious? how are you feeling about that?

_
 rose was sitting at the small table drinking a thin cup of coffee' care for some coffee Flora. i dnt drink coffee much but today i'm drinking some.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2015, 07:03:49 PM**

"I'm still exhausted...and starving..." Flora murmured sleepily in response to Rose's first sentence. "The desert really did a number on me yesterday..."

And then Marita continued talking.

Flora's eyes flew open in shock. "Wait, we did--? We had--?"

She racked her brain wildly. "I can hardly *remember* last night!" she exclaimed. "Everything's a blur past the part where I staggered out of the desert!" She looked in a panic around the room, then at her flytrap, then back at Marita. "I really....we really...What did we do??? I'm...not a virgin any more?"

A mix of every possible emotion flowed through her at once and left her head spinning in shock. She almost fainted. And slowly little tidbits came back to her. Taking a shower...passing out...smelling salts...someone rubbing breasts on her... "I...must have been so tired I...can't remember the sex at all..." Flora realized slowly. "How long did it take? What happened?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2015, 07:41:51 PM**

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well in total we had sex for at least 4 hours, a couple 3ways but for the most part it was you and rose.' Marita said. ' basically we did everything, french kissing, breast licking, blowjobs, you name it, we did it. for your first time, you did really well. you fell asleep almost immediately after we finished.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2015, 08:17:08 PM**

"I...I got...you gave..." Flora's mouth hung agape. "Four hours...?"

She stumbled back to the bed and sat down, grabbing herself by the head try and counteract an intense dizziness that overtook her. "Holy crap..." she breathed. "I lost my virginity for *four fucking hours* and I can't even remember it?" She felt a little sick to her stomach. "How many times did I cum?" she asked, flopping backwards onto the bed and only then noticing how damp it was.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 23, 2015, 08:49:05 PM**

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quite a few times, considering you mated with rose and me several times. you were pretty submissive, and i say that as someone who is pretty submissive in bed' Marita said. ' don't need a blow by blow recap' Marie said ' i'm trying to eat breakfast here. anyway whats the plan for when we leave this place?'
- the girls needs a reminder Marie, she doesnt remember hardly anything of last night, and the ' first' is always special.' rose replied.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 23, 2015, 09:46:13 PM**

"Christ..." Flora muttered quietly, staring blankly at the ceiling. She couldn't believe she'd slept through her first sexual encounter, and a threesome no less. "I don't...feel any different," she admitted. "I mean, maybe it would have been different if I'd actually *remembered* it, but being a not-virgin kinda feels exactly like being a virgin..."

She got up and the blood rushed to her head. "God, I'm starving," she realized. Grabbing a plateful of the breakfast Marita had cooked, she scarfed it down in huge gulps and quickly realized it wasn't going to be enough. "I'm heading down to eat the complimentary breakfast," she announced, grabbing her robe from the floor and cinching it around her. "Thanks for making food, but I'm going to need a lot more than what this hotel room had in the mini-fridge."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 26, 2015, 08:56:37 PM**

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just leave us some food when you're done' rose replied we'll be down in a few minutes after we finish eating up here..'
- marita wolfed down her food and put her plate away. truth be told, she had enjoyed the previous night, pity flora didnt remember it, because Marita sure did.
- marie poured herself a glass of milk and nursed it.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 26, 2015, 08:57:16 PM**

Flora rushed to the dining room to make maximum use of the complimentary breakfast. She poured mix into the waffler, put two bagels into the toaster, and started brewing a cup of coffee. The first thing fully prepared was a bowl of shredded wheat, and she consumed it hungrily while waiting for the hot food to finish.

She had just returned her hot items to her table and was dipping her knife in a butter packet when she was approached. "Excuse me, madam," the waiter interrupted her, coming up to her table with an apologetic look. "We recieved a complaint from another table as to how you ate your food."

"You what?" Flora stopped, halfway through buttering her bagel. "Who?"

"The Breakfast Club would like to ask that you use proper manners when eating." The waiter motioned to the table. "They're offended that your fork and knife are not placed to the left of your plate, and your napkin's not in your lap."

Flora blinked and looked around the room. "I'm sorry, where are they? There's nobody else here."

"They're eating in another building. But they're still offended that anybody could dine without the same ettiquette standards that they follow," the waiter explained. "We really must insist. No more spilling drops of milk on the table either."

Flora wiped up the milk, placed her napkin in her lap and straightened her silverware in the correct spots, still confused. "Is, uh, that good? Why are they getting a say in how I eat?"

The waiter bowed his head. "That should suffice for now." He departed, leaving Flora nonplussed and with cold food.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 29, 2015, 12:11:50 AM**

Marita, Rose and marie soon joined flora down at the breakfast wing. Rose grabbed some hot oatmeal. while Marie and Marita grabbed bagels and juice. ' this place has a decent spread' Marie said coming back to the table with her plate full of food. the girls had a collection of juices and milk for their drinks, all laid out in prim and proper order.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 29, 2015, 02:59:56 PM**

"Hiya!" Flora waved the girls over to her table. "Over here!"

She downed the rest of her breakfast and instantly got much more cheerful than she'd been since entering the hotel; a bit of the original Flora was shining through thanks to finally being fed and rested. "What should we do now? Let's explore the town! I've never been so happy to be alive; I'm going to do *everything* I want to!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 31, 2015, 09:08:44 PM**

let us finish eating first, then we'll go exploring " Marita said " But at least you're excited. me, i'm just going to enjoy these waffles. didn't have much to eat yesterday, or the day before come to think about it."
-
I'm interested to seeing how far we are from the next town. This town seems to be very small ' Rose said as she drank her milk. Marie was munching on a muffin.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 01, 2015, 11:33:53 AM**

"Okay!" Flora bounced in her seat. "Just don't eat too messy though, or we'll get in trouble. Like, BIG trouble. I don't really understand it, must be a culture clash or something."

She grabbed a banana and bit into it without removing the peel. "We schould shee if they haff any schtrip joints!" She said excitedly, talking with her mouth full.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 04, 2015, 07:29:13 PM**

Strip joints? this is Arabia, Flora they dont HAVE strip joints ' Rose said. ' very conservative area you know.. and this is a small town anyway from the looks of it. we'll just look for the local bazaar, and see what we can find. just dont buy whatever you set your eyes on.. we dont have tons of creds to our name after all, and we have to stretch things betwen the 4 of us.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 04, 2015, 07:52:56 PM**

Flora stuck her tongue out. "I don't have any credits *period*!" She looked down at her bathrobe. "But I'll definitely need a change of clothes." She wracked her brain for any knowledge of Arabic fashion and fell only on American stereotype. "Ooooh, can I get a burqa and a whole body dress? I want to fit in with the locals!" She clapped her hands in excitement.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 06, 2015, 08:20:54 PM**

i dont think they have burqas around here' Marita said ' we'll get you something.. something.. you'll be able to see out of ... we'll go shopping in a few minutes ' she said as finished eating her breakfast.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 07, 2015, 08:34:59 PM**

"Okay!" Flora slumped down in her seat. She was already bored of breakfast, with their rules. As the girls continued to eat, Flora caught herself zoning out observing the patterns of the tabletop.

She realized that her foot was on someone else's. Rather than withdraw it, she playfully danced it up their leg, tickling them with her toes and wondering if they'd say anything with the others around. She suppressed a giggle, trying to gauge from their expressions who she was playing footsies with.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 08, 2015, 08:46:41 PM**

Marie smirked as flora fiddled with her toes.' you still have a lot of sand inbetween your toes' she said to flora ' and you need to clean them.' she added, as she pushed her feet against Floras. she finished eating and pulled away from flora ' alright girls ! Lets go shoping!" marie grinned.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 09, 2015, 06:04:44 PM**

"Hey!" Flora giggled. "Its not my fault Marie was hogging the shower. Though if she's interested, I'd be game to share it with her next time..."

She leaped up. "Let's go shopping! Lead the way Rose!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2015, 04:17:28 PM**

Hmm.. so you want to.. bang in the shower?' a smirk spread over Marie face, her red lips parted in a smile' well Well.. Alright, after we finish shopping you and i can have some fun.. Consider this your first 'real' experience, since you dont remember last night.. Anything goes, lets say..." She finished as sje got up and heasded for the opening which lead to the hotels enterance.' so whay sort of stuff would you like Flora/ as a souvernir from this place?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 13, 2015, 04:22:11 PM**

A grin spread over Flora's face at the idea. "Okay! Yeah, that lines up with what I was thinking...I think I still consider myself a virgin. After all, if you don't remember your first time, it doesn't really count right?"

She looked at the city. Most of the buildings were unmarked. "Do you think they have a clothing store in this town? I really want to check out the local fashion." She glanced again at her small bathrobe. "Are you sure they won't stone me for showing my ankles or something?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2015, 04:29:42 PM**

no, this isnt the 700s ' Marita said as she followed Marie out ' they dont stone you for nor covering up. now if you are completely naked and prancing around, they do take offense to THAT. so, keep your clothes, and we wont have to run out of the town ducking rocks.."

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i'm just looking for a good change of attire ' Rose said ' something thats affordable..'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 13, 2015, 04:33:41 PM**

Flora tightened her bathrobe to make sure it didn't show anything. "Okay," she nodded in agreement. "Are you guys going to pay for my clothes? Cause unless they accept labor, I don't have a lot to offer."

She stepped outside. The ground was hot and gritty, but her pawpads were adequately calloused from her prior trip through the desert that she could barely notice.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2015, 04:56:35 PM**

Of course we'll pay for your clothes- within reason- Marita said as they crossed the street ' did you bring any with you, or was it just the stuff you had on?

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i'm thinking something simple for the 4 of us . nice.. but not too expensive' Marie said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 13, 2015, 05:06:56 PM**

"Just that horrendous nurse's outfit...it didn't even fit." Flora pulled her hair out from inside the collar of her robe. "My last real outfit was back in Cairo. Man, it's hard to believe that was just over a day ago..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 13, 2015, 05:20:30 PM**

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well all we have is what brought with us. so a fresh set of clothes for all of us is needed. we'll try and keep them under 200 creds each, or 800 creds max.' Marita said " so try and find something for yourself Fl;lora that you like that isnt too expensive..
-
they walked around the town, looking for a good clothing store, but most of the stores jut sold fruit or baubles..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 13, 2015, 05:54:34 PM**

"That should be fine!" shrugged Flora. "How much could a burka cost anyway?"

After twenty minutes of wandering without luck, Flora's feet were starting to burn. She looked around for pedestrians. "Let's just find someone and buy their burka. Hey you!" she waved at a lone female walking down the sidewalk. "You there! Can I buy your burka? I'll give you 200 credits for it! Oh, and your shoes!" she remembered, shifting her feet uncomfortably.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 15, 2015, 07:00:17 PM**

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the woman gave flora a dirty look and shouted something at her in Arabic before walking rapidly away.. clearly she was not interested in selling her her burka..
-
just get to a store Flora and stop pestering onlookers! ' Rose said. fibally they found a clothing store which sold various local attire.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2015, 07:08:05 PM**

"The hell's her problem?" Flora folded her arms and scoffed. "That wasn't even a lowball, I was overpaying!"

She followed Rose excitedly into the clothing store. "Oooh!" she jumped in excitement. There were clothes of all sorts. She immediately raced around the store grabbing anything that tickled her fancy.

"Where are the changing rooms?" she asked the cashier brightly. She looked at her three comrades. "Anyone want to share a changing room?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 17, 2015, 06:17:12 PM**

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there is only one changing room per gender. this is a small store the cashier said '; you will have to take turns.' she aded pointing to the back of the store. the female changing room was on the left, the males on the right. " you can go first' Marita said kindly to Flora. i still have to find something in a blue color.

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marie picked out a purple dress and Rose a light green one.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 17, 2015, 10:57:25 PM**

Flora scampered into the back and later busted out the door wearing this:

(https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/1e/c7/91/1ec7918c149427375a46619eb917b2fe.jpg)

"What do you think?" she beamed. "I look so elegant, and it's only 6 thousand dinars!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 20, 2015, 09:21:21 PM**

6000 dinar? rose said. whats a dinar?' its the local currency, its about 1/1000th of a dollar' Marita said 6000 dinar equals 6 bucks. since there are 10 creds in a dollar. 6000 dinar is about 60 creds. we can easily afford that. Nice find Flora.' the totals for the 4 girls dresses came to 450 creds, with Marita and Maries outfits going for 100 creds each, and Roses costing 190.' the clerk gave the girls bags to hold their dresses, and the girls left the store ' so where do you girls want to go next? marie asked. " back to the hotel?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 20, 2015, 09:26:19 PM**

"I'm hungry again!" announced Flora, leaving the store and flaunting her new outfit to the the first pedestrian she saw. "I don't think the hotel does free lunch, we should go to a restaurant! Maybe Mediterranean," She thought about the concept. "Is it even possible to go to a Mediterranean restaurant when you're in the Mediterranean? What do the locals call it?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 20, 2015, 09:52:27 PM**

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we're in a desert. the Mediterranean is hundreds of miles to the wst of us- and in any event we dont have the creds to go eat a fancy dinner ' we have.. ' marita ran some up an app on her phone ' we have 3050 creds left. so we are going to have to stretch that money as far as possible..

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well if they are in dinars ' marie said thats only a few creds'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 20, 2015, 09:54:19 PM**

"Hey, it's your money, beggar folfs can't be choosy folfs," Flora shrugged. "But I really need to pee, and I kinda want to eat, so pick something." She crossed and uncrossed her legs urgently. "Though I can just find a bush if push comes to shove. I'm good with anything, honest!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 20, 2015, 10:00:56 PM**

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we'll get lunch back at the hotel. we'll have enough creds to gran some pita bred or something.. now' i'm in a frisky mood.. why dont we go back to the room.. Maries f voice dropped to whisper and she leaned towards floras ear and have a nice long kiss?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 21, 2015, 08:06:35 AM**

Flora's eyes lit up. "Okay!" she whispered right back, unable to keep her voice from cracking in excitement. Quickly she followed the dog back to the hotel room and wasted no time in sprinting into the bathroom.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 21, 2015, 04:20:02 PM**

Marie closed the bathroom door behind her as she entered. ' well flora.. girl today is your lucky day' she said in a confident voice as she strode towards the pink vixen, her eyes focused on Flora , gazing at the pink shawl the folf was wearing, which completed every part of the folfs pink body except for the dark red of her lips, which were as crimson as Maries own. maries purple attire moved as she approached Flora. what do you say we have a 'little.. show and tell' first' she said, as she wrapped her claws around flora and ensconced her in a hug.Maries claws slipped under Floras shawl, her left claw stopping at her bra the right moving down her back towards her tail. Marie was almost nose to nose with flora, their lips achingly close together yet far away from a kiss.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 21, 2015, 04:58:48 PM**

Flora was halfway to the toilet when she saw Marie striding towards her non-too-subtly. "Ooh, are we...?" Her eyes widened, and she had barely a glance at her previous objective before Marie's hands were on her. Flora gasped as Marie's cupped her breast and another stroked her butt. *Already?* "That's...really fast," Flora smiled quickly, placing her hands on Marie's chest and gripping with an excited shudder. *I can pee afterwards...* She wasn't going to miss her first sexual encounter where both partners were fully conscious.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 24, 2015, 08:54:39 PM**

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shall we do this here, or wait until we get in the tub ? Marie said and she began working off Floras bra with her claw and she felt the folf begin to fondle her breasts. " And do you want tongue to start off, or not? Two questions to answer i guess. ah.. what the hell lesss talk, more liplock' she leaned in and kissed flora on the lips the red lips locking together as the girls began undressing each other. Marie slipped her tongue into Floras mouth.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 25, 2015, 11:15:43 AM**

Flora trembled with excitement as she slipped Marie's bra. She was already hard even before Marie had slipped her skirt off. "W-Whichever..." she stammered, unable to take her eyes off Marita's crotch. "T-tub would be nice..."

And then Marie's tongue silenced any further words. Running her hands down Marie's flank and grasping her butt, Flora fought to keep her excited panting from interrupting their makeout session.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 25, 2015, 06:45:17 PM**

Marie finished undressing flora, revealing her lower body, and climbed onto her, feeling her body against her, her murmurs smothered by Floras lips locked with her. Maries wrestled with her, each girl for a moment atop the other, the cold floor sending a brief shiver down Maries spine. marie ended up atop Flora, her eyes gazing at the folfs face.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 28, 2015, 10:23:48 PM**

Flora blushed instinctively as her remaining clothes were removed. Quickly she pulled Marie's pants until they slid to the ground and the two were fully exposed to each other.

But Flora didn't have long to ogle before Marie was on top of her, locking lips and leaving her nether region's very close to Flora's...

Then they switched places and Flora found herself straddling the Golden Retriever. Shimmying forward, Flora dug her palms into Marie's breasts and shoved her erection between them. Her every fiber yearned to start thrusting, but she wanted to give Marie a chance to look at her womanhood.

"You'll be gentle...right?" she flushed bright red.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2015, 01:51:29 PM**

Ah.. so you have both male and females parts ' Marie said, looking at floras member, now resting against her breasts " well you arent alone there, a lot of girls who frequented the Sheep had both. we didnt care, so long as they paid, actually Rose said they paid her the best for sex. Oh.. and as for being gentle..' marie leaned in and pressed her nose to floras breasts ' as gentle as you want baby. you've got a good package. and i'm expecting .. a couple deliveries ' she said, and began to lick Floras breasts.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2015, 05:37:34 PM**

"I, uhh, I mean," Flora stammered, trying to figure out how to politely note that female-wise she had secondary sexual organs at best, but her explanation died in her throat as Marie's smooth breasts slid back and forth across her erection. Any intelligible words turned into a high-pitched moan and she peaked her back, closing her eyes and focusing on the sensation of Marie's gentle caress. As the dog's tongue scraped across Flora's nipples, the folf shuddered and dug her claws into the bathroom carpet.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2015, 05:59:57 PM**

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marie liked Floras chest for a few minutes then gradually began to make her way up towards Floras mouth, kissing her neck throat and chin, before finally locking lips with the folf, and caressing Floras tongue with her own. Marie slid back on the carpet, her claws gripped at floras tail, murmuring as she french-kissed Flora. as she did so her nethers now stretched below Floras.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2015, 07:16:19 PM**

Flora panted heavily, her nerves overstimulated, her muscles felt coiled and ready to spring. Marie's hands, tongue, and breasts were all rubbing Flora at once, and Flora felt extremely hot...

She felt a flash of deep dread when she felt contractions bubbling up from within her abdomen. *Not already!* With a strained cry, Flora arched her back and gritted her teeth as she rode out an intense orgasm, splashing all over Marie's front.

The intense feelings seemed to last forever, her entire lower body tensed up as wave after wave of pleasure stripped the energy from her. "I'm...sorry..." she panted, dropping to her knees and looking with alarm at the mess she'd caused. "It was just so...intense...I...couldn't control myself..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2015, 07:29:50 PM**

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well. thats what the bath is for . Cleanup ' Marie said floras exertions clinging to her fur, as she goit up and climbed into the bathtub before turning on the water.' how hot do you want it?' She asked Flora with a smirk.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 29, 2015, 08:45:33 PM**

Flora staggered to her feet. "Hot's fine," she said, distracted. She tried to harden up again was was still limp. Her legs felt like jelly. "I'll do better next time...just got a bit excited..."

She blushed, embarrassed. She hadn't wanted to orgasm before even penetrating Marie, but her brain just got os excited at the prospect of imminent sex...*Is there something wrong with me?* she wondered bitterly. *How could I screw that up right at the finish line?*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 29, 2015, 09:52:01 PM**

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dont be embarrassed or beat yourself up" Marie said to Flora' you're new at having sex, so you'll make mistakes. thats why its good to have someone to practice mating on. usually you have a girlfriend to teach you such things, but i'm guessing you didnt have that .' Marie grabbed the soap bar and began cleaning herself of the goo. ' don;t worry, once I'm cleaned off. I'll make out with you until you're ready to try again. shouldnt take me more than a couple minutes. by the way flora you have a very nice form. good sized breasts, soft kissable lips, everything a girl could want in a girlfriend.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 02, 2015, 04:32:32 PM**

"Okay..." Flora flushed red, stumbling into the shower. Her breasts were B-cups, she always thought they were small, but Marie was presumably better equipped to make that call. Grabbing the shampoo, she started lathering Marie's hair. "You're really hot too. Very large breasts...I was just wondering...how many sex partners have you had?" She asked the golden retriever shyly. "If you don't mind me asking."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 02, 2015, 10:19:31 PM**

Quite a few. I did work in a strip club after all. Did both boys and girls, although truthfully the one I had the most hots for.. was Rose.' Marie blushed as Flora worked the shampoo into her hair." Girl's really hot, sad thing is she had a bad drug addiction at the time , which really made her a pitiable wreck.biproxytol is a real nasty drug, it can easily kill you if you take too much. Rose got lucky, one, that I was around to keep her from ODing, and 2, Marita managed to get her out of there.. in case you are wondering which gender I prefer. well, would I be swapping tongue with you, if I like guys more?' marie smirked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 04, 2015, 07:33:39 PM**

Flora smiled nervously. "Why don't I count as a guy though?" she asked. "You know...I was born a guy. That's why I've got a...flytrap...and all. I'm not really a girl..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 04, 2015, 07:49:32 PM**

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breasts, mannerisms, fur color, all the features of a girl-minus the malehood. from my experience, theres a spectrum of what we in the business called 'co-sexes' or bi-sexs. people that have both gender parts. many of them tend to chose their feminine side, and act on that. you are acting on your female side,so despite your male rod. you are a female. thus this sexual encounter between us is counted as homosexual not heterosexual. So.. ; marie reached forward with her paw and strioked floras breasts ' you ready for round 2?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 04, 2015, 10:54:44 PM**

Flora smiled as Marie explained why she was really a girl. It was nice to hear confirmation from someone on that front. Then her hand flew to her mouth when Marie groped her and offered a round two.

"Already?" Flora looked down in shock as her flytrap slowly answered Marie's question for her. "I didn't...know guys could be ready to go again so quickly..." She started stroking Marie's breasts and pressing closer. "Sure..." Flora purred.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 04, 2015, 11:01:56 PM**

" it doesnt take much to get guys aroused." marie said leaning over and stopping the water. that done, she felt Flora fondle her. marie leaned in and kissed flora passionately on the lips, slowly easing her tongue into the folfs mouth. marie wrapped her arms around Flora and began to straddle her their privates inches away from touching. marie felt Floras member get harder and harder.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 06, 2015, 07:50:31 PM**

Flora shuddered as her erection pressed into Marie's stomach. If it weren't for Marie's tongue filling her mouth she'd already be panting again. Taking charge, she pushed her own tongue past Marie's and explored her lover's mouth. Her hands slid around Marie's waist and straddled her buttocks. Her mind raced as she wondered what the Golden retriever would do next...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 10, 2015, 05:22:32 PM**

marie murmured as Flora began to kiss her back passionately and felt the folfs tongue deep in her mouth. she broke the kiss a stream of reddened saliva falling into the tub as their crimson lips separated. ' you're good ' Marie said, feeling floras stiffness just below her belly button. i i think its time for some suckling ' she smirked , as she moved down floras front towards her breasts ' marie opened her mouth wide and pressed it to flora right breast, taking in as much of the breast as she could and began to suckly hard on it.' She murrmured as she did so feeling the tension between the tw lovers, as floras members slipped close to her privates.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 12, 2015, 11:33:39 PM**

Flora gasped as Marie's lips closed around her breast. Moving forward, she pressed Marie into the shower wall and rubbed her erection against Marie's crotch.

Sliding her hands down Marie's sides, she gripped her lover's waist and excitedly attempted to penetrate her. She grew slightly concerned when she had trouble locating the opening. *There it is...I think?* Her mind raced as she felt mostly sure she'd just slid in. "Am I...in?" she asked, blushing at having to ask what felt like a stupid question.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 19, 2015, 03:55:12 PM**

No..Not, not yet..' Marie said pulling away from Floras breasts, lipstick stains circling Floras tit.' here ' she pressed against flora and felt her member slid inside her up to the shaft, and tensed ' NOW, you're in " She grinned to Flora staring slightly downward at her , marie was a couple inches taller than the folf. Marie panted ' How do you feel?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 24, 2015, 09:56:17 AM**

Flora gasped with shock as she felt a district increase in pressure. She was in! Grasping Marie's butt for support, Flora stood there quivering, letting the warm dampness of her partner's nether regions rub all around her member.

Slowly she began sliding in and out, her breathing grew heavy and she couldn't keep embarrassingly high-pitched yelps from punctuating her thrusts. Eyes wide, she stared in a state of shock at Marie's bobbing breasts, hardly believing she was actually having sex with someone.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 29, 2015, 03:35:23 PM**

Marie kissed Flora passionately feeling the folf's member moving back and forth inside of her. she grabbed on to Floras sides and pressed her breasts to floras moabibng as the kiss continued.

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marita and Rose were looking at a local map, trying to find a place to head to next, after

Mare and Flora got don with their ' shower' ' well we're running low on ceds so we'll have to find something of value to barte with , with the 4 of us ' Rose sighed as she loked at the map

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 29, 2015, 06:47:40 PM**

Flora returned the kiss, simultaneously panting with embarrassingly high-pitched gulps. Her nipples pressed into Marie's breasts and her eyes were squeezed shut as she focused on the feeling of ramming Marie's pussy again and again.

It felt awesome, but Flora was secretly worried that she wasn't going to be able to finish. Her backside was distractingly cold from being outside the shower stream and her legs were feeling like jelly from supporting her weight while keeping her balance. *Think sexy thoughts...* she tried to will herself to orgasm. *Think of pornos...big, muscled naked men...imagine we're fucking in a big, sleek, powerful car...*She glanced at Marie's face, lips still locked with hers. For a moment, her mind tried to imagine Marie was Emilena, but that made things more awkward than sexy.

Pretty soon her panting slowly edged away from husky and more into exhausted. She kept slipping out on accident. "It feels...really good," she moaned truthfully, gulping desperately for air and pausing momentarily to splash hot water on her butt. With a flash she realized she'd slid out and quickly jammed it back in.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 03, 2015, 12:31:15 PM**

I'm glad you are enjoying it' Marie said pausing for breath as Flora slid out again. she gripped onto the folfs rear and tensed, it was cold to the touch.' what do you say we finish in bed huh..' she smirked before feeling the folf reenter her and felt floras lips relock with her. marie felt secretions drip down her leg and mixture of hers and florsa from the sex they wee having. marie broke away from flora and smiled. so, want me to blow you/ she panted.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 03, 2015, 12:44:04 PM**

Flora's heart skipped a beat. "B-blow me? As in..." her imagination filled in the blanks. "Yes, let's do that!" She gave her lover's breasts one last squeeze and quickly stepped into the stream for one last drench of hot water. Shaking herself off like a dog, she grabbed towels and handed one to Marie.

Drying off quickly, she winced as the fabric scraped against her chafed privates, but the rawness wasn't enough to dampen her excitement at trying something new.

Walking into the other room, she blushed as she realized she was flashing Marita and Rose. "Hey girls," Flora smiled shyly. "We're, uhh, taking the fun to the bed, if you two are okay with that." *I guess it's nothing they haven't already seen...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 03, 2015, 01:53:15 PM**

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we were wondering when you two would finish' Marita said with a smile ' just finish having sex in 15 minutes or so, alright. we're headed towards the next town. its 12 miles away so it's going to be quite a walk.."

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Marie turned off the water and drained it, seeing tuff of pink and tan fur float towards the drain. she got out and dried off herself off a bit with the towel.. She folowed Flora back into the room, covered only with a towel.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 03, 2015, 02:12:03 PM**

"That's cool," said Flora, barely registering what Marita said. She was far more interested in Marie's half-naked form walking into the bedroom. With barely-restrained excitement she laid down in the bed and spread her legs wide, shivering in anticipation. Her erection had returned to throbbing full mast.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 04, 2015, 04:14:21 PM**

care to join us/ mMarie smirked to the other girls. ' i'm thinking after she and i tae turns sucking each otherm, that you two could join in. we'll take turns doing her.. but for now.. this bitch is mine to bang.' marie smirked threw her clothers off and climbed onto flora. she moved her mouth close to floras face then moved it down towards her privates finally hooking onto floras member.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 04, 2015, 06:00:34 PM**

Flora couldn't help it, and let out a throaty groan within seconds of Marie's lips making contact. Stiffening her legs and digging her nails into the pillow, she panted heavily and couldn't resist watching with wide eyes as Marie worked her magic.

She smiled weakly at Rose and Marita. "Yeah, you should come join us..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 11, 2015, 03:16:36 PM**

marie moaned, as she continuerd working on Dlora, the bed creaked as Marita and Rose climbed onto it, both looking intently at Flora. time to start some foreplay' Rose smiled, and she reached out and touched Floras right breast. Marita fondled her left. feeling good? the pair smirked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2015, 03:45:51 PM**

"Yes..." breathed Flora. "Feels good..." She stretched her legs and shuddered as Marita and Rose stimulated her other erogenous zones. Her breathing grew heavier and that series of embarrassingly high yelps started as she got more and more sexually excited. *If this keeps up, I'm going to cum so quickly...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 11, 2015, 03:51:33 PM**

rose leraned in and kissed flora fully on the lips, while marita put her mouth to Floras breast. marie pulled away coughing as she left a trail of saliva on floras member." girls/' She waas going to blow me next! she complained as she saw mmarita and Rose busying themselves with Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2015, 04:30:12 PM**

Flora felt Marita's lips press into her nipple and Rose's tongue enter her mouth. Curling her toes and rolling her eyes back into her head, she panted raggedly as her nerves overloaded with sensation.

Suddenly she felt it building up inside her.With a high-pitched squeal she dug her nails into the bedsheets as her orgasm crested through her and shot all over Marie's face.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 12, 2015, 06:49:02 PM**

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marie gasped as flora released on her. damn girl, you were really pent up' she said getting off off the bed and going into the bathroom to clean off her face.
rose pulled away from floras mouth, a string of reddened saliva falling away as the dark red lips broke apart. rose moved down to suckle on Flora right breast, and both great danes suckled on her for a few minutes. rose and marita then kissed, their dark red lips locking together near Floras bnreasts

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2015, 06:57:02 PM**

Flora panted languidly, her tongue lolling off to her side and her chest heaving contentedly. "That...was awesome..." she panted, eyes half-lidded and cheeks rosy red.

As Rose and Marita continued working themselves out over her body, Flora decided to get in on the action. Reaching around both of their backsides, she fondled both of them and watched them make out hungrily, focused on the minute differences in their curves.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 16, 2015, 08:48:44 AM**

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for the next 15 minutes Marita and Rose made love, using Flora like a rug, grinding back and forth across her stomach. the girls were more interested in each other then noticing that flora was fondling both of them during this. finally Rose broke away, fluid from her and Marita dripping onto Flora " wow.. its been aawhile since we did itlike that.."
_ since college if memory serves Marita said as Marie came back into the room ' Done having fun. Then lets check out..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 16, 2015, 10:53:34 PM**

Flora had taken the time Rose and Marita were using her as a prop to recover from her orgasm, and was capable of hoisting herself to a seating position.

"How long's it gonna take you girls to pack?" she asked. "I've got literally no luggage, Imma just chill here on the bed and watch TV till it's time to go."

After roughly fifteen minutes, she was languidly surfing through dozens of Arabic-speaking stations in a fuguelike trance, tongue lolling flaccidly down her jaw as genres and actors and graphics sped by all punctuated in a rapidfire tongue she couldn't understand.

So when an English-dubbed commercial came on, she immediately stopped flipping channels despite it appearing to be a generic pharmaceutical infomercial.

Genetics is the backbone of our humanity, it began, showing a 3D representation of the double helix. *Our society flourishes and our species controls the world solely due to our genes. At Sartonic Labs we are dedicated to the preservation and study of humanity's finest blueprints.*

Shots of photogenic scientists working with complicated and microscopic machinery. *We've accepted genetic material from the finest human specimens across the world, and have spent billions of dollars unlocking the theoretical limits of the human body, and making those limits a reality.*

"Woah..." muttered Flora, watching the biopic with glazed-over eyes. "They pay people thousands for their genetic material...hey, you think they'd want mine? I mean, my body's absolutely amazing! Perfect in every way." She didn't feel like mentioning it was due to her having the psionic power to gradually adjust her phenotype; she didn't want her new friends with benefits to turn on her like everyone else did when they learned she was a freak.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 20, 2015, 07:58:07 AM**

marita soon packed and the girls left the room and checjed out.
(several hours later)
the four girls reached the outskirts of the city, which was bigger thanthe one they had been in
' Look for a place to spend the night ' marita said to Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 05, 2015, 12:35:07 AM**

Flora panted loudly, staggering into the new city. But her mouth opened even wider when she glanced in awe at the sprawling metropolis in front of her.

This city was far more industrial than the previous, and Flora felt a tremor of nervousness even thinking of trying to barter out a room...after all, she didn't even speak Arabic, and she couldn't count on getting another impossibly nice hotel clerk like last time.

"So, like, for the time being we're probably gonna sleep in this alleyway," she finally admitted to Rose, Marita, and Marie after a few fruitless hours of trying to ascertain what the hell various signs were trying to say. "It's not claimed by any of the gangs, at least none that I've seen. And you can flip the dumpster top over and shield yourself from the rain, in case there's any of that."

She fished a metal pipe out of the dumpster and used it to fish through the contents, looking for anything interesting. "Any idea what direction Sartonic is?" she asked the others. "The sooner I can donate genetic material, the sooner we can have enough money to afford a hotel room."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 05, 2015, 12:47:16 PM**

we have enough- barely- for a cheap motel ' marita said." i'm staying is some alley. anyway..' she gathered up her things and walked gown towards a stall.'[come on. we're not spending the night in some dingy alley.' she pulled out her phone ' the nearst hotel is 5 blocks down on our left..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 05, 2015, 08:25:22 PM**

When they reached the hotel, Flora asked the clerk, "Do you have a map of the city?" She tried to give a polite blush, but her nervousness gave away that if she didn't find a form of income, they would probably be unable to pay their hotel tab upon checking out.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 08, 2015, 04:09:46 PM**

theres a map over there ' the clerk said after the 4 girls sighed in ' room 63, its up the stairs' he said handing Rose the key.
-
come on Flora lets go take a peek' marie said to the folf.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 08, 2015, 06:44:56 PM**

Flora walked over to the map. She could see the city and many different routes, spindly roads and alleyways with Arabic writing everywhere. She was only able to recognize Sartonic Labs due to the recognizable insignia under their name; a circular eye with a horizontal line through the middle.

Grabbing a piece of paper out of the hotel printer, Flora sketched the route as well as she could. "I'm going to head there now; can't waste time when we'll be broke if tomorrow rolls around and we want to buy another night," she told Marita. "Can I have some money to buy food on the way?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 18, 2015, 07:38:06 PM**

mo, we're coming with you. yopu'd get losdt otherwise ' Marita sad ' besides er'
re running low on creds as is. we have enough for one night.. and.. well thats about it..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 19, 2015, 07:20:57 PM**

"Okay!" Flora led the way down the street, skipping merrily.

After a few hours of being hopelessly lost, she somehow managed to wind up at the Sartonic Labs. It was a towering building with white marble walls and a scarcity of windows.

"Hiya!" she beamed at the receptionist.

The receptionist looked at her with and air of condescension. "Can I help you?"

"Umm yeah, my name is Flora, and uh...I saw your advertisement on TV." The folf shifted her feet uncomfortably. "I was thinking of trying to qualify as a donor."

The receptionist tossed her a datapad dismissively. "Fill this out and you'll hear back from us within one month."

"A month? But--!" Flora's protest died in her throat when the receptionist, who was wearing a nametag saying 'PILAR', shot her a glance of pure ice. Resigning herself to the possibility of future income, Flora began filling out her personal information. Until she hit a snag. "Ma'am? My species isn't listed in the dropbar."

Pilar cocked her glasses. "What? What's your species?"

"I'm a folf," Flora smiled weakly under Pilar's unfriendly gaze.

Pilar narrowed her eyes. "Folf don't exist."

"Not normally, no..." Flora answered, "but neither does pink fur or...uh...other weird things about me."

Pilar took the datapad back. "Are you genetically modified? How old are you? And why..." she suddenly frowned, "Why did you mark 'sperm sample'?"

"Heheh, that's...uh...the other thing..." Flora blushed.

Pilar masked a look of alarm and sat up. She looked over Flora, silent for several seconds. "I, uh...need to go in the back for a moment."

Flora looked at Marita with bemusement as Pilar left them in the waiting room. "What was that all about?" she asked the Great Dane.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 29, 2015, 11:32:26 PM**

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well you're.. unique.' marita said as she wabed a few creds ' they pay people wh refer donors hee too. so we've got a few creds to ourse;ves. let me take you out to dinner. My treat?' she said with a smile.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 02, 2016, 08:12:56 PM**

Flora's eyes brightened up. "Sure, that sounds love--" she abruptly cut off when the receptionist burst back out of the door.

"Miss Flora, you've been fast-tracked to the front of the line! If you come with me please." Without another word, the woman grabbed Flora and led her into the inner recesses of Sartonic Labs.

The receptionist led Flora down a pristine white hallway filled with tinted windows. She finally opened one of the labs, where a tall raccoon in a business suit motioned to a seat in front of the center table. "Hello, I'm Dr. Van Der Merwe. Please, sit down," he ordered congenially.

Flora acquiesced, staring around the room in awe. The walls were dotted with storage lockers, gestation chambers, and various gleaming chrome machines.

Van Der Merwe tried to refocus her attention on him. "Are you comfortable? Could we get you anything to drink?"

Flora nodded eagerly. "Ooh yes, please! Do you have juice? I'm parched from all the walking!"

The receptionist nodded and left the room, and Van Der Merwe discussed the task at hand. "Miss Flora, you did an admirable job filling out our questionnaire, but you must understand we still have some questions about your unusual appearance. The scanners reported no indication of gene therapy or augmentations in your body."

"You scanned me?" gasped Flora. "Where? When?"

"As soon as you walked through our door." Behind Van Der Merwe the receptionist briefly returned, handing Flora a chilled can of cranberry juice.

So Flora told the doctor everything he wanted to know. Starting with her early life as a male gray wolf, to the time in boarding school that she started developing the mental ability to alter her appearance, to redesigning herself as a pink-furred female and fleeing her old life out of fear of prejudice.

"Very fascinating..." breathed Van Der Merwe, jotting notes down on his clipboard the whole time she spoke. "Untrained psionic manifestation...that's a rare occurrence, especially for a non-gecko."

Flora gave an awkward smile. "So...do I qualify to donate sperm?"

"Even better." Van Der Merwe handed her a map of the facility. "We'd love the chance to be able to analyze you on a more permanent basis. We have private apartments in our staff quarters and we're prepared to offer you a rent-free room. Food, utilities, and various recreations are included." For the last one, he pointed out a gym, pool, and indoor garden on the map. "In return, you'll agree to a series of tests we'd schedule at regular intervals, focusing on various aspects of your mental, physical, and genetic state."

Flora looked over the paper, mouth hanging open and thoughts swirling through her head.

"I understand if you need some time to think about it--" Van Der Merwe started, but Flora immediately interrupted him with "*Where do I sign???*"

* * *

"Hey girls!" Flora exclaimed excitedly, bursting into the waiting room. "Guess where we're sleeping tonight?" She excitedly showed them the map of the facility. "Sartonic says we can live with them while running a bunch of tests on me!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 02, 2016, 10:12:59 PM**

how much are they paying you? marita asked Flora, as marie and rose followed her down the hallway ' i'm hoping you get a good amount of creds. goodness knows we need it." she said taking a look at the map- the facility was quite larged and was designed to fit in with the natural surroundings.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2016, 12:31:50 AM**

"I get a weekly allowance of 500 credits", replied Flora. "Not much, but considering it comes with free food and water and electricity, I can spend it however I want. Or save it up for the future. Credits are worth a lot more out here."

The receptionist handed Flora 500 credits. "Here's an advance for this month," she said. "Your room will be ready by this evening. For now, would you and your family be interested in dining at our food court? Tonight's special is Vietnamese."

"I told them you were my family so you get to live in my apartment with me," Flora whispered under her breath as the receptionist pointed them in the direction of the food court.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2016, 07:53:32 PM**

Fa,ily huh? well it gets us a place to stay for awhile.' marita shrugged ' so 500 a week, thats 2000 a month , 24000 a year. not bad, considering we dont have much creds right now ' she added as they walked down the hallway ' so what sort of tests are they running on you?'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2016, 08:01:46 PM**

"All sorts, apparently," Flora replied as they reached the elevator, a glass-covered gilded pad that hummed powerfully as it rose up the stories. "Running, reflexes...more sciencey stuff like blood samples, IQ tests...they really want to know everything about my..." Flora trailed off.

She'd never admitted her psionic powers to the girls. "...about what makes me look the way I do. But they promised that none of the tests are harmful. They aren't gonna cut my brain up or anything."

Following the map, they reached their new apartment on the fourth floor near the futuristic ice machine. Everything was equal parts elegant and practical; the floors were padded with waterproof luxury carpet and the furniture looked easy to clean but was composed of high-quality plastics. A curtained transparent aluminum window showed a breath-taking view of the bustling city below.

The apartment came with a tiny kitchenette, two bedrooms, and a living room with a plushy couch that Flora immediately collapsed on after shedding her outer clothes. "Ummmm..." her tongue lolled happily and her chest rose up and down, covered only in her bra. "Maybe we should just order room service tonight...I think I'm too comfy to go to dinner right now..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2016, 08:09:25 PM**

marita took off her shirt tossing it aside ' hmm. room service .. can wait she said as she climbed onto the couch next to Flora..' Because' she grinned. " you and i are going to be a bit busy' maritas dark red lips parted in a smile and she looked at Floras dark red lips' playing tonmsil hockey. she suddenly leaned in and kissed Flora on the lips, feeling the folfs soft lips locked with hers. Maritas breasts bounced against Flora and the girls began settling into the kiss.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2016, 08:12:58 PM**

Flora's eyes went wide as Marita and climbed on top of her. "Oh!" She returned the kiss happily, reaching over and unclasping Marita's bra so her breasts could hang free. Fondling her excitedly, Flora passionately stuck her tongue into her lover's mouth. "Mmmm..." Within seconds, her underwear wasn't doing a very good job of hiding her excitement.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 03, 2016, 08:51:39 PM**

marita reacted to Flora taking off her bra by reaching under the flof and unhooking her bra in return. she began to masages Floras tongue with her own vigorously, moaning softly as she did it. with her left hand she tossed Flora bra and with her right began to caress Floras right breast. she moved her body slighly so she was directly over Flora feeling the folf's panties slide against her thigh as she diod so. Marita kissed Flora passionately with her mouth open, nibbling slightly on Floras lips as the kiss became more passionate.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 03, 2016, 09:57:06 PM**

Flora panted excitedly as Marita fondled her and reciprocated with all her energy. Grasping Marita's pants, she unbutton the waist excitedly and slid them down to the Great Dane's knees. Hands trembling, she rubbed Marita's inner thighs and spread her own, sinking deeper into the plushy recesses of the couch.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 04, 2016, 04:04:26 PM**

Marita broke the kiss briefly and slid her pants entirely off, revealing her panties to Flora " good, you're enjoying this. I owed you after all from that bet in Lanthae. so, now you'll get to have what you said you wanted back then. Your balls in my mouth. Course, here i'll be doing so willingly. VERY willingly' Marita smirked as she took off Floras soaked panties, revealing the folfs erect penis.' well well someone is very excited. But first.. " Marita put her lips to Floras left breasts and began to suckle her.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 05, 2016, 10:40:10 AM**

"You're going to...?" Flora could hardly believe her ears. Before she could digest what Marita was about to do, the older woman was stimulating her again and she moaned in surprise. Arching her back as Marita suckled her, Flora presented herself completely to her lover, allowing her to do whatever she wanted.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 05, 2016, 07:49:13 PM**

Marita suckled on both of Floras breasts, using her let claws to stroke floras tail and squueze her butt ' mmm. soft and squishy' marita murmured as she moved to floras right breast.' you've got nice tits too, dear Flora.. i'm going to enjoy having you in me.. Marita felt the folf getting more and more excited with each stroke each kiss- marita spaced out her suckling with some kisses , kissing flora passionately on the lips.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 06, 2016, 01:43:02 AM**

Flora returned the kiss, chest heaving with sensitivity at the amount of attention Marita was giving it. "Mmm, keep talking dirty to me..." she purred, grasping Marita's buttocks and pressing her whole body against hers. Running her fingers up the Great Dane's flanks, she savored the sweat-soaked fur running through her fingers. After so many years of never being close to anyone, this was more than she ever could have dreamed for...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 08, 2016, 06:52:00 PM**

marita began micving her mouth down floras front passet her lips leaving a trail of kisses as she did so. she kissed both breasts then continue moving diw tqwwards floras privates which were now hard to the touch.. you.. ready?' she grinned her face close to floras nethers, the smell pugent yet arousing..' i take you've never done this before. after i do this. you have to do it to me' marita said pointing to her vagina.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 09, 2016, 09:00:43 PM**

"I have to...oh!" Flora was currently too turned on to devote much brainpower to the prospect of anything after the imminent blowjob, but she still marveled at the prospect of getting to reciprocate. She'd always been extremely open to providing sexual favors, even if life had always found a way for nothing to ever come to fruition, but she couldn't help but worry that she'd do a bad job due to lack of experience. "Okay!" she exclaimed excitedly. "I can't wait!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 15, 2016, 05:56:10 PM**

marita pressed her lips to flora's nethers feelning the folf tense beneath her. marita let he musk waft over her running her hands over floras butt, and she began to 'blow' flora, sucking lightly , then harder, her mouth opening wider and wider to close more and more around floras member. marita moaned as she ' stimulated flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 17, 2016, 10:55:39 AM**

Flora let out a low moan, arching her back and tensing her muscles. The feeling was incredible, and as the friction continued rhythmically she felt herself get more and more excited. Marita was bringing her a world full of pleasure, and before long she felt her climax threatening to burst. "If...if you keep this up," she panted through ragged breaths, "...I'm gonna cum!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 18, 2016, 06:51:43 PM**

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marita pulled away and off of flora, leaving the folf to slowly unclimax. ' you dont come until you and i are one ' she smirked. ' now.. its your turn to whet your appetite' she said getting off of flora and lying down on her back. ' your turn to be on top too ' she s added

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 18, 2016, 09:58:27 PM**

Flora moaned turgidly when Marita's stimulation stopped and she felt her release slip away. "O-okay..." Rolling over with a wince, Flora took a deep breath and slid her tongue into Marita's inner folds. Running her tongue along the inner walls, she massaged the outside with her thumbs and marveled at how deep her tongue could go.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 23, 2016, 05:43:11 PM**

Marie and Rose entered the apartment and smiled as they saw Marita "busy" with Flora. not wishuing to disturn the pair, rose went into the kitchen to make herself and Marie some food." marie was dgging out bread from the pantry.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 23, 2016, 06:31:54 PM**

Flora felt the older woman tense up with each lap. She stretched her tongue as far as it went and noticed with surprise that it was angled a lot more downward than she'd always expected. *How have all those pornos prepared me so little for this?*

After some time, she switched to a figure eight pattern, and decided to start exploring. Trailing her tongue up Marita's abdomen, Flora rubbed her fingers along the stomach before finding her way to Marita's breasts. She felt an excited thrill when she brushed the dog's nipples with her lips, giving them her mouth's full attention.

She was so preoccupied massaging Marita's breasts that it was several minutes before she realized with a flash of shock that her flytrap was pressed tenderly between Marita's legs...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 25, 2016, 12:25:11 AM**

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marita tensed as Flora entered her then she leaned forward to grab flora by the face and pull her into a steamy liplock. marita forced her tongued deep into floras mouth and held the kiss as they settled into the lovemaking ' inwardly she was thining flora was doing pretty good for her first time ever doing this. a prono, this was not. then again marta never watched those anyway.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 25, 2016, 12:41:05 AM**

Flora gasped, eyes widening as her brain caught up to what her body had already figured out. She barely registered as Marita's lips connected with hers, so focused was she on what was happening downstairs. "Mmmph!" she yelped in surprise, faltering for only a single thrust before plowing ahead. Her eyes drew themselves to Marita's bouncing breasts.

It didn't take long at all. "Marita...!" she tried to pant, but Marita's tongue in her mouth rendered her words unintelligble. *I'm already about to blow!* she thought in a panic, *How do I stop???* With little to no chance of stopping herself, she hoped Marita was okay with how little time had passed before the folf stiffened up and groaned passionately as her climax coursed through her in a wave of pleasure.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 26, 2016, 11:46:58 AM**

Marita moved under Flora so the folf was fully inside her, and it wasnt long before she felt a warm rush as the inexperieced girl peaked. marita broke the kiss briefly 'don't be upset. this is a learning exoerience. we have all night for me to teach you ' she said locking lips with Flora again and climing on top of her, moaning slightly as she did so.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2016, 12:18:31 PM**

Flora gulped for air, her body shivering with emotions as her peak subsided. Wrapping her arms tightly around Marita, she hugged her as hard as she could while the dog climbed on top of her. "This is so awesome..." she gasped, eyes shimmering with tears. "Getting to finally be so close to someone...to experience a genuine physical connection...it's everything I've always dreamed of..."

She pressed her face into Marita's chest. "Thank you...for everything..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 26, 2016, 03:20:54 PM**

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well, you're welcome ' Marita said holding Flora to her breasts. ' i'm glad you are enjoying this, because i am too. Romps are fun, and i'm guessing you havent had many of those>'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 26, 2016, 06:47:36 PM**

Flora shook her head in confirmation (and to get some free marshmellow hell while we she was there.) "I really haven't..." she replied, smiling. "Before I met you three, I've only had one experience I'd classify as a romp." Her eyes lit up in memory. "Maybe I could tell you three about it over dinner..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 03:35:20 PM**

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or you could tell me while we finish our romp ' marita said kissing her passionately. ' so, flora.. talk to me about yourself..' she panted between kisses.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2016, 05:06:24 PM**

"Oh, it's too long a story for that," panted Flora back, wrapping her lips around Marita's and pressing her fingerpads into her lover's breasts. "What would you even want to know about me? I've told you everything..." Except about Flora's psionics, and already she was wondering how she was going to keep that a secret forever. After all, they were currently living in a facility that wants to test her precisely because of said psionic abilities, it wasn't hard to imagine that circumstance could reveal her darkest secret to those she loved most. "Before I met Emilena in Corona, I lived by breaking into cars and driving them to new towns until the gas ran out. I'd usually buy fast food with money from the glove compartment and I'd shower at truck stops. I'm lucky I never got arrested..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 06:29:21 PM**

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everything. my dear flora. if you are going to be in a relationship with me. you have to tell me about what happened prior. also you;re going to have to identity as fully lesbian, becauses thats what i am. now a personal question. you have the organs of a male in addition to those pf a female, i, of course have fe,ale parts. thus the possibility is there for us to have children. i ask you, my beautiful folf... do you want to have kids? of course i'd be the one to have to birth them..but' marota smiled ' i wouldnt mind that at all.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2016, 06:52:46 PM**

"Fully lesbian?" Flora mulled over. "I always was kinda bisexual though..."

And then her eyes went wide when Marita asked the next part. "*Kids???*" Her flytrap, which had been inching its way back into the warm embrace of Marita's thighs, retreated into its sheath at record speed. "H-have children? Wow, that's--I--really--sudden for a second date, you know?" she stammered. "I--having babies...uh, could I even have kids? My biology's so messed up, I'm not even sure if I'm fertile." At only seventeen, Flora had always been too concerned with getting laid to ponder on the biological ramifications of being successful. "I think I'd ask to have the doctors here whether that's even possible!" she blurted. "Before we plan anything. So, um, question I probably should have asked earlier..." she grinned nervously, "Are you three...on any birth control?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 07:00:04 PM**

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girls cant get other girls pregnant. we lack the plumbing for that. so no we're not on birth control, because since we bang each other, theres no risk of pregnancy. we do have protection against STDs though. we're all clean of that. i trust you are clean as well? marita said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2016, 07:08:18 PM**

"Oh yeah, I'm clean," Flora assured her, still hung up a little about Marita's chosen rationale for not needing birth control. "I was a virgin, you know. Not a lot of opportunities to pick things up, unfortunately." She stretched her arms and shifted her position so Marita was spooning her backside instead of her crotch. "Say, are you hungry?" she asked digressively, "Cause I'm super starving after that workout."

With her attention finally off Marita for a moment, she became aware of the ample fluid stains causing the couch cushions to cling to their fur. "Oh man, we made a serious mess of this upholstery..." She bit her lip as she observed the damage. "Hopefully they do daily cleanings...and don't bill us..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2016, 09:59:20 PM**

i'm sure they have vaccums in here that we could use to clean up ' marita said.' if you're finished ' then go clean yourself off. just dont take more than 10 minutes because i newed to get cleaned too.' Marita said. i'll vaccuum while you go get cleaned up..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2016, 02:34:34 AM**

"Okay!" smiled Flora, skipping towards the bathroom. Her heart was pounding in her chest and unable to shake a feeling of foreboding ever since the end of the conversation. She'd needed a break from the lovemaking just to digest this new direction their relationship had taken.

She had been extremely startled by the kids question; the possibility had literally never entered her mind. She practically still considered herself a kid, having lived only 17 years and without ever holding a job or having any sort of responsibility. Was she ready to have kids? *Could* she even take care of kids considering her financial situation? And whether her mental answer was yes or no, the fact remains that she just blew a load right in the babymaker, and Marita is showing no indication of not wanting the baby if nature takes its course...

She became aware that she was in the kitchen, having taken a wrong turn due to not knowing the layout of this sizable apartment. "Oh, uh, hi gals!" she beamed, face flushing red as she realized she wasn't exactly presentable at the moment. But while she was here... "Hey, do you mind if I ask you both a question?" She lowered her voice so it didn't carry into the living room. "Where do you two stand exactly on the topic of...having children?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 01, 2016, 06:43:35 PM**

have a seat flora ' marie said as she entred the kitchen
we;ve made sandwiches. i'm sure tyour hungry.' as flora asked her quesgtion her faces narrowed in though ' kids, well thats not really come up.. i've always preferred other girls and kid making wasnt a possibility.but .. you have both male and female parts so you could 'father' a child..
-
well if you want to have kids, with one of us.. well you'll need to earn an income. kids arent cheap.. at all. try many hundreds of thousands of creds, if not into the millions." Rose said. but i'd be fine with having kids with you ' rose said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2016, 06:54:16 PM**

Flora sat down and took a sandwich. "You all keep saying I have male and female parts, but I don't have a vagina," she reminded. "I was born male and have never had any surgeries, so my body hasn't changed in THAT way."

She bit into her sandwich. It was delicious but she couldn't place the meat. "I'm only asking because Marita mentioned she wanted kids with me." She looked Marie and Rose in the eyes. "Is it true none of you are on birth control? Is that safe? I'm glad you all see me as a girl, but my manhood IS fully-functioning."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 01, 2016, 10:45:12 PM**

you hasve fully functioning breasts and identify as female, yet have a male package, thus you have both ' Marie said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 01, 2016, 11:30:54 PM**

"I mean...my breasts *might* be fully functioning..." Flora blushed. "I don't actually know, never having had kids to...well you know..."

She shifted uncomfortably. "But on the topic of unwanted pregnancies, my, uh, male part is kinda the more pressing concern. If we're going to keep having sex, are you girls planning on taking any birth control?" She glanced out the door at the living room. "And...is Marita?"

There was a light knock on the front door, too quiet for the girls in the kitchen to hear.

"Hello!" smiled a skirted receptionist clerk when the door opened. She was different from the one they'd met in the lobby. She handed Marita an unmarked envelope. "This is Miss Flora's testing schedule for tomorrow. Dr. Ven Der Merwe insists that she must be punctual in reaching the indicated stations, but tell her not to be shy asking for directions if needed!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 02, 2016, 01:14:17 PM**

will do ' marita said taking the envelope. she had only opened the dood enough so the clrk could see her face and so she could grab the envelope. " i'll see to it she gets there on time. have a goof evening.' she shut the door bhind the clerk as she left.

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naturally we will use birth control, to avoid unwante pregnancy. Marita as well. the only time we would stop is if we were trying to have a baby.' Rose said.' so starting now, we will start going on borh control. of course that doesnt eliminate entirely the possibility of pregnancy.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 02, 2016, 01:41:23 PM**

"That's true, but you could always get an abortion worst case scenario," shrugged Flora. She helped herself to a second sandwich. She looked behind her as she saw Marita coming for the kitchen. *I wonder if they even sell morning-after pills in this country...*

"Hi Marita! Come grab something to eat!" she smiled.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 04, 2016, 10:38:49 PM**

Abortions? are you nuts?' Marie exclaimed " No, if one of us gets pregnant by you, we're KEEPING it!
_ Abnortions are out Flora' rose said shaking her head." so put that put of your head. If I get pregnant, I'm keeping the baby.
-
got a package fir you Flora Marita said "Directions for testing and a schedule fir tests. you need to be punctual as well' Marita said, going over and starting to make herself a sandwich.' Go get yourself cleaned up' she said to Flora. We'll discuss it after your shower.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 04, 2016, 11:07:56 PM**

"Okay, no abortions!" Flora agreed, alarmed at the degree of protest the suggestion elicited. Grateful for the chance to change the subject, she quickly took the envelope and opened it. "Hmm, tomorrow begins with a 'circulatory and muscular systems baseline assessment' at..." the hairs on the back of her neck prickled, "...9am...crap what time is it?"

The kitchen clock noted that 9 am was in seven hours. "Yikes, they aren't fooling around," she muttered, exiting for the shower without further ado. "I need to get to bed or I'm going to be exhausted for my first day of tests..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2016, 02:27:09 PM**

Ten minutes later, Flora returned from the shower with her hair in a towel and her fur looking frizzy.

"So I just noticed," she grinned coyly, "that there's only two beds. We're gonna have to double up, who wants to be my cuddle buddy for the night?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 06, 2016, 03:08:32 PM**

I will' Rose said "i hope you dont mind if i sleep in the nude Flora ' she said , a grin on her face.
fine i'll share with marie after i Get out of the shower. Marita said going into the bathroom.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 06, 2016, 03:14:58 PM**

Flora's eyes lit up. "Sounds good to me!" She couldn't help but stare at Rose's curves, imagining what it must feel like to press her face into those breasts while warm under the covers. Flora had always fantasized of large-breasted women, and of the three girls Rose was the most well endowed.

"So long as you're okay with me being naked too," she said over her shoulder with a smile, exiting for the bedroom. "I'll be in bed getting comfy..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 08, 2016, 04:56:39 PM**

Girl, i'm used to seeing girls naked. comes from being a former stripper. you see lots of tits and packages, and more than a few times those are on the same customer. you're not the first girl packing both guns, as we say in the business, that i've seen. those girls tipped well too, because they liked having a fling wth someone who wasnt flipping at at their member. if i hadnt been badly hooked on biproxytol at the time. i likely still would be doing that. biproxytol is not a drug you want to get addicted to, lets just say that ; Rose said getting into bed with Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 08, 2016, 08:45:17 PM**

"Mmm, you lucky girl..." purred Flora, snuggling closer to Rose under the covers. She pressed as much of her body as she could into Rose's soft curves. "I wish I'd had that many lovers...of all shapes and sizes..."

She wasn't particularly interested in being subtle; already her hands were getting very grabby and her body was shuddering with excitement. "Do you ever miss getting to be so sexually active with so many people?" she asked. "A new person every night...sometimes multiple...?" Flora's hands bushed Rose's ample chest. "All the partners you could ever want..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2016, 01:18:56 PM**

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we had to have protection, of course ' rose said stroking floras butt and tail. didnt want any stds or pregnancies on the clock. we didnt have insurance for that sort of thing. sand truhfully i was drugged up most of the time. its not a job you can do for 40 years, once you get past 35, they dump you for younger models..' rose reached over and pulled out a condom and worked it onto floras member ' don;'t want to run any risks from our flng, now do we' she smirked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2016, 04:07:07 PM**

Flora's eyes lit up as Rose brought up protection before she had to. "No, we don't," she agreed, climbing on top of Rose and pressing their lips together. For some reason, she felt way more comfortable taking charge with Rose. Maybe it was the older woman's level of experience; after having so many lovers, Flora knew there was little she could do wrong that Rose wouldn't have seen before.

Her pawpads pressed into Rose's breasts and her whole body relished the feel of Rose's skin. She trembled at delight from the feel of Rose's hand on her butt. "I think you'll be beautiful even after 35," she panted, taking only a breath's break from the kiss. "You're gorgeous..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 13, 2016, 03:50:30 PM**

When Rose didn't resist, Flora slid her member in between her legs, groaning softly. For some reason Rose was a lot warmer than Marita was, and the soft bed and fluffy blankets only made the experience better.

Flora was also able to last a lot longer. Smiling unashamedly, Flora pressed herself against Rose and thrust away. She was too sleepy to really register the passage of time, but somehow that added to the dreamlike quality of their lovemaking.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 14, 2016, 11:47:22 PM**

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rose kissed flora passionately as they made love, drawing moans from the folf as roses dark red lips locked with floras dark red lips continouosly. rose suddenly flipped flora onto her back and climbed on top.. rose softly ran her claws along floras back then moving to her front.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 15, 2016, 01:06:37 AM**

Flora panted heavily as Rose took things to the next level, increasing the pace and speeding up their thrusting rhythm. Flopping obediently over as Rose took control, the folf stretched her arms and let her tongue languidly loll out of her mouth limply as she felt Rose's hands play along her body. The blankets clung to her sweat-slicked fur and the friction was sending her nerves into overdrive.

Suddenly she felt it building up within her, the tightly-coiled sensations of release bubbling up through her abdomen and sending all of her muscles contracting. Unlike with Marie and Marita, Flora ignored it and merely continued enjoying the sex. She neither tried to achieve the coming orgasm nor delay it, and to her immense satisfaction this caused the buildup phase to prolong itself, simmering just under the surface until Rose's thrusts drew it out of her. With one final moan Flora had the longest climax of her life.

"Ohhhhh man..." Flora locked her knees instinctively when it was over. "Don't tell the others..." she muttered weakly, "but you were far and away the best..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 16, 2016, 05:32:26 PM**

well ' rose smiled ' i've been doing this sort of thing for years..you're good, for someone who hasnt had much sex. very soft kissable lips- the redder the lips the more kissable they are- good sized tits, and you've got a decent sized pecker. not the biggest one i've had in me, but a nice size. now, for a cool down period. i'm going to kiss you in the lips, and hold it for awhile. you wanna french m,e. thats fine, whatever cools you down afterwards. now.. here we go. ' rose reached out, grabbed floras face and pulled her face close to her and kissed her fully and firmly on the lips.. for now.. Rose kept her nmouth closed as the liplock started. she would open it only i response to Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 16, 2016, 05:37:56 PM**

Flora happily returned the kiss. She enjoyed the cooldown period greatly, letting her heart rate return to normal and just enjoy the sensation of her body pressed against Rose's. She didn't stick her tongue in Rose's mouth, simply because it seemed too much work for such a relaxing afterglow.

"Your breasts are the largest I've ever gotten to touch..." she whispered excitedly, running her fingers along Rose's cleavage to prove her point. She hadn't even pulled out yet; even her flytrap was relaxed and enjoying the warmth.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 17, 2016, 04:28:48 PM**

i've touched bigger breasts than mine' Rose saod softly kissing Flora again on the lips. yhe was a slight gush as their bodies untangled, and rose gently slid her tongue into Floras mouth and lovingly massaged the folfs tongue with her own. Rose had enjoyed the lovemaking, she thought flora, woth more seasoning would make a fine lover for her. Rose enjoyed romps with marita- for obvious reasons- and Marie- but Flora offered many new possibilities.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 17, 2016, 04:33:23 PM**

"Lucky..." murmured Flora sleepily. With Rose on top and taking more control, Flora was finding her brain less and less conscious. Without even noticing, her eyes were closing, her muscles were relaxing and the sensations of being pressed against Rose were slipping away to the similar contented feelings of a relaxed dreamscape.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 17, 2016, 04:52:53 PM**

RoSe kissed flora euntil she was certain that the girl wasnt actually awake then she pulled away to the other side of the bed, to give the folf space to sleep.

She was soon asleep as well

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 17, 2016, 04:57:13 PM**

Flora didn't remember dozing off, but her next conscious thought was the apartment phone ringing in a polite but shrill jingle. Groggily crawling over Rose, Flora awkwardly grabbed the receiver and mumbled a confused hello.

"Good morning, Miss Flora." The warm but authoritative voice of Dr. Van Der Merwe filtered through. "I apologize for disturbing your sleep, but it's 9:30. They're waiting for you in the circulation lab..."

Flora's eyes flew open. "Oh god, I'm so sorry!" she stammered. "I'm on my way over RIGHT NOW!"

"Well, don't hurt yourself in your rush," the doctor advised, but Flora had already leaped out of bed. Looking around the room wildly, she located her clothes in the living room and hesitated before putting them on. They were dusty, stained, and had been purchased for five dollars from a pawn shop. She'd literally make a better impression in a Sartonic bathrobe until she could buy new clothes.

Seconds later she dashed into the hall wielding the instruction pamphlet and clad in a fluffy white robe adorned with the Sartonic logo on the breast.

Several minutes later, she reached the circulation lab and, huffing and puffing, dragged herself through the door.

GOOD MORNING , greeted a robotic voice; Flora couldn't tell if it was automated or just heavily filtered. *PLEASE REMOVE YOUR CLOTHING AND ATTACH THE NODES ACCORDING TO THE DIAGRAM* .

It was referring to two printouts of a genderless human's front and backside. A number of circular sticky nodes were sitting on a small table beside a large treadmill, and Flora did her best to place them on her body to match the image.

VERY GOOD. NOW, PLEASE RUN ON THE TREADMILL, STANDING UP STRAIGHT AND ASSUMING A STEADY, MANAGEABLE PACE.

Flora was not in the mood to do more running, so her steady and manageable pace was pretty pathetic, but nevertheless after fifteen minutes the voice seemed pleased. It ran her through several other basic exercises, from push-ups to jumping jacks to cherry pickers. Then a television turned on and a smiling female trainer demonstrated different yoga poses for her to hold.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH , the voice finally affirmed, as Flora left downward dog for the last time and dragged her sweaty self off the mat. *THE CIRCULATION BASELINE TESTS ARE COMPLETE. SHOWERS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE LEFT, PAST THE BATHROOMS. WHEN YOU ARE READY, PLEASE PROCEED TO LAB 31 FOR YOUR HORMONAL EXAM.*

The shower was public, but luckily it was empty when Flora took hers. She wondered what sort of folk she'd see if she were ever to walk in when someone was using it. She showered the bare minimum and left for Lab 31 as soon as possible; after starting off late she didn't want to keep whatever staff member was handling her physical waiting.

But even though she was prepared for anything, it was nothing short of abject shock that crossed her face when she walked in and saw who was waiting for her. "Kojurro???" she gasped, observing him in a Sartonic labcoat and a nametag. "What are...how did you get here?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 09:01:15 AM**

Kojurro smiled at her ' Flora! what a surprise! its a lonmg story. these guys found me lying in an alley, and treated me while running tests on my body. turns out i have some weird disorder that stops the bleeding of cuts 5 times faster than a normal person. Odd that. so what bring you to Sartonic?' he smiled patting the open seat next to him.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 03:33:43 PM**

Flora swallowed her surprise, not wanting to look flustered in front of someone she'd known from before. "My story's pretty long too...Kalis captured us, and tortured me in his warship, but Lily saved me. Marita, Rose and Marie found me in the desert, and the four of us have been trying to get by ever since. Sartonic is interested in my psionic powers," she admitted. "See...I never told you guys this, but...I've always had the ability to alter my appearance as it grows in. It's why my fur is such a weird color. "

She looked at his outfit. "Did they hire you? Cause they're treating me like a lab rat. Not that I'm complaining, of course; they've been super hospitable, some testing is a small price to pay. Speaking of which, how are we going to do this..." she read her printout of today's tests "reproductive system analysis anyway?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 07:56:17 PM**

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as an intern yes . its a job, and in 2 months i'll become full time kojuuro said ' as fr your testing it will involve taking samples of your semen. theres a girl who volunteered to assist you in that. you'll have to kiss her until you release enough semen for us to analyze. after that. we'll measure the size of your privates, and check to make sure they are healthy.' Kojuuro said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 08:00:13 PM**

Flora's pupils dilated. "I...uh...okay," she stammered, flushing furiously red. "I'm, uh, ready than you are." She tried to smile nonchalantly but her mind was still spinning. "And, uh, when she is. What's her name?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 08:08:35 PM**

Her name is " Kojuuro flipped through a sheet of paper " Emma, and shes an 18 year old vixen. Very pretty, and open-minded too. you'll be her first kiss, ever. So theres that as well. she;ll be here in 10 minutes.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 08:36:07 PM**

Flora sat down in the proffered bench nervously. "18? That's...almost my age..." She looked around the room nervously, wondering if she needed to hold a catching container or something. *I think I'll just leave everything to them...* she finally decided before opening her mouth and possibly saying something dumb. *They're employees, they must be prepared to handle everything.*

She couldn't help but wonder about Emma. As an eighteen-year old, she'll be the first time Flora had ever kissed someone also in the teens. For some reason this made Flora all the more nervous that she might embarrass herself, not the least reason of which being that she'd never met Emma before. It was going to be a rather intimate interaction for Flora's first impression...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 09:11:18 PM**

A few minutes later a yound red colored vixen entered the room. she had bright green eyes pale red fur, an ample chest and the darkest red lips flora had ever seen." Hi, um. you must be Flora. I'm Emma, and well I'm supposed to um., Stimulate you. i think is how the doctor put it.. But Um.. I'd like to chat first, if thats ok with you ' she said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 09:20:13 PM**

Flora's eyes widened, but she quickly recovered and kept her jaw from slacking open. "Um, er, hi! Yeah!" she said brightly, probably too chipper. *Tone it down!* "Yeah sure, we can talk! I'd love to talk!" She held out a shaking hand. "Hi, I'm Flora!" *She already knows your name is Flora...* her inner voice groaned. "Though you already knew that, didn't you?" she tried to recover, sweat pooling on her forehead and a toothy smile plastered on her face.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 09:39:27 PM**

i'll leave you two be ' Kojuuro said as he got up." Um.. Could we have a couple glasses of water. just to sip on while we talk" emma asked. ' sure, sure ' i'll see if we have bottled water if not i'll get some from the fountain. be right back."
kojurro headed out the door and closed it behind him.
_ so flora tell me a little bit about yourself ' i'm 18, just turned 18 last month in fact. i'm the youngest of 3, have two older brother Matt and Morris , Matts 4 years older morris is 3. i needed money so I could go to college.. and well the job description was vague. I've.. never kissed anyone, so i don;t know where i am on the spectrum sexually . i wont tell my parents the details, thats really my business.' emma said.
A Nurse was showing marita marie and rose atround campus, each of the girls was holding a large brochure compl;ete with map ' we've been testing special clients here for more than 10 years..' the nure said ' marie was starting to tune her out , she sounded like a tour guide.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 09:48:43 PM**

"Wow, you're going to college?" breathed Flora. "That's so cool...I've always heard awesome things about college...drinking and partying all night." She couldn't draw her gaze away from Emma's face, especially her bright green eyes. "I, uh...never graduated any school myself...always been kind of off the grid."

Emma probably didn't need to know about the drug dealing, car stealing, or the laundry list of other crimes she committed while with Emilena's gang. Flora decided to switch gears and focus on her powers instead of her backstory. "I can change my appearance however I want just by thinking about it." She realized Emma would be expecting a demonstration. "It doesn't happen instantly, the new stuff has to grow in. That was how I became a girl though..."

Flora blushed. "Never kissed anyone, huh? Well, I hope you aren't expecting tips from me. I'm not super experienced myself, always been kinda unlucky..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 10:01:17 PM**

so you've never been to school? did you start an apprenticeship somewhere or something Emma asked " i hear those pay good, but i wouldnt know.. and yeah i've never kissed a girl.. um.. if you'd like to go out something so we can do stuff together and maybe kiss as normal people do. i'd be up for that..' emma shrugged.' yeah i'm trying to become a model, for clothes.. need a degree for it.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 10:12:07 PM**

"A clothes model? That's awesome!" Flora smiled. "Um, I used to do nude modeling for Corona U on the side. It was a nice supplementary income. It was probably the closest I've ever been to being in school too, come to think of it."

Her head was spinning. *Was Emma...asking me out? It sounded like she just asked me out.* "Yeah, I'd love to hang out and go places!" she exclaimed. "And kiss! As normal people do! Wait, would people around here be okay with that?" she suddenly amended. "Never heard great things about Arabia's acceptance on homosexuality."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 10:20:49 PM**

We're in Arabia, Western Iraq in be precise' Emma said " So you did nude modelling? how long did you do that? Did you get asked out a lot? How was the pay? thats not something I'd.. um consider doing.. my girls are reserved for someone special, not just for anyone to ooogle or touch..' she said covering her chest with her arms.. ' so.. once we get done with this.. would you be free to do something.. we're pretty isolated here, and as long as we dont start french kissing openly in public i dont think people will care if we hold hands while in public.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 10:35:13 PM**

"No nobody asked me out while I was modeling, they were all older than me. College kids you know..." Flora replied. "I just took my clothes off and stood really still and they drew me, sometimes painted. They weren't supposed to interact or talk with me cause it might distract me from staying perfectly still."

She checked her schedule. "I've got some more tests later tonight, but after this one I have the rest of the afternoon off! We should totally do something after!" she smiled.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 23, 2016, 10:46:21 PM**

so they just drew your body for art class. well a job is a job' emma shrugged ' hmm.. what sort of thing could we do? something fun.. Go for a hike a suppose.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 23, 2016, 10:49:21 PM**

"Mostly. Maybe a few videos here and there...but those weren't exactly university-sanctioned..." Flora fidgeted. "Oooh how about a swim?" she suddenly suggested, brightening up. "Is there a sauna or a pool? It's been so long since I had a good swim, and all this desert's got me missing the water more than ever."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2016, 12:00:36 PM**

well there might be an oasis nearby, whether natural or manmade. Emma said.i'd be up for a swim ' she said ' arabia is murder of my fur, i've got all sorts of split ends ' she sighed. ' so how did you realize you had powers.. was it just something you were born with or..? i'm pretty normal, well i'm taller than my mom, and my moms pretty tall. for a girl that is..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 04:51:49 PM**

"You're not normal, you're drop dead gorgeous!" Flora blurted out, then immediately turned an even darker shade of fuscia. "Er....um, I mean, to answer your question, it started when I was in an all-male boarding school. I was a grey wolf at the time, but I'd always wanted to be a vixen... then my body started responding to my inner desires and I slowly developed curves and lighter fur..." Flora bit her lip remembering the fear that had eclipsed that time. "It was terrifying. I got so scared that people would judge me, or hurt me...so I just...ran away," she remembered. "Really far away. I never saw anyone from my old life again." She forced out a casual chuckle to pretend she'd fully recovered from the old history. "Puberty's a bitch, huh?"

She listened as Emma spoke about her mother. "So you've really never kissed anybody?" Flora asked. "I mean, no offense but you're a bombshell. Guys must have been crawling all over you."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2016, 05:36:52 PM**

Ii.. well wasnt one of the popular girls at school. i was a late bloomer.. here ' Emma pulled out a picture that showed a teenage vixen about 15 , with large braces a flat chest and a thin shirt- and showd it to Flora.'that's me from 3 years ago. I was.. well I was forced to join band instead of cheerlead. that should tell you how i was in the looks department. you're beautiful.. i mean 3 years ago someone like you would have never given me the time of day. I've only grown into this is rally the past 3 months or so. You.. were able to literally change yourself, from a wolf to a fox! you were able to do.. well what every teenagers wants! To change how they look! you were able to do that.. to change from a guy .. to a girl..You ever think about changing back to a guy wolf?' Emma asked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 05:53:33 PM**

"I tried!" confessed Flora. "Right at the beginning, I fought my transformations as hard as I could!" She sighed. "But I had no control, so they kept operating off of my secret desires, ignoring how inappropriate their timing was. Nowadays I can control it a lot more, but there still needs to be an element of desire. And I don't ever *want* to look like my old self again." She smiled. "I like new me."

She continued on the subject of Emma. "So, you weren't a loner by choice? You're a sight for sore eyes now, how have you restrained yourself the last three months? Is that why you've grabbed such an...intimate...sort of job? It's just weird that a nurse who kisses people for sperm donations has never been kissed."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2016, 06:03:38 PM**

well I didnt KNOW this gig would entail playing tonsil hockey with another girl!' Emma said a bit flustered' "I just thought, maybe that I would have to help , test your reflexes or something like that. nope I have to let you stick your tongue down my throat until we can test your ' equipment' I only found out you'd be the one I'd be assisting last evening.. very last minute switch you see. originally my first kiss would have been with a yak from South America, but he left the program 2 days ago so they switched .. and.. i need the money. model school isnt cheap. but , well you're really attractive, and you've got magic powers, so in many ways I got lucky."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 09:13:49 PM**

"Pfft!" Flora giggled, "if those were really your options, I guess you *did* get lucky!"

She leaned forward. "I'd say I'm pretty lucky too..." her eyes twinkled, "otherwise I bet I'd be snogging Kojurro right now, and you're a hell of a lot cuter!" She slid her robe off so it draped on the back of the bench. "Guess we should get this going..." she tried to say nonchalantly, even though her heart was racing, "we shouldn't keep Kojurro waiting too long..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2016, 09:25:36 PM**

JKojuuro entered the room a few seconds later, carrying two large cups of water ' sorry t be so later girls had to find a bubbler that was working..' he said before seeing Floroa unrobed " Er.. I'll. just set these down here and dim the lights so you girls have some privacy.. the tube over there is for catching the sample. just stick it on there once she;s stimulated dully.' i'll be back in an hour..' he said setting the water down and heading back out..

_
uh.. keeping your robe on please.. i wanna do this step by step, if thats ok Emma said blanching as she saw Floras breasts exposed.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 09:32:01 PM**

Flora paled when Kojurro appeared and Emma asked her to put her robe back on. "O-okay!" she stammered, face paling with embarrassment. She scrambled to dress herself and almost dropped the robe in her haste. "Sorry, sorry!" she squealed with embarrassment to the vixen. After so much time with Rose, Marie, and Marita, she'd forgotten that normal people were less okay with nudity. "Um, er, I...will just let you say when things begin from now on..." she apologized in a small voice, filled with shame.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2016, 09:46:49 PM**

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its ok. i just wasnt expecting you to show me your goods right off the bat.. thats not something i was Expecting Emma Said " I mean. We'll be showing each other mostr of ourselves. have to, if we want to get that sample. so.. lets chat a little more, and then i'll kiss you. just a regular kiss, no tongue, at least right away..'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2016, 09:51:50 PM**

"That's okay...I shouldn't have done that..." Flora blushed, still beet-red and unable to meet Emma's eye. "I've never really been with 'normal' people, I'm pretty uncultured. Living off the grid you know...don't know any manners at all...but I won't do it again, promise."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 25, 2016, 06:56:43 PM**

Its alright. you didn't know any better' emma said kindly. ' we all make mistakes. so. i'm guessing you still have male parts. i'mm guessing your transformation to girls wasnt complete..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 25, 2016, 09:15:54 PM**

"Well, no I mean, there's only so much you can do when you're tweaking yourself from the inside, no surgeries or anything," Flora chuckled, relieved for the subject change. "Biologically I'm still completely male, just...curvier. But I'm okay with that, I more enjoy being treated like a girl when I'm walking around in public with clothes on, you know? The male role's pretty fun in the bedroom. Though it's a large part of my lack of success in that department," she admitted.

She bit her lip. "That doesnt...bother you, does it?" she asked tentatively. "I've met a lot of people who weren't okay with it."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 25, 2016, 09:44:49 PM**

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you're not completely a guy though. normal guys dont have fully functioning breasts' emma pointed out. ' Guys have no breasts and a pecker. girls have breasts and no pecker. so.. you;re a girl, with both male and female sexual organs. hermaphrodite, in other words. i take it you like being treated as a girl etter, so for simplicitys sake, we'll say you're a girl. which would making the kissing we are going to do same sex- lesbian to precise. so.. you want to touch tongues pbefore we start kissing. you stick out your tongue i stick out mine and we rub them together. i'd.. like to try it out if thats ok. only ru;le is. no trying to slip your tongue in my mouth.well until I say you can.' emma said..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 25, 2016, 10:07:46 PM**

Flora realized the kissing was about to start, and eagerly nodded. "Okay! Sounds great!" She acquiescently stuck her tongue out. It felt kinda awkward, letting it hang there in open empty space, but she kept her eyes closed and tried to find some romance in the anticipation. *Remember she's a professional...don't worry about looking embarrassing, it's not like you've been remotely suave up to now...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 26, 2016, 05:29:13 PM**

Emma crossed over to the bench and sat down next Flora, and smoothed out her thin prink dress. As she did so she saw Flora close her eyes and stick outt her tongue. emma took a deep breath turned her body to face flora and leaned in close. Floras face grew closer and her pink tongue stuck out from those dark red lips, as Emma lips came with range of Floras, Emma stuck out her tongue, at first Emmas tongue just lightly brushed floras sat the tips, but as Emma moved in closer, her tongue made full contact. this was not a tongue lashing as seen in some film, it was a nervous slow uncoordinated tongue kiss from two really inexperienced girls, they were actually licking each others face far more than they wre touching tongues. Unlike Flora Emma kept her eyes open

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 26, 2016, 05:43:03 PM**

Flora jumped slightly when their tongues collided. Emma wasn't forceful or controlling like Rose and Marita were; she almost seemed as awkward as Flora was. Flora remembered that this was Emma's first kiss; with a jolt of shock she realized that she was actually more experienced than her partner for the first time.

But still, Emma had been very clear that things moved at her pace, so Flora kept her tongue submissively reacting to Emma's, and her hands stayed by her side. She made sure not to do anything to prevent Emma from progressing at her own pace.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 26, 2016, 07:59:53 PM**

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as the tongue lashing continued Emmas lips closed upon Floras. at the first contact(and soft brush) emmas tongue reteatd into her mouth anmd she made stronger contact, feeling Floras mouth againmst hers. Emma keep her left hand in her lap but her right moved to touch floras left arm. emma murmured as she settled into the kiss.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 27, 2016, 03:26:39 PM**

Flora felt Emma progress to hand- and lip-contact, and acquiescently assumed a more active role in the kiss. She felt a subdermal thrill when Emma's hand brushed her arm and kept her lips pressed against Emma's, giving Emma complete unrestricted access to whatever part of Flora's body she wanted.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 27, 2016, 10:49:57 PM**

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emmas moved her arm up to Floras shoulder to brace herself , and began kissing flora passionately, as the kiss moved past a minute, Emmas mouth opened while nibbling on floras lips and her tongue slid briefly into floras mouth. realizing what was going on., emma took a deep breath and began to massage floras tongue with hers inbetween locking lips with her.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 29, 2016, 02:54:45 AM**

Flora’s eyes flew open in surprise when Emma’s tongue entered her mouth. She quickly reciprocated, brushing her lips against Emma’s while still allowing the vixen to maintain control.

“Mmmmm…” she breathed, getting into the passion of the kiss. In a burst of emotion she almost got her hands into the action, but had to will herself to remain submissive. For a folf who let Marita, Rose and Marie dominate the flow of the lovemaking, she was having to remain surprisingly restrained with Emma. She was just getting hungry for the good stuff.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 01, 2016, 10:47:07 PM**

After nearly 3 full minutes, emma finally broke away, Floras tongue slidings out of her mouth I.. Uh' her face grew redder as she realized what had just happened. not only had she just had her first kiss, she had also french kissed for the first time ' so.. um.. how did i do? for my first , I mean/ She asked Flora as Emma moved away from her and to give the folf a bit of personal space. Emma clasped her hands together in her lap.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 01, 2016, 11:03:37 PM**

Flora panted loudly when the kiss broke. "You did awesome!" she beamed encouragingly. "Very receptive!" She genuinely did enjoy Emma's eagerness, not to mention the mental excitement at being Emma's first gave Flora her own motivation for the kiss to go well. "It's a shame you waited so long to start giving nookie, cause a lot of boys in your past missed out." She smiled crookedly, hoping Emma didn't think too hard about what she just said. "But its lucky for me, cause otherwise I wouldn't have been your first..."

She leaned forward. "If you're looking for tips, I think you should use your hands a lot more. Kissing is awesome, but it's just one aspect of foreplay. You should focus on exploring your whole partner's body, not just the tongue." It was kinda exciting for Flora, being the knowledgeable partner for once.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2016, 04:43:30 PM**

ALright' emma said nervously " this next kiss I'll.. touch your chest.. I suppose. um. third kiss we'll undress completely..after all i'm here to get a sample from you . so.. here we go she said leaning in and kissing Flora on the lips.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 03, 2016, 05:03:54 PM**

Flora liked that idea, and excitedly returned the kiss, making sure not to seem too eager. She had to let Emma retain control after all...it was interesting being with someone more insecure than the older women in the apartment. Flora wanted to make sure Emma had as good a first time as Rose had given Flora.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2016, 05:33:44 PM**

Emma settled into the kiss and began to passionately masage Floras tongue with her own. Her hands moved up to the hem of Flora's robe and began to untie the robe, gradually revealed the folfs breasts. once the breasts were partly visible Emma gradually began to caress them with her claws, feeling the soft, supple and warm breasts bebnath her claws. each passing second , a bond was forming between Emma and Flora, the king you form with a significant other.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 03, 2016, 05:54:54 PM**

"Mmmmm..." Flora murmured happily, closing her eyes and letting Emma expose her. She relished Emma's touch; she had a gentle hesitance that none of the other girls had. "Mind if I reciprocate?" she asked during a short lull where they caught their breath. Her robe had draped lower and was hanging on her shoulders.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 03, 2016, 08:11:13 PM**

Su-Sure' mma said nervousness in her voice. i -i hope i'm doing ok' she said as she ran her hand over Floras right breast.."I.. i think I'm enjoying this.. to tell you the truth.. I.. never thought i'd like kissing another girl.. as much as i'm enjoying kissing you..'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 03, 2016, 10:44:55 PM**

Flora smiled and reached out to massage Emma's chest through her pink dress. Her fingers pressed into soft warm skin. Emma's breasts were springier than Flora's despite being much larger; Flora suspected it had something to do with living most of her life braless. "I never thought I'd kiss someone my own age," she whispered back, smiling, "you're probably the first teenager I've ever had as a real friend." Hands shaking, she slowly slid Emma's dress straps over her shoulders, letting her dress pool around her waist. Then she excitedly made to undo Emma's bra, excited to see her ample bosom in its full glory.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 07, 2016, 04:46:13 PM**

emma helped flora work off her clothes, and worked off floras robe exposing floras breasts to her and he breasts to flora ' nice rack' she said 'good siz and softness' she said blushing.' i'm glad to have met you..' she said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 07, 2016, 05:54:23 PM**

"Not as nice as yours!" blushed Flora. She'd always thought her breasts were smaller than average, but Emma would never have that problem. Her chest was huge, rounded and perky despite being weighted down by gravity. Trembling with excitement, Flora clasped her hands around them and pressed her fingers into their soft skin. She re-engaged the kiss, enjoying the multiple points of skin-to-skin contact. Without a robe to hide it, her erection fully betrayed her enthusiasm; she hoped Emma wouldn't find it too odd.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2016, 04:11:01 PM**

Emma threw her arms around Flora as the girls resumed kissing. Emma pressed her chestto Floras, and pinned Flora against the bench, emma began to ran he hands down floras back, feeling floras fur beneath her hands. she stroked floras tail feeling the folfs puffy tail through her fingers. she hadnt notices floras privates as she was busy snogging flora, emma placed her tongue as deep into floras outh as she could, and loked down at the folf and the makeout continued.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2016, 06:17:56 PM**

Flora's hands trailed down to Emma's butt as the vixen pinned her against the bench. She was still consciously making sure her privates didn't rub up against Emma, since she wasnt sure if the girl would be pleased or disgusted by them, but otherwise Flora relished the feeling of their bodies pressing against each other.

She was amazed at how turned on she was right now; the anticipation of waiting for Emma to begin the "collection" act was tantalizing.

Title: **Around the Folf**

Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2016, 08:04:42 PM**

After another minute' Emma broke the kiss and went over to collect the collection device. having done so, she came back over to Flora " This might sting a little ' it er.. shouldnt take more than a minute to fill' she said as she clamped on the device.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2016, 08:24:25 PM**

"Eep!" Flora yelped in surprise when the device was attached; it looked like a long thin tube, hinged lengthwise when open, but at the moment it was clasped around her flytrap and rapidly venting the air out. She gulped nervously as the suction got tighter. "Errr, what happens now?" she stammered. "Do we need to turn it on or...?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2016, 08:28:10 PM**

its forcing you to release, by building up pressure. course the pressure should already be there since i stimulated you' Emma said.' once you start filling it up, it shouldnt take more than a minute to fill." once its full, i'll slide it off of you.. and we're done.' She said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2016, 08:48:43 PM**

All of a sudden the device began vibrating, causing Flora to pant in surprise. The sensation was unlike anything she'd experienced before, very subdued but increasingly impossible to ignore. Like Emma explained, Flora felt her orgasm brimming slowly, building in intensity at an agonizingly slow rate, and she slowly degenerated into her embarrassingly high-pitched yelps, squealing pitifully as the machine worked its magic on her. She was sweating profusely and clutching Emma for support when her climax finally reached its brimming point, sending her muscles contracting and lasting almost a full minute before the machine beeped that it has obtained a full sample.

The vibration stopped and Flora instinctively crossed her legs tenderly. "Oh my god..." she murmured, resting her sweat-soaked head on Emma's shoulder. "That was...*intense...*"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 12, 2016, 05:02:57 PM**

Emma renmoved the device and slid a top over it as she did so Kojurro came back in ' good! you got the sample. i'll take that to the lab for testing ' He loked at his watch. ah you have 20minutes before the session ends . so if you want to spend some more time ' getting acquainted' you are free to do so.' he said as he carried the device out of the room. he closed the door behind him, and emma began getting dressed again.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 12, 2016, 05:14:09 PM**

Flora slipped her robe back on. "I guess I'll see you soon," she smiled at Emma. "According to Kojurro's schedule, he needs to give me a physical after this. Do you know if there's a place I could buy a phone? Then we could reconnect at the Jacuzzi once my physical is over." She gave a sideways grin. "I'm glad you took my...unusual anatomy...as well as you did. Most people are surprised, or at least feel the need to comment on it, but you took it stride. Guess that's why you've got this job, huh?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 12, 2016, 05:20:55 PM**

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theres a phone store on the second floor' emma said ' thats where i got my phone. decent price too. i. uh. didnt look at your member, i was focused on your face, which is very nice to look at. gawking at your member would have been awkward.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 12, 2016, 05:26:29 PM**

"Fair enough", blushed Flora. She had shown no such restraint herself. "I'll check out the phone store. Thanks for everything Emma, super glad I got to meet you."

Flora wasn't sure how to keep her voice casual, and was hoping desperately not to make another embarrassing mistake as Emma was leaving. *Is this what having a crush feels like?*, she wondered to herself. Emma made her feel this weird desire, this longing to be accepted. It was something she'd never felt with Marita, Rose, and Marie. She wanted Emma to see her as an equal.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 16, 2016, 12:19:59 PM**

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well, we have a few minutes. you wanna makeout one more time? Emma Asked I'm up for it, if you like.' she blushed ' cause.. well i really enjoyed doing this with you.. and we do have 20minutes before you have to go to your next appointment.. ' oh.. ' she pulled out a pirece of paper and wrote on on it. i'm in room 113 floor5. and thats my number 353-177-9800/ so.. just give me a call when you wanna do something.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 16, 2016, 01:35:11 PM**

Flora took the paper excitedly. She'd never gotten a girl's number before. "Sure!" she said excitedly. "Though you know you can't use your job as an excuse any more, since we're all done," she teased, before leaning over and resuming a new kiss with Emma. This time she was more forward since Emma seemed to be more comfortable with herself.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 19, 2016, 11:29:59 PM**

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emmas claws fund their way to floras breasts and as the kiss moved past a minute she began working off floras clothes. ' emma was enjoying the kissm, the feekll of her lips locked with floras the scrape of floras tongue against hers and the feel of her breasts pressd to Floras. emma was starting to consider flora and friend and not just because of the testing.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 19, 2016, 11:36:27 PM**

Flora's eyes lit up as Emma stripped her robe off. Quickly moving to reciprocate, she dexterously unbuttoned Emma's shirt and bra and slipped them around her waist. Still making out passionately, she gauged that Emma was receptive to her advances and so she removed her dress entirely.

Before long, they were standing arms wrapped around each other with their clothes strewn in a wide pile around them. Flora felt herself wishing that the kiss could last forever.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 20, 2016, 11:35:26 AM**

Emma massages Floras tongue with her own, their tongues moving back and forth into each others mouths, her hands wre pressed tightly to floras pink breasts feeling the folf .'flora.. when we go to my apartment.. i want you to have sex with me. as much as you like however you like..because flora.. this has been the most fun i've ever had i had no idea making out could be this much fun.. she whispered betwen the kiss ' i want .. more.. and you've been an xcellent partner so far..' emma then moved mouth down towards floras right nipple and began to lick her there with her tongue..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 20, 2016, 12:41:18 PM**

Flora blinked excitedly, floored at Emma's offer. "I'll head up there as soon as Kojurro is done with me!" she whispered excitedly. Pressing her hands into Emma's buttocks, she pulled their bodies closer together. "I've also never had this much fun kissing someone..." she admitted. "I think I... *really* like you..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 23, 2016, 10:48:53 PM**

Hmm. Feelings mutual' Emma said and began to suckle vigorously at the folfs pink breasts. If you had told Emma a hour previously that she would not only kiss another girl but fondle her breasts with her mouth, she would have looked at you like you were from Mars. Yet.. here she was, fully naked with another girl, who was not only reciprocating her advances but had indicated a strong physical attraction to her.Emma felt Flora squeeze her tail, and a shudder ran through her.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 24, 2016, 06:48:25 PM**

As their fooling around grew more intense, Flora grew bolder with exploring her lover's body. Reciprocating Emma's breastplay with some tongue action of her own, Flora also ran her fingers down Emma's flank and fondled between the girl's legs. "You get me so hot and bothered like this and I'm gonna have an embarrassing boner during Kojurro's physical," she teased jokingly.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 27, 2016, 03:46:40 PM**

well, now we wouldn't want that.. now would we? Emma said betwen kissing floras breasts. emma moved her mouth up to floras and the dark rd lips locked together once more and emma pressed her body forecely against floras. emma felt her breasts bounce off flora and moaned as flora's member rested against her abdomen.' this.. is something i'm been looing for emma thought.. but... without another girl? Could i really be a lesbian?
- kojjurro entered, to find the girls making out in the mude on the bench' um.. sorry to break up the frenching, but flora you are due for your physical' he said tapping his clipbioard

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 27, 2016, 03:58:59 PM**

Flora smiled as Emma pressed closer. Emma had such an eager attitude, Flora loved how she felt like the vixen was just as excited as Flora to blaze new trails in her love life and mature into seasoned lovers.

Then she peeped in surprise when Kojurro entered the room just as suddenly and with the same unfortunate timing as last time. "Oh my, I'm sorry to keep you waiting doctor!" she exclaimed, standing up abruptly. "I guess I'll see you soon, Emma," she smiled warmly, migrating from the bench to the exam table which covered in a thin sheet of rolled hygienic paper.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2016, 08:06:35 PM**

Emma got dressed again and straightened her headfur.. ' er.. yeah..i'll... i'll see you later Flora.. just call me once we're done and we'll go get something to eat.. or something.." she aded as she walked past kojuuro..'so , now that the job is done, when i will get the creds for doing this?' 2-3 days I think.' Kojuuro said' you agreed on 500 creds right/ 5000 creds, was what i was offered' Emma said "oh.. well i'm have to go check. but you should get your money in that time period. thanks for your help miss emma.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2016, 08:12:50 PM**

"I'll let you know!" said Flora cheerily as Emma left. "So, what did this physical entail again?" She asked the doctor, quite pleased with herself that despite Emma turning her on so intensely, she'd managed to retain at least the dignity of being flaccid for her follow-up exam. "And you can start whenever you're ready, Kojurro..." she assured him.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 31, 2016, 04:06:01 PM**

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a general heal exam, testing your strength, weight and general health ' the doctor replied ' we'll start with your hearing..' he pulled out a box full of stethoscopes.' then check to see about your privates and chest.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 31, 2016, 05:21:09 PM**

"Okay!" Flora acquiesced. When Kojurro started prodding various parts of her body with the stethoscope, she took deep inhales and exhales like she remembered doing as a kid for the doctor.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 02, 2016, 07:17:06 PM**

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good' the doctor said ' ears are clear of obstruction, tongue looks healthy, as do lungs' forgive me' he pinched her chest and felt it ' good' no lumps..' now for your scrotum ' he felt down there ' again, no lumps.. ' after 15 minutes he stopped ' a;tohht every loks like its in order..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 02, 2016, 07:26:27 PM**

Flora shifted uncomfortably as Kojurro palpated her testicles for longer than she thought a doctor would need to locate any warning signs, but when he announced they were healthy she felt a wash of relief. It had been many years since she'd had a physical, the opportunity not really presenting itself while living on the fringes of society, so she was quite pleased to hear nothing had manifested since her youth. "Awesome," she grinned. "Sounds like I get a clean bill of health! Thank you Kojurro!"

She glanced at her robe. She now has a few hours break before her next test, and she was suddenly feeling very hungry. She resolved to obtain a cell phone and some food before heading upstairs to see Emma. "Is there anything else, or can I see you later?" she smiled at Kojurro.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 08, 2016, 01:16:50 PM**

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just need you to sign these pieces of ppr vreifying that these were tests you agreed to' Kojuuro said giving her two pieces of pa[per and a pen ' once you sign them, you'll be free to go..' he said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 08, 2016, 01:37:34 PM**

Flora signed them hastily. "See you later doctor!" she exclaimed happily, putting her robe back on and returning the the hallway. Her stomach had that hollow ache that sneaks up out of nowhere, and all she could think of was locating somewhere to get some fast food.

But to her surprise, her shortcut through the courtyard led her across Marita, Rose and Marie at the end of their tour. "Hi gals!" she beamed. "Say, can I interest y'all in some pizza?" she pointed at a small pizzeria with an outdoor patio. "It's such a beautiful day, we can eat outside and enjoy the sunshine!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 09, 2016, 07:10:32 PM**

On the patio of the pizzeria, a fox-esque figure sat, barely distinguishable beneath a set of odd, fitted metallic pieces and a dark, sleeveless robe. At Flora's exhuberant outburst, the figure's ears twitched a few times, and he looked up.
Huh... Never seen those girls before. Wonder if they're the new arrivals I heard about yesterday...
He mused, getting up and walking over towards them casually...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 09, 2016, 08:44:27 PM**

Flora saw a cloaked vulpine approaching them and waved in greeting. "Hiya!" she grinned. "My name's Flora. I'm new! Wanna join us for pizza?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 09, 2016, 11:16:48 PM**

The cloaked vulpine froze for a moment when Flora noticed him, ears flicking upright as he tensed briefly.
Okay.... So much for subtlety. How should I play this... Okay, be cool, be cool Yu... Play it cool...
The cloaked figure smiled a little, walking over to the others.
"Oh, hi there, Flora. A pleasure to meet you. Name's Yurei. But you can call me Rei. And I'd love to, if it's okay with the rest of you guys"
He chuckled a little, smirking some.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 09, 2016, 11:35:07 PM**

"Of course!" Flora beamed. "Let's go!"

She quickly led the way into the pizzeria, arguably terminating the conversation less politely than she could have, but she was famished and wanted to at least get the seating and ordering happening ASAP.

"Sit anywhere you'd like, darling," the waitress scribbled something in her notebook. "I'll be by to get your drinks in a jiffy, yeah?"

"Oh, I'm ready to order now! I'll have a large slice of vegetarian pizza please!" Flora piped up excitedly.

The waitress shrugged. "Alrighty." She glanced at the others, in case they were ready to order before even sitting down as well.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 10, 2016, 07:41:29 AM**

Marita motioned to Yurei to take a seat at the stall first ' Hi Rei. I'm M.arita this is rose" rose smiled at him' and Marie. Flora here is our new roommate. full of energy, and very eager. comes with being a teen." she then turned to the waitress 'Ii'll have a diet coke if you have it, but as for pizza i'll need a few minutes to look at the menu..-
rose took a seat across from Flora, and set the brochures that she had picked up as part of the tour of the facility, down on the table in front of her.' she grabbed one pf the pizza menus and began looking through it.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 10, 2016, 04:08:21 PM**

Yurei sat down next to Flora, casually flicking a menu open.
"I'll have some mint tea, if you have any.".
He said to the waitress, leaning back in his chair.
"So, haven't seen you ladies around before. I presume that you just got here recently."
He chuckled, glancing around a little...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 10, 2016, 06:15:21 PM**

"Drink for you, miss?" the waitress turned to Flora.

"Hmmm, ooh yeah how about something stiff." Flora glanced at the menu but was not able to immediately locate the drinks. "What's the strongest thing you got?"

"Uh...beer."

"K, that'll do!" Flora turned back to Yurei as the waitress left to grab their drinks. "We got here super recently, just yesterday in fact! Hardly even know my way around. Already took my first tests though, and I'm *loving* what I've seen so far! This apartment and this gig was really a lifesaver;" she smiled sincerely. "We were in a bad place. What about you? Are you a test subject here?"

She hoped he said yes; she hadn't seen another test subject, and would love a chance to talk to someone going through the same thing as her. She resolved to try and become this person's friend.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 10, 2016, 07:11:38 PM**

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this isnt 20 questions, Flora' Rose said ' let him get a word in edgewise' she laughed . ' Yes we are new to this town ' she said " we've moving from town to town, trying to find jobs.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 10, 2016, 09:59:49 PM**

Yurei chuckled a little, raising an eyebrow at Flora.
"Bad place, huh? Guess it's a good thing you made your way here. After all, the world would be a lesser place without such lovely ladies in it"
He joked, then seemingly faded and fell through his seat, disappearing for a moment before seeming to pop out of the ground behind Rose and Marita, then repeating the trick and appearing behind Flora.
"Am I a test subject here? Well, I suppose you could put it that way"
He said coolly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 10, 2016, 10:27:48 PM**

"Eep!" gasped Flora in surprise when appearing behind her. "Holy crap that is *so cool!*" Her mind filled with questions and she had to mentally restrain herself from launching into an excited interrogation; as Rose had warned her, now was merely the time for initial pleasantries. She resolved to keep a lid on her natural curiosity to avoid intimidating potential friends.

The waitress returned with drinks. "Y'all need another minute to look at the menu?" she asked. Somehow Yurei's trick hadn't phased her; she'd been working here long enough to have witnessed the test subjects do plenty of weird things.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 11, 2016, 10:42:37 PM**

Yurei chuckled, slipping back into his seat with a small smirk.
"It would be, if I could actually keep it under control and not have to wear a device to keep me from falling through everything. Being able to wear clothes would be a nice change of pace, too."
He joked, then smiled at the waitress.
"Chicken Alfredo pizza for me. And whatever the ladies want, too. I'll cover it"
He replied glibly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2016, 02:19:45 PM**

"Wow..." breathed Flora. "But it's so *strong*! Even if you don't have control over it, you're like an X-Man. I have the opposite problem; apparently I'm like, *barely* psionic, so I'm kinda lucky they're even interested in keeping me here."

She brushed the fur on her forearm. "My power is I can change my appearance, but it takes forever for the new look to grow in. We're talking months. But my pink fur, my body shape and...some other oddities...are all natural, I've never have any cosmetic surgeries or implants."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 13, 2016, 02:03:17 AM**

Yurei cast an appreciative glance over Flora's body, grinning a little.
"So, that's all natural, hmm? Well that's a pleasant surprise."
He joked, then, glancing around a bit, undid the upper chest of his cloak and pulling it open to reveal a large, black metal device implanted into the center of his chest, which pulsed faintly with red energy.
"See, you're lucky that your power is fairly minor. You don't have to worry about it going awry and possibly killing you."
He said, closing his cloak and looking away...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 13, 2016, 12:32:12 PM**

when did you get the implant? Marita asked , gazing with interest at it before Yurei covered himself. " i'm guessing it was to control your powers , huh?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 13, 2016, 04:44:24 PM**

"Hmmmm, didn't think about that," Flora mulled over. "That would be really scary. Good thing the scientists are watching over you."

The waitress arrived with Flora's pizza, and the folf tucked into it ravenously. "Ohhh, thank *fuck*," she gasped through mouthfuls of dough. "I am so hungry!" Downing an open mouthful with a heavy swallow of beer, she hiccuped painfully but with a sigh of satisfaction. "Oh my god, yes. This is the second-best pizza I have ever eaten."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 13, 2016, 05:00:57 PM**

Yurei nodded at Marita.
"They stuck this thing in me after one of the tests went wrong, and they had to cut me out of a ceiling I had gotten part of myself stuck in. Not a fun experience. And yeah, it inhibits my powers a bit, keeps them from kicking in involuntarily"
As the food arrived, he turned to his plate with a grin, looking back up at Flora.
"Only the second best, huh? Well, now you've gone and gotten my curiosity up as to what the best was"
He chuckled..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 13, 2016, 05:06:58 PM**

Flora grinned back. "Oh, that's quite a story."

So while they waited for the other's food to arrive, Flora told the tale of the time she visited a farm in the middle of nowhere.
(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XswUl4l6w3KtF51VLEeUfz3KIhClwQtRdIkk0VMZIwk/edit#)

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 13, 2016, 08:42:20 PM**

As Flora recounted her story, Yurei had to stop eating several times, either to chuckle lightly, or occasionally simply stare at Flora with a fascinated grin.

"Hmmm, well I can see how this would come in second to that much fun...".
He smirked as she finished her tale. Under the table, his free hand idly sought Flora's lap as he grinned conspiratorially at her...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 13, 2016, 10:48:50 PM**

How did your tests go today Flora?' Marie asked as she took a bite of the stuffed crust pepporoni pizza she had ordered ' i Trust everything is in working condition.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2016, 03:10:49 PM**

Flora's eyes widened in surprise at Yurei's touch, but she quickly composed herself and maintained eye contact with Marie. "They went perfect!" she replied happily. Under the table, her bare foot slithered forward to brush against Yurei's shoe. "I met this adorable girl named Emma! She's a fashion model but she's working at the facility to pay for school. I was going to meet her after lunch if you want to come along!" Her toes playfully snuck under the hem of Yurei's robe to tickle his bare skin, but above the table she paid him no heed.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 14, 2016, 05:06:17 PM**

Yurei chuckled a little, teasing his hand ever closer to Flora's crotch as he grinned at her.
"While I think I'd be hard pressed to find someone as adorable as the ladies in with right now, I suppose it would do me some good to meet a few more people, eh? I suppose my training can wait a bit"
He said smoothly, teasingly placing a foot on Flora's...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 14, 2016, 06:55:48 PM**

Sure, You can introduce her to us' marita said ' Let me guess she was one of those who administered your tests and yu two hit it off? You're getting bettr Flora!' the old saying goes " theres no better teacher than experience' and i'd like to learn more about her" How long has she been working there, for starters?"
- so thats what you mean by fun' Marie smirked as she heard floras story.' Well Well i certainly agree."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2016, 08:09:55 PM**

"I think she just started work here," Flora pondered. "At least, she said I was the first patient she ever worked with. She performed a very...specific function during my physical, but it didn't feel like one that would require special training."

The rest of her mind was trying to figure out how bold Yurei planned on getting with his hidden hand. *He's certainly not one to beat around the bush,* she thought with amusement, spreading her legs somewhat and letting the bottom of her robe come a bit undone under the table. *Thank god there's a tablecloth...*

"Uh, how did your tour of the facility go, Marie?" she asked quickly, fighting to keep her voice level.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 14, 2016, 08:25:05 PM**

Pretty boring actually" Marie replied as sh took a sip of her drink " The woman who was guiding us had a monotone voice, it was annoying afterawhile, so i tuned her out. Likely missed half of what she was talking abnout."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 14, 2016, 08:49:10 PM**

Yurei smiled a bit as he felt Flora shift her legs, lightly tracing his hand along her inner thigh and brushing it gently against her balls.
"Yeah, the tours here kinda blow. Maybe after we meet up with Emma, I could give you guys a more interesting one."
He said with a coy smirk...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 14, 2016, 09:29:01 PM**

"That would be awesome, Yurei!" Flora nodded quickly but took a slightly irregular breath. "You can show us...all the secret places that they wouldn't on the guided tour!" Her stomach did a belly flop as she fought to mask any reaction to his ever-so-slight stimulation. Thankful that her pink fur masked a faint blush, she grabbed her beer and took a long swig, using the seconds to get her bearings.

"What were some of the places you saw on the guided tour, Marita?" she asked, as her foot rubbed the back of Yurei's leg.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 15, 2016, 01:36:01 PM**

Yurei chuckled a little, stroking Flora's shaft experimentally as he grinned over at her.
"Oh, you bet I'll show you the parts the staff would NEVER show on the guided tours. Not like I blame 'em. They're of little interest to the general populace, after all."
He smirked, shifting a bit to contain his excitement at the feeling of Flora's foot on his leg...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 15, 2016, 10:22:39 PM**

Flora's heart was racing and sweat was pooling on her brow. Under his massaging grasp she quickly felt herself getting hard. *I hope we don't stand up to go on this tour soon...* she thought nervously.

She shot a glance at Yurei and noticed his shit-eating grin. *Having fun, are we?* she thought mischievously. *Enjoying making me squirm? Let's see how YOU handle yourself!* Shifting her own hand under the tablecloth, she slid it between the folds of Yurei's robe to find out how much clothing he had on underneath.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2016, 03:39:59 PM**

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it was just a general tour of the facility ' Marita said. " its a big place, at least several miles in area. Needed a beter tour guide though." She turned to Yurei. " and how long have you been here Yurei, if i may ask? And.. you can stop playing footsie with Flora at any time you know' She smirked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 20, 2016, 09:04:20 AM**

Yurei chuckled nodding at Marita.
"A few miles? This place is the size of a small city, and that's just the above-ground parts! I've been here for...huh, almost six years now, and I haven't even seen the whole place properly!"
He smirked, then gave a small shrug with his free hand.
"And I have no idea what you're talking about with footsies. I'm not doing anything of the sort~".
He added, the well-fitted pants he wore tightening further at Flora's touch...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 21, 2016, 11:15:01 AM**

Flora brazenly kept up the footsies, though taking care to make less noise. Trying and failing to slip her fingers into Yurei's waistline due to how tight his pants were, she bit her lip in surprise when the waitress appeared from somewhere behind her without warning.

"Let me take those plates," the waitress commented, placing receipts on the table. "You pay these up at the register when you're ready. Any of y'all need refills?"

"No, I'm good," Flora said hastily. *Did she see anything???* She returned her hand to her own lap, realizing that with lunch finishing, they were likely going to stand up soon. "Er, do we wanna do that tour now, then?" she said, smiling and hoping to maintain a straight face while Yurei continued stimulating her privates with impunity. She was getting more hot and bothered the longer it went. *If he doesn't stop soon, I'm going to embarrass myself so badly...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 21, 2016, 03:15:05 PM**

"Flora, why dont you call your friend -- Emma, wasnt it?- and have us meet her at a place of her choosing. there should be a public phone near the entrance." marita said getting up and heading towards the counter to pay.
_ we're good thank you. the food was good .' Marie demurred to the waitress.

_ So Yurei what made you decide to come to this place? was it recommended to you? Rose asked him.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 21, 2016, 06:17:16 PM**

Yurei chuckled a little, using his free hand to pull out a small cell phone and hand it over to Flora, grinning.
"Here, you might want to use this instead. Little... Easier."
He teased, rubbing his foot against Flora's as he circled her tip with his thumb, smirking idly as the waitress left, turning to Marita.
"Recommended? Heh, you could say that. Got placed here by some doctors after my powers started going somewhat out of control. Guess they were afraid I'd get seriously hurt if it kept up."
He joked, tail flicking a bit behind him...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 21, 2016, 06:31:46 PM**

Flora took the phone. "T-thanks Yurei..." She didn't know if she dared calling Emma in the middle of being stimulated. But at least it'll give her an excuse to not stand up right away...

Taking the slip of paper out of her pocket, she shakily dialed the number.

"Hi Emma..." she said when the other picked up. "It's Flora! We're down at the pizzeria in the courtyard. We met another experiment called Yurei, he's going to give us a tour of the facility. Wanna join us?" She tried to sound chipper, but something of a moan got caught in her throat at the very end. She realized she was leaking pre-ejaculate on Yurei's hand, and the thought left her flushing ruby red, so badly she feared her pink fur wouldn't be enough to disguise it.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 22, 2016, 09:23:24 PM**

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so, yurei, how much do you get paid to let them run tests on you? 1000 creds a month?' Marita asked..
-
hi flora.. well I'm kinda in the middle of something.. my place is kinda a mess..' Emma said " Yurei huh? .. sounds like an interesting guy.. anyway I'll see if i can make it down there,. Could you give me like 15 minutes? i need to freshen up a bit any way..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 22, 2016, 10:22:51 PM**

"T-that sounds good! See you soon!" Flora hung up. *Fifteen more minutes of this? I can't take that!* "I, uh, need to go use the bathroom!" she stammered, wrapping her robe around herself. Cinching her belt tight, she hobbled to the restrooms, trying to keep herself from panting with pent-up lust.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 22, 2016, 11:01:27 PM**

Yurei shrugged.
"Closer to 1500 a month, plus they pay for my living here. Helps that I've involved myself on a project of theirs, though."
He chuckled, standing up and shifting his robe slightly to make sure everything stayed hidden.

"Anyhow, I think I'm gonna hit the can real fast before I give the grand tour."
He added, stretching a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 22, 2016, 11:21:30 PM**

1500 is a good amount of creds' marita said ' and they give you a place to stay, which is nice too..' she stopped at yurei got up to use the bathroom. ' just.. um.. dont take too long.. because i want to see as much as possible before nighttime..'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 22, 2016, 11:28:45 PM**

Yurei grinned.
"Aww, but the nightlife is the best part!"
He replied as he made his way towards the bathrooms, smirking to himself...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2016, 12:24:02 AM**

(OOC: RP'd with Starfall via google docs)

Flora slammed the bathroom door behind her with a gasp. "Oh god!" she breathed, shuddering. "Oh fuck, I made it…" Her belt unraveled and her erection sprang forth to rest on the cold porcelain of the counter. Panting with relief at having escaped what was imminently going to be an embarrassing accident under the table, she took a look at herself in the mirror. Her face was flushed red and her fur was disheveled and sweaty. *Crap, no fucking way the girls didn't pick up on Yurei fondling me under the table…*

Well, something to worry about once she'd relived her pent-up heat. Staggering to the nearest stall, she shakily locked the door and began masturbating furiously, her breath catching in her throat with each pump and a turgid moan escaping her throat.

Yurei smirked, quickly peeking around to make sure he hadn't been followed, and, not seeing anyone nearby, quickly slipped through the door with an impish grin. "Hey, Flora? You in here?" He asked coyly, grinning as he spotted her feet under one of the stall doors. Leaning against it nonchalantly, he lightly rapped on it. "Anyone in there~?" He said lightly, ears pricked at the sounds from the stall…

Flora had almost completely retreated into her fantasies, and yelped in surprise when someone had completely silently entered the bathroom without warning. "Yurei! How did you...this is the girl's room!" In her shock she slipped off the toilet and skidded on the ground, one of her legs appearing underneath the stall and coming to a rest between his feet. "Owww...sorry, sorry!" she stammered, thoroughly embarrassed.

Yurei chuckled a little, slipping through the stall door with a soft grin, resolidifying and offering a hand to Flora. "Well, let's just say I've gotten pretty good at getting in and out of places unseen" He said lightly, casting a few looks at her shaft as he did. "Besides, nobody uses this bathroom ever. Hear it's got a few issues with some of the plumbing." He added with a coy smirk

Flora was sprawled on the floor, chest heaving and pupils dilated. Her robe was strewn out around her, fully exposing the lighter pink fur on her chest leading down to her crotch. But she quickly scrunched into a ball in shock when he phased through the door. "Jesus that's...that's really weird…" She quickly took his hand and laughed nervously. "Sorry, you just startled me." Also, you're totally a pervert coming into the woman's bathroom like that." Her tone was one of coy mirth, though, and she couldn't hide the twinkle in her eyes. "I could report you for being a sexual predator now, you know…"

Yurei gave her a rougish grin as he helped her up, then gave a slight tug, hoping to pull her into him. "Is that really all the thanks I get for coming to make sure you were alright? Geeze~" He retorted, lightly rubbing along her thigh as she got up. "And here I was, planning to do you a favor, too~" He chuckled, licking his lips slyly as he looked her over again. "You know, you should go without the robe more often…"

"Haha, keep hanging around me and you won't be disappointed...I'm a flaming nudist." Flora's chuckle caught in her throat as Yurei rubbed her thigh. "Oh god, you're gonna keep teasing me...please, you almost made me pop in the middle of lunch, I would have been mortified..." Her erection pressed pleadingly into his arm. She couldn't figure out what to say; she'd never been in a situation like this before, in a private place with a complete stranger who had her at a sexual disadvantage, struggling to control her urges while also unable to ask for the assistance she suspected he was more than prepared to give.

Yurei smiled lightly, tracing a hand along her length. "Keep teasing you? Mmm, wouldn't dream of it. After all, a gentleman never leaves a lady hanging." He teased, sliding his free hand down her back to appreciatively cup her butt. "And, since I can give you my full and undivided attention now~... Well, let's just say I wonder how much such a pretty girl can shoot." He said, voice gradually getting softer as he leaned in closer, practically whispering the last few words, his face almost touching hers..

Flora whimpered pitifully, her robe sliding unnoticed off her shoulders to pool at her feet. As

Yurei backed her into the stall wall, she pressed her lips against his desperately, surrendering complete control of her body to him. Her buttocks tightened under his grasp and every muscle in her body felt coiled and ready to shoot. "I'm not gonna last long at all..." she warned as she took a deep breath, "you might want to aim it away from you..."

Yu chuckled, stroking her shaft slowly as his other hand teased its way between her buttcheeks. "Mmmm, true… don't wanna have to explain that, now do we?" He smirked, gently spinning so that the pair ended up against the other wall of the stall, with Flora's back pressed against his front. He lightly nibbled along her neck, grinding his hips against her backside. "This any better?" He whispered, his still-covered arousal prodding between her cheeks…

Flora panted excitedly as Yurei took over her masturbation for her, her squeals of lust all the permission she could muster. Still, when she felt his stiffie pressing up against her backside, she paused. "Yuri?" she asked nervously. "I know we're pretty far along, but...I don't feel comfortable with, uh...any sort of sex right now. It's just, we haven't been tested for STDs...I can jack you off next, I promise, but I think we should avoid mixing fluids until we've both been tested...if you don't mind."

For the first time Flora felt a trickle of worry tighten her chest. If Yurei didn't feel like agreeing, she was in a very very bad position...

Yurei smiled some, lightly sliding a hand down between the pair, letting it rest just under Flora's tail. "That works for me, Flora. If it makes you more comfortable, than I'd be more than okay with waiting. And you don't have to worry about taking care of me. I'll be fine, at least until later...that is, if you want." He murred, lightly circling a finger around her tailhole. "Though I'll warn you now...I can be quite the kinky pervert…" He whispered teasingly, once again lightly kissing her neck…
Flora felt relief wash through her as he acquiesced to waiting until they were tested. They lived in a laboratory, how difficult could it be to find STD tests? "Thanks Yurei..." she panted gratefully. "And I'm not one to turn down a fair exchange...I was laying it on almost as thick as you were out there you know..." To show she meant business, she leaned one hand back and lightly rubbed the bulge in his pants, teasing it for just a moment. "Also it'll give you motivation..." she smiled mischievously, "the better you give, the better you're gonna get..."

Yu chuckled, licking his lips as he ground against Flora's hand. "Well, now. You've certainly gotten me interested~." He teased, pressing his finger lightly into her as he circled her tip with his other hand. "And you know, there are lots of ways for us to...fool around, without any risk of actually catching anything…" He added, nuzzling along her neck lightly. "Oh, the things we could get up to…"

Flora yelped as Yurei slid a single finger into her tail hole, and she had to quickly brace herself with both hands against the wall. She'd never tried anything penetrative before, and wild trepidation quickly subsided as she realized it felt amazing, the initial pain quickly subsiding as he stimulated her prostate. Her moans became higher-pitched and she squeezed her eyes shut as she felt her abdomen tense up. "Oh god I'm gonna...I'm..." Her words died in her throat as an orgasm roared up that quickly engulfed her entire lower body in sensation. A deep cry escaped her throat and she arched her back, locked her legs and painted the wall with a hot splash of seed.

Yurei grinned and murred, continuing to stroke her as she rode out her orgasm, lightly wiggling his finger inside her as he did. As the last few spurts dribbled out of her tip, he slid his hand along it, collecting as much as he could, then made a small show of licking it up. "Mmm….my, my...you certainly can make a mess. But a very, very tasty one~" he practically cooed to her, smirking a little. "So, does that make up for the teasing earlier, or do I owe you a few more?" he teased, nipping her neck affectionately…

Flora's legs felt like rubber and she sank exhausted to the ground. She noticed through weary half-lidded eyes that Yurei didn't seem as worried about STDs as she was. "It made up for it..." she panted, "and then some." She laid her head against the unsoiled wall. "My legs need a rest before we go back out to the others. But actually..." her eyes flashed excitedly. "I think this puts me at the perfect height." Drawing him nearer, she unzipped his pants, excited to see what he brought to show.

Yurei blushed brightly, smiling a little. He liked to think he was slightly above average in size, but he hoped Flora would agree. He'd hate to disappoint her, especially since he was already beginning to grow a bit fond of her. "Mmm, well...Since you're so eager, and you look so comfy down there~" He smirked, reaching down and lightly ruffling her hair as he slipped his pants down a bit for her, giving her better access to his package. *Oh, this will be fun…* he thought to himself. *Wonder how much kinky stuff I can get her into…*

Flora nodded appreciatively and her eyes lit up when she saw the goods. *My heavens, those jeans were hiding a lot...* she quickly got to work massaging his scrotum, biting her lip playfully as she toyed with him, taking her time in revenge for all the agony he'd put her through. She examined every detail intently, relishing the chance to explore a more masculine element of sexuality than what she'd got to see with Marita and the other girls.

She couldn't stop looking in particular at his tip. At first, her mind wondered what made it look so different to her own, until she realized her was uncircumcised. *How odd...* she thought to herself, spreading the foreskin and revealing the glans underneath. As he hardened, she watched the skin disappear into the length of his shaft. So enrapt was she in her studies that she almost forgot to keep stimulating him, and with a start she traced his shaft with her fingers. "I can't believe how naughty we're being," she grinned up at him as she began pumping. "Here I am, sitting naked in a public bathroom, beating off some guy I just met...this was not where I saw myself when I woke up this morning you know..."

Yu chuckled a little, though it quickly faded into a soft, throaty moan as Flora started stroking him. "Really? Because this is exactly where I hoped to end up. Getting to fool around someplace just a little public, with the most beautiful girl I've ever seen. Only way today could get better would be if things got kinkier." He joked lightly, shifting a bit so he could rub Flora's shaft with a foot "But that can wait. After all, don't wanna force you into things or freak you out too much~" He added, giving her a warm, impish grin, humping against her hand a little

Flora increased the pace as her other hand darted down to massage his balls. "Sure, we're starting off a bit vanilla, but give it time," she grinned. "I'm not going anywhere, and I think we're a pretty good match. I bet you've got more than one session's worth of ideas to try out."

She leaned forward and licked his tip, just a single light brush with her tongue. "You better warn me now before you cum..." she cautioned, noting the position they'd assumed left her right in the line of fire. "As much as I bet you'd love to make a mess all over my pretty face..."

Yurei smirked, panting a little as Flora teased his balls. "Oh, I've got plenty of sessions worth of ideas. And maybe a few places to show you later~" He teased, licking his lips. "And as much as I'm sure you'd love to get a nice, messy facial, I'll be sure to warn you, lovely. Hate to get anyone too jealous of us, after all." He joked, running a foot along her leg…

Flora traced his tip with her finger, keeping her pace rapid and her attention transfixed on his crotch. She loved seeing his sharp intakes of breath, the bulging of his veins at her touch. She licked it a few more times experimentally. It was a bitter taste, more musky than what it had been like when she went down on Marita. She felt a deep desire to take him in her mouth all the way, and after a few more minutes she couldn't resist. "Let's put your chivalry to the test…" she teased, running her tongue along the length of his shaft before closing her lips around his tip.

Yu blushed bright red, letting out a soft, eager moan as Flora's mouth enveloped him. "O-oh, you'll see~. Still want that warning, or are you more in the mood for a taste~?" He teased shakily, reaching out and lightly rubbing her ear. His hips tensed some, resisting the urge to buck forward into Flora's warm maw. "Mmmmf, gods are you amazing~" He exhaled, tail thumping against the wall behind him…

Flora purred as she continued pumping his shaft. "Not until you've been tested, but after that you can look forward to finishing wherever you like...you'll find I'm a very willing receiver."

Resuming the blowjob, she hummed a low rhythm from the back of her throat, a tuneless sound that vibrated her lips and cheeks as she pushed his cock deeper into her mouth. It was a trick she'd always thought would feel amazing, and Yurei seemed like a good opportunity to try it out.

Yu moaned more passionately, hips bucking forward a bit into Flora's ministrations. "W-well then you're probably going to want to move pretty soon, Flora…" He murmured, eyes shutting a bit as he felt an all-too-familiar pressure building up in his core, his cock twitching in anticipation of his coming release…

Flora narrowed her focus and gave his penis her full attention. She was enjoying the blowjob, but should she keep going? How close could she predict the payload before it happened? Part of her wanted to feel the swelling of his urethra as it ejaculated, and another part was reminding her that oral sex had a very low chance of passing STDs...

A few seconds passed, and she had just made up her mind to play it safe and downgrade to a handjob when she felt the first spray of salty cum hit the back of her throat. Yelping in surprise, she pushed him out and received a faceful all over her face, splashing onto her forehead, eyelids and snout. "Yurei!" she spluttered, rubbing her eyes. Luckily she'd closed them just in time.

A few seconds passed, and she glanced up at him, not looking particularly upset. "Welp, you did warn me, but I wasn't fast enough." She wiped some off her cheek and watched it drip onto her breasts. Luckily semen in the mouth and on skin has a very low chance of transmission, so all things considered she wasn't too worried. "Looks like I might have to freshen up a bit before we go back outside..."

Yurei blushed, still a little shaky as he came down from his post-orgasmic high, noticing that he had unintentionally given Flora a facial. "Oh..oh damn, sorry Flora! I...you were...oh, wow, I am SO sorry…" He stammered, grabbing some toilet paper and using it to gently wipe her face off. Finally collecting himself enough to notice that she didn't seem overly upset, he made eye contact and gave her a small, earnest frin. "Heh, well, you still look beautiful to me." He said sincerely, blushing some…

Flora giggled. "It happens, no hard feelings." With his help she got to her feet and staggered to the sink. "It let me know for sure that you enjoyed yourself right up to the end. That was the goal, after all." Splashing water on her face and chest, she wiped herself down with a bunch of paper towels and took a deep breath. "Wish I had makeup, we need to look presentable for Emma and the others. Speaking of which, we should probably get going." She flashed him a grin. "It's been a hell of a bathroom break."

Yu smirked, walking up behind Flora and giving her a quick, one-armed hug around the middle, then a peck on the cheek. "Heh, that is true. Think we should come up with some kinda alibis?" He chuckled, keeping his arm around her midsection as he used his other hand to roughly fix his hair. "I mean, they might think something untoward happened~" he teased, grinning slightly goofily…

"I don't think they'll notice if we just play it cool," Flora winked. Grabbing her robe off the floor and shaking it, she slipped it back on and led the way out the door. "But hang back a bit, let's not return as a pair, K?"

Yurei grinned, giving her a knowing smile as the two left. *Heh...what a girl…* He thought to himself, grabbing his robe and slipping through the ground a few seconds after Flora had left...

Fifteen minutes later, Flora came skipping back to the table. "Is Emma here yet?" she asked excitedly. "It's around the time she was going to show up, right? I hope I didn't miss her!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 24, 2016, 07:51:08 AM**

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man you mjust have really had to go' Marie xsaid ' 15 minutes usually means diarrhea or something like that.. and she hasbnt arrived yt, but..' marie scanned the crowd and saw a wixen in a red dress coming towards them. here she cmes, I think" she sm,iled as Emma came up " Hi. Um is Flora-- oh there she is. Hi Flora, sorry I'm a little late. place was in worse shape than i thought. May I Join you ladies? i havent had much to eat.' emma admitted
_ Not at all, please have a seat" Marita said " i'm Marita, thats rose and thats Marie. Floras told us that you're a new assistant here.. or.." Intern really. i was hired to help in running tests on Flora' Emma said taking a seat next to Rose and across from Flora." So far so good..'; she smirked' i havent cut off anything of Floras thats very important."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2016, 06:58:18 PM**

Flora grinned. "No trouble at all Emma! Glad you could make it! There's one more of us named Yurei, he's in the restroom right now, but he's the one going to give us an unofficial tour of the facility. You should grab a slice to go, their vegetarian pizza is to die for!"

She pinched the shoulder of Emma's dress. "Oooh you look so pretty in this! What fabric is that?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 24, 2016, 08:19:54 PM**

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its cotton ' nothing really to get excited over.. as for pizza, well i'll just have a slice of pepperoni. stuffed crust, if they have it..' she said. i'll get it boxed to go, i suppose if you are all headed out..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 24, 2016, 08:19:58 PM**

Just as Flora mentioned him, Yurei made his way back over to the table, grinning broadly.
"Did I hear someone mentioning me over here?".
He joked, nonchalantly pulling up his chair with a small chuckle. He gave a cheerful nod to Emma, smirking a bit.
"And you must be Emma. A real pleasure to meet you.".
He added suavely, leaning back in his seat a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 24, 2016, 08:25:08 PM**

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you must be yurei. charmed ' emma said.' i'm just here to say hi and meet some of Floras friends" she said as the waitress brought her a menu..' a dietcoke and a dtuffed crust pepperoni.. to go please' emma requested.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2016, 08:25:49 PM**

The waitress brought her a triangle cardboard box containing a large slice of pepperoni, as well as the drink. "The gentleman asked that it be put on his bill, so you're good to go," she nodded.

"Thanks Yurei!" Flora smelled the aroma of spiced pepperoni. "Can you eat while you walk Emma? We should get this tour started!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 24, 2016, 08:31:57 PM**

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well thank you yurei. next time you need a drink, i'll get it for you. well, within reason. I'm not made of money" she laughed" i'll try , Flora. Pizza really is supposed to be enjoyed sitting down.. Its not like fries, which you can eat on the go..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 24, 2016, 08:46:47 PM**

Yurei smiled a little, giving a nonchalant wave of his hand.
"Oh, don't worry about it. It's the least I can do, honestly.".
He said lightly, grinning languidly.
"Now, what sorts of sights would you guys like to see around here?".
He asked, humming a small tune to himself.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 24, 2016, 09:10:59 PM**

"Knowing the sights is your job, silly!" giggled Flora. "I haven't seen anything except my room and the insides of various labs. How about you show us what residents do for fun around here?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 25, 2016, 01:36:08 PM**

Yu grinned, giving Flora a playful wink.
"Hey, just wanted to know what sorta sights you wanted to see is all~".
He chuckled, then pulled his phone out and began thumbing through some things.
"Oh, hey, while we're on the tour, I think one of my friends would love to meet you all, so we'll take a quick detour, alright?"
He asked, sounding somewhat more serious...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 25, 2016, 04:45:39 PM**

"Awesome!" No time like the present to meet someone new. As they walked, Flora couldn't help but wonder what sort of person Yurei would choose to hang out with. He was such an oddball himself, she doubted they'd qualify as normal.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2016, 04:51:12 PM**

Emma got her stuff and followed flora and Yurei out of the diner. she casually sipped on her soda as she flowed the lead group..' so you girls friends with dlora?' she said ' yeah we've known her awhile ' Marita said.'nice girl, she really id..' Yeah i got a good sense of that while running.. tests on her..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 25, 2016, 06:20:19 PM**

Yurei smiled at the group, leading them to a large, secured door.
"Right, so, I suppose I should warn you guys that this area's a bit off-limits to the general populace, so don't get too shocked by what you see."
He said, looking around for a second before slipping into the ground. A few seconds later, the door clicked open, swinging soundlessly to reveal a dimly-lit cement hallway. Yu smiled a little and gestured behind himself.
"So, uh... Welcome to the specialized containment wing".
He chuckled nervously...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 25, 2016, 06:58:19 PM**

The dreary cellblock looked like a prison-style hall, with reinforced transparent windows into each cell. The cells were nice but the atmosphere was sterilized and the lights were kept low.

"Wait, so there are test subjects in these?" stammered Flora. She crept close to one. "Subjects like us? Did they do something wrong?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 25, 2016, 08:02:04 PM**

Yurei nodded a bit.
"Yeah. These are specialized holding rooms for psionics whose powers are considered dangerous to others. Among others, I know at least one in here's power is..."
A muffled explosion sounded through the cell hallway as Yu flinched a bit
"He can cause things to explode."
He said, gently placing a hand on Flora's shoulder.
"Trust me, it's for peoples safety.".
He said gently, as he made his way down the cellblock...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 26, 2016, 01:34:24 PM**

So these are the ones who'd be a danger to society if allowed out. Charming.' Marita said. rose got quick glances of the some of the various occupants through peepholes- one was drawing complicated formulas on the wall. another one was tossing a fireball between hands. as he caught it it turned into a snowball, then became a fireball again in the other hand.

_
Emma remained quiet as she walked alongside Rose " so which guy did you want us to see Yurei" Emma asked as they walked along.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 26, 2016, 04:31:48 PM**

Flora was looking at the cells, a feeling of apprehension trickling down her spine. She should have realized that a facility built to house psionics would require a wing like this, but it clashed so harshly with Sartonic's friendly resort-like image that it got her worrying. She was a test subject here, after all. What if her powers ever grew dangerous? Could she one day find herself in a cell down here?"

"Wotcha lookin' at?" sneered a rat when her eyes passed over him, making her jump. Unlike the others, he had a very oddly-designed metallic chair that he was resting in. It seemed to be made of spoons.

"Nothing, sorry!" stammered Flora, backing up.

The rat pressed himself up against the cell wall. "It's not polite, you know. These are our *homes*. Say you're sorry."

"Sorry!"

"I'll forgive you this once," he leered. "But only if you give me something. A pebble, a strip of tissue. Anything at all."

Flora shook her head anxiously, backing up quickly.

The rat observed Marita and the others. "Oh, I'm so lonely...All this old man craves is some material possessions. Could you spare me any objects at all?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 26, 2016, 04:57:26 PM**

Yurei walked back over, fishing in his pocket for something, finally producing a set of ball bearings as he stepped over to the window.
"Hey, old man, go easy on 'em. They're new here."
He chuckled, opening a small door and sliding the bearings into a small tray, which slid into the cell as he shut the small door.
"Here, pinched these for ya. Figured you'd appreciate them."
He said with a smile. Turning around, he gestured slightly towards the end of the hall.
"C'mon. She's down here."
He said softly, smiling faintly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 26, 2016, 09:20:11 PM**

The rat's eyes lit up as he palmed the pair of ball bearings. "Aw yes, this will do nicely...thank you," he said gratefully.

Flora couldn't help but glance as he rolled the four (four?) bearings in his hand. Crossing over to his wash basin, the rat poured the eight bearings in and started lying contentedly in it. Dozens of bearings covered him, slowly forming a metallic pool of gleaming silver balls.

Flora finally tore her sight away when they'd gone too far down the hall, and quickly shifted her focus to the cell that Yurei was leading them to.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 26, 2016, 11:42:39 PM**

At the end of the hall, Yu stopped, knocking lightly on the window.
"Hey, Taga. It's me. I uh... Brought some friends down to meet you."
He said, smiling softly as the lights in the room flicked on, revealing a very old-looking female cat sitting in a large, plush rocking chair. She looked up at the window, and a large, warm smile crossed her features as she did.
"Ah, Yurei! So you found time to come visit little old me, did you? Are these the friends you mentioned?".
She asked, voice weathered and cracking a bit with age as she stood up and shuffled her way over to the window, her long shawl and dress making it look almost as if she were floating...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 27, 2016, 04:21:16 PM**

So why are you in here , mam? Emma asked " What sort of abilities do you possess? You have to shave some sort of ability or they wouldnt have put you in here.'

_ Marita took a look at some of the newspaper clipping which were on the wall, many of them were yellowed with age.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 27, 2016, 06:16:12 PM**

Flora swallowed her trepidation and managed a friendly smile. "H-hi Taga. My name's Flora, I'm the newest test subject here at Sartonic." She didn't want to make as bad an impression as she'd given the rat. Plus with Yurei being so friendly to each of them, they had to be decent people, right? "Pleased to meet you."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 28, 2016, 06:30:39 PM**

Taga smiled a little, looking at each in turn, settling on Emma once she asked about her powers.
"My, my aren't you the curious bunch~. I'm in here because my power causes me to devour the emotions of anyone who's around me. It can be... Very harmful. But you don't have to worry, this cell keeps me from affecting anyone outside it.".
She reassured, then turned her gaze towards Flora.
"Oh, child. You don't have to be afraid of me. Welcome to the facility. I'm sure you'll fit right in, and I think you'll enjoy your stay here.".
She said lightly, as Yurei opened the small window and slipped a few chocolate bars in.
"Here, Taga. Bright you a few of your favorites."
He said, and she gave him a warm smile in return.
"You're to sweet, Yu. You know you don't have to trouble yourself for me"
She said softly..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 28, 2016, 08:03:45 PM**

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so you.. absorb the emotions from other people. so.. are you a vampire? emma asked ' Vampires suck blood.. not energy or emotion 'Marita said to her.' So how long have you been in here? She asked Taga' Curiosity, you understand."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 29, 2016, 05:28:47 AM**

Flora smiled and nodded, glad that she seemed to be making a good impression. But inwardly, she wondered whether Taga was as friendly as she seemed. Her power didn't seem that bad, and it felt to her like Taga should be allowed to live normally in the facility, and the fact that she didn't was unsettling.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **April 30, 2016, 09:04:20 AM**

Taga smiled softly, chuckling a bit.
"Oh, I've been in here a very, very long time. Almost since the place first opened up. I came here after I realized that my power could be dangerous to others.".
She said softly, delicately opening a candy bar and taking a small bite...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 30, 2016, 10:38:23 AM**

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so you took precautions then. Smart. How many others with.. 'abilities, for lack of a better term, are here currently? Or do you not know that? you have been here, the longest, or nearly so, by your own admission' Marita said, looking at Taga with Interest

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 30, 2016, 03:31:34 PM**

"Why don't you just...control it then?" Flora knew she was being impolite but couldn't resist learning more about someone who had trouble with their powers. "Just don't manipulate people's emotions, and then you could live wherever you wanted instead of...trapped in this cell." She shifted her feet, hoping Taga didn't think she was insulting her home like the rat did.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 01, 2016, 06:49:07 PM**

Taga chuckled softly.
"If only it were that simple, dearie. I've tried to keep my powers under control, but if I allowed myself to lapse for even a moment, then they would slip out and endanger people again. I decided that it would be best to stay someplace where I could work to minimize that risk. Most of the people here are much the same. We've willingly agreed to stay here until our powers can be kept in check and we won't endanger people. And miss, as to how many of us there are, there's a dozen or so of us. Each of us with abilities that can be very dangerous if unchecked. But we all are reasonably happy down here."
She said pleasantly, doing a small gesture around herself..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 01, 2016, 08:33:58 PM**

"So...most of you chose to come down here?" asked Flora, feeling relief wash over here. "You won't forced by the labs?" That was good to hear; her powers were very minor and she was prepared to be more than cooperative with Sartonic in every way.

She shifted her feet. This cell block still unnerved her, but it wasn't as bad now that she'd gotten to know some of the inhabitants a little better.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 02, 2016, 12:20:11 PM**

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fewer than i thought' Marita nodded.' how old are you. if i may ask.? you look like you re at least 90 years old.

_
well i don;t know about the rest of you, but i'm ready to go' Emma said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 02, 2016, 11:26:13 PM**

Taga smiled wryly at Marita's question.
"How old am I? Hehee, I've lost track, to be honest. I suppose your guess is as good as mine, isn't it?"
She said lightly, then looked over at Emma.
"Ah, of course. I didn't mean to keep you. You must have a lot to do and see, being new here. I'll let you get on with it! But thank you for coming to visit an old spinstress like me, all of you."
She said, making her way back towards her chair before pausing and turning back around.
"Oh, but, Flora, dearie? Could you stay a moment longer? I know you're a bit uneasy, but I promise you'll be fine. And Yu, no eavesdropping, child! I swear, you're just like a little boy

sometimes.".
She teased, to which Yurei gave a coy shrug.
"Yeah, yeah, Baachan. I won't snoop this time. Sheesh, I do it once and you never have let me hear the end of it."
He retorted, leading the group back down the hall, though not before giving Flora's hand a reassuring squeeze...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 02, 2016, 11:31:58 PM**

Flora nodded nodding encouragingly as her friends retreated down the hallway. "What is it, ma'am?" she asked politely, walking up to the cell door and placing her face against the bars so she could get a good look at her conversationalist. Not knowing how sensitive the talk was going to be, she decided to give Taga the most privacy possible considering the situation.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 02, 2016, 11:41:58 PM**

Taga smiled softly, shuffling up to the door.
"Please, you don't need to be so formal with me. I just wanted to talk to you about Yurei. I think he's rather smitten with you.".
She said lightly, then looked a bit more contemplative.
"I just wanted to let you know that, as much as he acts cheerful and light-heated, the poor child's been through a lot, and tries to carry the burdens all himself. He means well, though. And he loves with all his heart. So please, do take care of him."
She said softly, her voice gentle and almost maternal...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 02, 2016, 11:54:55 PM**

"A relationship? Already? But we just met..." Flora answered nervously.

She bit her lip at the warning that Yurei wasn't as carefree and content as she thought. "Thank you for the advice," she continued, smiling softly. "I'll be careful around him, the last thing I want to do is hurt anybody." But if Taga was right (and as a psionically-powered empath, Flora was inclined to believe her), Yurei is going to have to be patient. Flora wasn't yet comfortable entering into relationships with anybody beyond the 'friends with benefits' level. And even then he's going to have to share with Marita, Rose, Marie, and Emma for Flora's time...hopefully she'd be able to make it all work.

Sexual relationships are complicated... she thought with unexpected despair, feeling a slight knot in her stomach.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 03, 2016, 12:06:51 AM**

Taga placed her hand on the bars, smiling gently
"Oh, dearie, I didn't mean it as something so serious. He cares about you immensely, but I don't believe he'll try to make anything more than that until you two know each other better. But thank you for listening to a doddering old lady like me. It's just that, when he looked at you, I could feel something from him that I hadn't felt in a long time. He's been so very closed off since... Well, it's not my place to say. I think that you two will be good for each other. So please, don't despair."
She said gently, giving Flora a small smile...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 03, 2016, 12:23:05 AM**

Flora returned the smile. "Yurei's a good guy. I like him a lot and I hope to get to do a lot of fun things with him. So I'm glad he's got your vote of confidence. It's good to hear from someone who knows him really well." She put her hand over Taga's. "I'm sure we'll come visit you a lot," she added brightly. "Yurei seems to have a lot of friends down here! I've got to run finish my tour, but I'm sure I'll have plenty of opportunities to get to know you better."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 03, 2016, 12:17:51 PM**

Emma waited for Flora by the wing entrance, hoping she would not take too long..
- so whats next on the tour Yurei' Riose asked ' will you show us your flat? She asked.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 03, 2016, 01:35:38 PM**

Flora headed back towards the exit, but stopped when she crossed the cell containing the old rat, who was still enjoying a ball bearing bath. "Ummm, hello again," she added, determined to make a better impression before she left. "Sorry about before. I'm new, learning how things work around here."

"Same deal as before," he said dismissively. "I'll forgive you when you give me something."

Flora rifled through her pockets and found only the scrap of paper containing Emma's phone number. Tearing a decently-sized blank portion off the bottom, she let that flutter through the bars. "How about that?"

The rat's eyes lit up. "I'll wallpaper my room with this!" He said excitedly. Leaping out of the bath, he grabbed the paper excitedly and began twirling as white confetti sprung forth from his hand.

Flora took that opportunity to leave while she was ahead. "Hi all!" she said brightly when she found them waiting outside the cell block. "I think I got the rat to like me. Now, where are we going next?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 04, 2016, 04:00:04 PM**

Yurei chuckled some, giving Flora a wink.
"Heh, I was thinking I could show you guys the entertainment district! Shopping, arcades, you name it!"
He said with a coy grin and wink to Flora.
"After all, I figure you guys would like to know where to get some neat threads and some fun."
He said jokingly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 04, 2016, 04:11:03 PM**

Flora's eyes lit up. "Ooh, sounds good!" she exclaimed.

She could hardly contain herself during the walk to the entertainment district. "What part should we go to first?" she asked as it drew close.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 05, 2016, 06:13:56 PM**

Yurei chuckled a bit, giving Flora a smirk.
"Well I was figuring I'd let you take the lead, shop around. I'll tag along, follow your lead and pick up the tab. I mean, if you'd like."
He said with a smile, doing a sweeping gesture towards the large, open promenade...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 08:21:08 PM**

The receptionist looked up. "Destination?" she asked as she saw the sextet of them heading for the exit to the lab.

"Oh, we just wanted to see the city...if that's alright of course." Flora shifted her feet.

The receptionist looked at her bathrobe, which wasn't doing that great with all the wear and tear. "I hope you head to one of the clothing stores first," she commented, printing out 5 day passes in the form of little wristlets, like the ones in hospitals. "Keep the bracelet visible at all times; and if anyone asks you're legally required to inform them of your position at Sartonic Labs."

"Position? What's mine?" asked Flora.

"Test subject."

Flora nodded in understanding, and then left the lab to return to the city she'd only seen during the day. Despite this, she couldn't have been prepared for the flurry of lights and activity. Flora gasped at the thriving Indian nightlife outside the facility. There seemed to be more people on the streets now than during the day. The weather was chilled but the smell of food carts, the heat lamps in bazaars, and the bright sparks of glowsticks punctuating the gloomy streetlamp-lit streets turned the city into a haven of warmth and light among the endless expanse of desert.

Flora excitedly ran to the nearest bazaar to see what they were selling. She saw rows and rows of scarves; fine silky garments studded with gems and brooches. "Are these real diamonds?" she asked excitedly.

"They are 24-carat," the shopkeeper nodded. "Five dollars each."

"Five dollars for scarves with real diamonds?" gasped Flora. "That's insane! Ooh if only I had the money!"

The next shop has shish kebabs grilling behind a clear plastic screen. Flora's stomach rumbled, and she asked against hope if there were free samples. The kebab guy laughed and said no, so she moved on.

Her first actual purchase came when she bought a pair of shorts from a street vendor. "I'm feeling a little exposed out here in just a robe..." she admitted to her friends as she slipped them on in an alleyway.

Sounds further down the alleyway intrigued her, and she left the beaten path to find children playing Kick the Can in a more residential district. "Can I play?" she asked excitedly, but kids merely took their game elsewhere, giving her weird looks. They did forget a glowstick, so Flora claimed it and returned to the main streets looking slightly less out of place with her new acquisitions.

"Oooh let's get some fireworks!" she exclaimed excitedly when she saw some men holding out rows of them on a stand. "This is so cool, its like nothing is illegal! Can we get weed out here?"

While they watched, one customer who was smoking a cigarette picked up a firework and examined it. The shopkeepers urgently demanded he put it down, but the cigarette got too close and as he dropped it in fright, it ignited, causing the entire stand to go up in smoke. Flora and the onlookers cheered at the brilliant display of color and streaks of light that lit up the sky as the owners and customer ran for their lives, cursing loudly.

"Does this happen every night?" Flora wondered in amazement as she continued drinking in the activity and excitement around here. "It's like a completely different city at night. This is so incredible...."

They were almost back at the lab. She gave Yurei a crooked smile. "Well, I've pretty much led the whole night, like you were hoping. Was there anything you'd wanted to see before we head back?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 08:54:16 PM**

Yu chuckled a little, giving a small, noncommittal shrug, while keeping his hands hidden behind his back.
"Well, I come down here a lot, so I've been just about everywhere. Though, if you ladies are into arcade games, there's an especially nice one a few blocks from here. Free games, and some really cool music, plus a dance floor. Bu~t before that..."
He chuckled, showing that he had gone and grabbed a selection of the scarves Flora had been eyeing earlier, as well as a to-go box of kebabs.
"Figured I'd grab these for you. The scarves are for all of you, so I figured I'd let you four pick the ones you like."
He said lightly, smiling broadly.

Smooth, you idiot. Blowing money because you like a girl. AGAIN. And you know just how this'll end, too. You'll end up alone again, just like before. After all, she was right about you. You're not worth anything to anyone, and especially aren't something a person could love...

For a brief second, Yurei's grin faltered, but he quickly tried to brush his thoughts aside, returning to his normal smiling demeanor...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 09:02:28 PM**

"Oooooh!" squealed Flora excitedly. "I want the purple one! No, the silver one, it's got garnets! Are these garnets?" she asked the seller.

"Since there is no refunds, I'm comfortable telling you that they're all glass," he replied with a snicker.

"Well purple it is then," Flora stuck her tongue out at him and threw it around her neck. "Goes with my fur. And let's do arcades!" As someone who lived most of her life completely broke, video games were always out of her budget, though she'd always been interested in them when she was a boy.

She entered the venue and quickly decided on the one with two burly men punching each other to death. "Who wants to get their ass kicked at Street Fighter 7?" she challenged Emma and Yurei, determined fire in her eyes.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 09:13:01 PM**

Yurei grinned slyly.
"Oh, a challenge? Well, I dunno, I find challenges much more fun when there's a little wager involved. Care to make it a bet?"
He teased, rolling his neck and bouncing a bit to the sound of the music...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 09:14:50 PM**

Flora's eyes narrowed. "What you prepared to wager, mister?" she grinned competitively.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 06, 2016, 09:17:11 PM**

i'll play.' Marita volunteered ' so street fighter huh ' you'll likrly beat me. i stick to PC games ' she said." whats the wager?' She said " something simple, perhaps?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 09:21:45 PM**

Yu chuckled.
"Tell you what. I'll let you and Marita duke it out first, give you a practice round. Now, when I win against you, I'm thinking I'll give you another tour, this time of one of my... Favorite parts of the city. Now if you do win... I'll do absolutely ANYTHING you'd like. Sound good?"
He shot back, giving an equally competitive grin, then throwing in a sly wink...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 09:30:00 PM**

"Deal," Flora smiled. She quickly deposited the coins to get a match and picked M. Bison, a military man with an awesome hat and cape. She waited for Marita to pick her character, as the counter counted down to begin the fight...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 06, 2016, 09:37:09 PM**

Marita selected Ken, from the choices available " alright Flora if I win, you have to kiss me on the lips, But if I lose, I have to kiss you. Best of 3, alright?' She smirked.' Sound Like a deal?
 Emma was warching the game with interest' You ever play video games?' Marie asked her " No, not really, i would watch my brothers play though . what about you?' no, never was into video games, was more interested in dolls growing up."Marie admitted ' i'll just watch, if its all the same.
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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 09:42:57 PM**

"You're on!" Flora agreed, as the game flashed: *Round one...FIGHT!*

Flora immediately leaped forward and punched...or tried to. Her character crouched, then ducked. She hit another button and M. Bison jumped. *Ugh, how do I hit?* she thought, hitting buttons intently as a bead of sweat formed on her forehead.

But unbeknownst to either girl, Marita had picked the easiest character to play in the game, and after three rounds M. Bison slumped to the ground a thoroughly defeated loser while the announcer congratulated Ken on his victory. "You got me..." admitted Flora. Stepping forward, she pressed her mouth against Marita's, lips trembling only somewhat at the injustice of how badly she'd lost.

As she came out of the kiss, she looked at Yurei and bit her cheek defiantly. "But I'm not gonna lose to you, Yurei! I was just warming up!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 09:56:31 PM**

Yu smirked, lightly cracking his knuckles as he took his place, before leaning over to give Flora a quick smooch on the cheek.
"Well then, giving you a bit of luck won't hurt, will it?"
He teased, tail flicking a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 10:09:37 PM**

Flora quickly dropped the coins in and picked a new character. This time she went with Poison; she wasn't sure why, but destiny was telling her she had a connection with this character. "I don't need luck," she challenged aggressively. "Pick your poison..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 10:30:20 PM**

Yu stuck his tongue out, flicking through a few fighters before settling on Yang.
"Poison chosen~. Hope you don't mind seeing another side of the city~"
He retorted, tail lightly touching hers for a moment...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 10:47:13 PM**

Flora gritted her teeth as the game announced *Round one...FIGHT!*

Jamming the joystick forward, Flora growled as the character ducked and combat-rolled. "Goddammit..." she muttered as Poison tried some grappling move that wasn't the basic punch she was hoping for.

Occasionally she landed a kick or something, but for the most part the only real trick she figured out was dodging Yurei's attacks with a spinning jump. Flora had lived a teenage life almost void of video games of any type so even things as basic as movement were struggles, much less combos or timing counter-attacks. At times she suspected Yurei was going easy on her, but it didn't matter because after three painful rounds Posion lay crumpled in the corner while the announcer praised Yang for an almost flawless victory.

Flora couldn't stop a pent-up growl from escaping her throat. "Fucking christ!" she burst out, almost punching the machine in frustration.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 11:02:00 PM**

Yurei smiled a bit, reaching over and giving Flora a friendly, one-armed hug.
"Hey, easy there. That wasn't half bad! You're a quick study, and I bet in a few weeks you'll be kicking butts and taking names. As a matter of fact, I think I'm gonna call this a draw and give you a free pass to do whatever you want to me. Plus, you and I'll take a tour of my

favorite part of the city. Sound good?"
He said amicably, tail rubbing itself against Flora's...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 06, 2016, 11:12:22 PM**

As Flora felt her blood pressure return to normal she realized she was making a bad impression on all her friends. Taking a deep breath, she counted quietly to ten to get a hold of herself. "Sorry sorry...I'm kind of a competitive sort..." she admitted. "You don't need to pretend I wasn't awful. I got my ass completely handed to me."

She glanced at the exit. "Looks like we're going to that place you wanted sometime soon. Probably not tonight, I think everyone's getting tired," she glanced at Emma in particular, who was showing signs of exhaustion. "We should probably get back to the labs. Is there anywhere else on the tour, Yurei?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 06, 2016, 11:23:43 PM**

Yu smiled, rubbing Flora's arm lightly.
"Nah. Well...not on this tour, at least~"
He teased, grinning coyly.
"But I do mean what I said. You get one free "Yurei'll do anything you want" pass."
He added, straightening his hair a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 10, 2016, 10:33:15 PM**

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its ok Flora " you tried your best' Marita said patting her on the shoulder in consolation " here' the dark red lips locked together and Marita kissed Flora flush on the lips. the great Dane put her tongue gently into the folfs mouth and massaged her girlfriends tongue with her own. Emma blushed as she watched the kiss. Marita however acted as if this was not a very big deal, and no one outside the group paid much attention. the kiss lasted for 15 seconds before Marita pulled away' Make sure you give Flora her tongue back, the girl needs it' Rose smirked. You just kissed her right in front of everybody. Smack on the lips' Emma said and Marita looked at her" Emma dear, if you love someone, and are comfortable in your own skin, then snogging them in public is expected as a matter of course.PDA, my dear, or Public Display of Affection. Of course there are limits. we're not going to makeout while au natural of course, they frown upon that here."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 10, 2016, 10:44:00 PM**

Flora's pent-up resentment from the game evaporated as Marita suddenly French-kissed her in front of everyone in the arcade. Her heart skipped a beat and time seemed to stand still as Marita gave her a much more passionate kiss than the one Flora gave after losing to her at Street Fighter.

Flora's face was beet red and she could only stammer gibberish for almost half a minute after Marita broke the kiss. "Guess you, uh, don't mind that I lost to you then?" she babbled, crossing her legs and wrapping her robe more securely around her. "Between you and Yurei, I just got all the prizes we bet regardless..." Part of her felt emberrassed at how openly Marita had just displayed their love in public, but she was right, there's nothing wrong with public displays of affection...was there?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 11, 2016, 04:10:44 PM**

Yurei had begun to make his way towards the arcade door before Marita had kissed Flora, turning just in time to catch the tail end of the kiss. For a moment, he froze, then turned and slipped out the door quietly. As he made his way back towards the labs, he chuckled bitterly to himself.
"Hah...way to go, Yurei. Way to set yourself up to fail again... Maybe she was right. Maybe I'm not worth anything..."
He said softly to himself, kicking a small stone as he walked...
"Maybe she was right"? No, there's no maybe about it. All you are is a freak and a monster. Not like anyone could ever love something like you. You don't even have a right to be alive, and definitely don't deserve happiness. You're nothing but a tool and a mistake.
Yurei kept walking down the path silently, quietly blinking back any trace of tears...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 11, 2016, 04:25:46 PM**

" Yurei?' where are you going?' Marie called out as she ran down the trail after hm " You said that you still had some things to show us ' the retriever said giving Yurei a smile. ' and you're a better tour guide than that woman who gave us the official tour. she was boring as dry paint.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 11, 2016, 04:32:26 PM**

It felt like Flora barely had time to blink and two of their number were gone. "Err, where'd everyone go?" she asked. She glanced at the exit of the arcade, completely clueless as to why Yurei and Marie had dashed off so quickly. Already they were out of sight. "We...going somewhere else?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 11, 2016, 04:45:47 PM**

Yurei turned, quickly regaining his composure and smirking some.
"Heh. It's getting late, and I'm sure you guys had plans for the night, and I'd hate to get in the way."
He said with a small, halfhearted chuckle...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 11, 2016, 05:00:46 PM**

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we don't have any plans ' Marie assured him" Come on, lets go get some dinner.. my treat.' She smiled at him. 'don;t worry about Marita. shes always been open with her affections, shes planted kisses on me like that on more than one occasion. Girl believes in public snogging what can I say. don't read anything into it. Doesnt mean that flora doesn't like you, or that you have to compete with any of us for Floras affections. Your relationship with Flora is between you and her. we'll know about it, of course since we're a small close group, but you want to take her out on a date, none of us are going to stop you. we're fine with it, in fact. next time you see Flora, snogg her like Marita did. that will ease matters on that score.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 11, 2016, 06:05:42 PM**

"Uh, hello?" Flora slowly came walking down the trail, looking confused. "Guys...?" She hadn't noticed their location due to the darkness; they were halfway between the labs and the city, and the faint dim of the city streetlamps could only do so much this far into the lonely desert dunes. "What happened...?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 11, 2016, 06:32:01 PM**

Yu chuckled sardonically.
"Nah, it's fine. Really. You guys go on ahead.".
He said lightly, shaking his head a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 11, 2016, 07:09:57 PM**

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maybe yuri had to head home to do something that he forgot to do' Marita said ' we'll catch up with them' Emma assured her.
_ Come on Yu, I insist. lets go get some food.' Marie said firmly' any place you would recommend?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 11, 2016, 08:45:35 PM**

"Well, we're going to be back at the lab soon enough...I hope they're not still in town." Flora and the girls had walked right past the pair in the dark. "Do either of you have Marie's phone number?" Flora asked Marita and Rose nervously. She didn't like the idea of her friends going missing out here in the desert.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 15, 2016, 09:29:34 AM**

Yurei chuckled softly, shaking his head.
"Honestly, I don't have any suggestions. Plus, I'm kinda tired. Think I'll just head home and crash for the night."
He said firmly, turning and heading towards the lab again...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 15, 2016, 10:12:10 AM**

Alright we'll pick you up in the morning then. say 8 am..' Marie said.

- Yeah i have her phone number' marita said pulling out her phone and checking first to se she had reception, which she did. marita pulled out maries Number and dialed.
_ marie head her phone ring and pulled it out ' hi marita! where am i? Oh I'm with Yurei, hes headed back home to get some shut eye. ' i think you probably passed us as we were walking. just head to an inn or something and I'll meet up with you.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 15, 2016, 11:20:30 PM**

Flora nodded. "So Yurei's okay and y'all are staying in a motel?" she asked. "We could probably make the lab, you know. It's like ten minutes that way."

She glanced at Emma. "I'll walk you back to your room if you want Emma," she smiled. "Sounds like everyone's going to sleep."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 18, 2016, 02:45:19 PM**

Yurei turned and gave a small wave to Marie, heading back the way he had been going.
"Right, then. I'll... See you then."
He said softly, chuckling slightly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 18, 2016, 02:56:50 PM**

Flora started in surprise when she saw Yurei emerge from the lamplight. "Yurei, there you are!" she exclaimed. "Where did you go? Is everything okay?" Leaving Emma's side, she darted forward to her best male friend to check on him and maybe get an explanation for his behavior.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 18, 2016, 03:09:22 PM**

Yu turned at the sound of Flora's voice, expression barely changing.
"Oh. Hey, Flora. I just... Forgot something is all. Figured I shouldn't leave it here over night."
He said coolly, barely making eye contact as he kept walking...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 18, 2016, 03:34:07 PM**

"Oh, okay..." Flora bit her lip. She could sense something had changed since they last spoke. "Um, you wanna meet up sometime? Emma asked me to come to her room tonight, but tomorrow I'm free. We could, like, go for a swim or something."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 18, 2016, 03:52:25 PM**

Yurei shrugged noncommittally, barely breaking his stride.
"Sure. Whatever. Wouldn't want to get in the way, though."
He said flatly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 18, 2016, 04:00:22 PM**

"In the way?" Flora put her hand on his shoulder. "Hey, you wouldn't be in the way. I like spending time with you. I'd totally hang out with you if I could, I know you wanted to show me the red light district tonight, but Emma just...asked sooner. That's all." She tried to give a reassuring smile but she doubted he could even see it in the dark. "I can make time for you both, trust me."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 18, 2016, 04:32:01 PM**

Yurei looked at her hand for a moment, and then pushed it off his shoulder.
"It's fine. No need to worry about me. You go and have fun."

He said, voice momentarily icy as he walked off...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 18, 2016, 04:52:28 PM**

Flora gave up the chase and just stood there, blinking in surprise at how that conversation had gone. *What is his problem?* she wondered. *Everything was fine at the arcade, he even won the video game, and then...what did I do wrong?*

She slowly made her way back to Emma. "So, um, do you still want to go to sleep? I'll walk to you your room," she asked hopefully, the prospect of getting lucky marred only somewhat by her continued attempts to figure out what she'd done wrong with Yurei. *He knows I'm not his girlfriend, right? I thought we both understood that just because we fooled around in the bathroom, I've got time commitments to my other friends...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 18, 2016, 05:57:30 PM**

i think its my fault ' Marita said ' I think.. when i kissed you Flora , he didnt take it well.i didnt mean to hurt his feelings, of course..but .. i think i did. Tomorrow, spend the day with him, we'll make do, looking around the complex..

_
i'm a bit hungry' Emma admitted ' i'd like to get something to eat first, if thats ok."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 18, 2016, 06:11:07 PM**

"Who knows," shrugged Flora. "Yurei's my friend, I'll talk to him later. I need to find a way to make sure he's comfortable with the situation." She noticed they'd reached the lab. The night receptionist let them in. "Hey is there anywhere in the labs that are open this time of night?" she asked.

The man shook his head. "Sorry, the restaurants close at around ten. But you are welcome to use the kitchen to prepare your own food. The are pantries with basic foodstuffs like bread, rice, and pasta. Don't take too long though; eleven o'clock is curfew."

"Curfew?" asked Flora.

"All test subjects and unauthorized personnel are required to be in their rooms with the doors locked by eleven. Roaming the hallways is not permitted and there are punishments for being caught out after hours."

Flora gulped. "Thanks for letting us know." They had about 45 minutes to prepare their food and get back to their rooms.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 20, 2016, 11:11:21 PM**

In another part of the residential area, Yurei sighed and chuckled to himself as he stepped into an elevator, hitting the button for one of the uppermost floors. However, as the elevator began to move, Yu allowed himself to phase out, slipping through the floor and descending into a set of old maintenance tunnels beneath the facility. Making his way down the dark, cold concrete halls, he finally turned and stepped into a caged section, filled with a variety of broken parts and miscellaneous other things that had been tossed aside. Shutting the mesh cage behind him, he made his way over to the corner farthest from the door, where a thin, worn blanket sat. Laying down and curling up against the wall, he slumped for a moment before repeatedly smacking his head into the metal pillar forming the corner.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid! Thinking that I even had a chance with someone like that... What the hell came over me? Yurei, you goddamned idiot... Why don't I just learn? Some... Thing like me isn't something anyone could ever like, let alone care for!"
He muttered, head slumping down against his chest.
Heh... I hate to admit it, but I guess all my naysayers were right. That I'm just a damn fuckup who ruins everything... Guess that means my family was right about me being alive, too. Not like I ever really doubted that, though...
He thought bitterly, picking up a shard of glass from the floor near him, holding it and turning it over in his hands a few times, then tightening his grip on it until it drew blood from his hand. Still clutching it as tight as he could, he pressed the edge of it to his wrist, drawing it across and leaving a jagged gash along his arm. He stared at the crimson welling up on his wrist and chuckled a bit.
"Heh... Why not do that a few more times... Just end it all here with all the other broken, useless things..."
He said softly, staring at his reflection in the piece of glass...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 21, 2016, 06:40:02 AM**

Flora led the way to the kitchen. She wasn't particularly hungry so she simply poured herself a bowl of cornflakes with honey and sugar.

She tried and failed to stifle a yawn. It had been a long day, and she'd gotten quite a few unexpected workouts while making new friends. Hopefully Emma didn't take too long preparing food, they needed to be in bed by lab shutdown.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 24, 2016, 07:33:03 PM**

Emma came in a few minutes later carrying a pair of stuffed sandwiches ' Hope you like Meatballs" she said handing a sandwich to Flora. " we'll eat this, and thenm head to bed, I think" She smiled.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 24, 2016, 07:35:38 PM**

"Thanks!" The sandwich wasn't microwaved, which Flora usually did when making meat sandwiches, but this let her eat it faster because it didn't have to cool. Flora was only a little hungry, but the sandwich turned out to be perfect for that since it wasn't very filling. "Sounds good to me," she smiled.

She borrowed Emma's phone to call Rose and Marita. "Guess you're gonna head back into town to find Marie and her hotel, right? You two have fun with that. Tomorrow we might head into town and find you, and we can all explore together during the day."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 25, 2016, 05:25:35 PM**

Actually, the three of us are headed back to the apartment for the nioght" Marita said . " Marie caught up with us after you left with Emma. Have a good night, i'm sure we'll ran into you girls tomorrow. Good night Flora' Marita said and hung up the phone.

_
Rose was in the apartment kitchen making a late night cup of tea befiore headed to bed. Marita took the left bed, Marie the night. Tonight rose would sleep with Marita. ' i'm hoping tomorrow we'll get to see much more of the Complex. Yurei showed us a bit, but not all of it, I'm sure' she said to herself taking a sip of tea which was strawberry flavored

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 25, 2016, 06:22:05 PM**

(OOC: RP'd with nick via Google Docs)

Flora followed Emma to her bedroom. She wasn’t 100% sure if she was about to get lucky, or if Emma was truly interested in just falling asleep. After all, it had been a long day, and the vixen seemed to be genuinely sleepy when they left the city to return to the lab, and Flora certainly wasn’t going to bring the question up and look like she was trying to force it to happen.

“I’m excited to see your room!” she said chipperly, cutting into her own thoughts as she wasn’t too pleased with the doubtful unsure direction they were taking. *Let’s not overthink this,* she told herself, forcing her mind back to the present. *Just rely on Emma to call the shots, and see where this goes…*

Well I could offer you something to eat” Emma said with a smile “You hungry at all?’ She asked giving the folf a broad smile. Sorry if my room’s a bit messy.

"No no, your room looks fine!" Flora quickly assured. It was indeed smaller than Flora's, probably because Emma was just a worker and not a psionic test subject. It looked a lot more like a typical extended-stay hotel room, though it came with a kitchenette and a full-sized fridge. "Do you have anything to drink?" Flora asked, glancing at the fridge. It had been some time since lunch, and beer wasn't particularly thirst-quenching in the first place.

Well you can look in there. I might have some sodas , like Sprite or something “ Emma said ‘ sorry If I don’t have much. Paydays on Friday, and I’m scraping by until then. Take whatever you like.’ Emma blushed. Everytime she looked at Flora , she flashed back to the “test’ she had run on Flora, the taste of Flora’s dark red lips against her own, the scrape of her tongue, the bounciness of her breasts in Emma’s hands... Emma shook her head, trying not to show Flora that she was very interested in her, and part of the reason she invited her to her room, was that she could kiss those lips and caress those breasts again..

Flora gratefully popped open a can of Sprite. “I can reimburse you, promise, I’m just so parched right now,” she panted, collapsing on the bed. Taking a few more deep swigs, she realized her robe had come undone and fixed it with an awkward grin. “Not gonna lie, your bed’s definitely a one-person bed,” she observed, rolling over and only managing a half-turn. “I take it you don’t have people spend the night often?” Her tone was more joking than anything else; a small bed certainly didn't bother her, she’d managed to sleep in a queen with Marita, Rose and Marie all squished in with her. But by broaching the topic she hoped she might get Emma to reveal whether she intended Flora to stay and sleep with her.

“No, you’re actually the first person I’ve invited up here since I got the place. I haven’t had it long, and of course money is always an issue. If I had more money, I could afford a bigger bed, or a second bed of similar size. But, right now I have just enough to pay rent and get some bare essentials. What’s left goes in that coin jar over there.’ she motioned to a jar on the dresser which was about a third full of coins.” don’t know much money is there exactly, Fifty bucks, maybe?’ She shrugged “ so, Flora… did you like kissing me during the stimulating test?’ She said nervously.

Flora’s heart skipped a beat. “Yes, I did!” she answered quickly. “And I hope you realize when I said about smaller beds, I don't mind.” She quickly scooted to make room. “It's way comfier than the bench, and we both fit on that, right?” she chuckled, masking her nervousness. What if Emma thought she was being too forward?

“Yes we did, although a bench isn’t exactly the most romantic place to get intimate. Flora. I think you’re beautiful, and I think you sell yourself short by being so shy. I’m guessing, just spitballing here, that it’s because you’ve tried other folks in the past, and things didn’t go well. I know the feeling, there was this girl in high school that I asked to the prom, when the few guys I asked first turned me down. And, well, I had a crush on the girl, and she seemed to reciprocate. 'Seemed' being the operative word. See Flora, if things had gone a bit differently, you wouldn't have been my first kiss. She would have been, and quite likely more than that. I think we would have had sex that night, two high school girls trying out other girls. And, had her feelings for me been genuine, I don't know, I would have introduced her to my family as my girlfriend and we would have started an open relationship.Full of lots of kissing, foreplay, and sex. Her name, in case you are wondering was Marta. Marta Crull.": Emma said said dabbing at her eyes, which had started to be misty.

Flora could tell Emma was revealing a very emotional moment from her past, and putting a lot of trust in her by being so honest. She put her arm around her. "I'm so sorry. Believe me, I know all about rejection and it's always gut-wrenching." Flora set her soda aside and slowly graduated to a full hug while she continued. "But I think you sell yourself short too. I can't believe you're still single, to be honest; you're kind, you're outgoing, and you're really beautiful," Flora broke the hug and smiled. "Marta's decision says everything about her, and you were lucky to dodge that bullet. You're worth more than someone who would do that."

Her heart was thudding because of how close she was to Emma. She felt every fiber of the robe on her body and ached to throw it off and snuggle with her under the covers, but still her fear of rejection kept her from doing more than giving reassuring words.

' I didn't know that at the time. You see, back then I looked nothing like I do now. My chest hadn't developed, and I was wearing braces. I was , well, considered a bit of a dork. Marta, well , she was one of the popular girls, always had a couple guys hanging around her, like moths flitting around a flame. Had a couple gal pals as well, one of them was named Staci. Staci was ok, she would wave to me whenever I would come by. Anyway, the first of the school dances was coming up, and i really wanted to go. I tried approaching a couple guys, they were in the band and choir- I went to the football and basketball games, but i wouldn't be what you would call a superfan, and the football players were pretty much lunk heads.- anyway I'm getting sidetracked. They couldn't make it. Marta had several boyfriends, none of them stayed her boyfriend for long, it would be on, then off then on again then off again. The guy she was seeing at the time was named Marcus, who was a football player, and who had all the charisma of cement. Then had gone through several breakups at that point, it was a joke among the gossip I heard at school. Who's ugly, who's nerdy, who's introverted , who's lesbian, that sort of thing. Girls can be as mean as guys, if not meaner. I mean if I looked like this then, well I wouldn't have been considered a dork.I almost certainly would have been treated better.and if I had to do that over again, I would have asked Staci to the dance instead of Marta. She was a lot nicer to me than Marta was, that for sure." Emma said

"I never really experienced any of that," Flora admitted, "because I went to an all-boys boarding school. I can't even say anyone was mean to me, I just mostly kept to myself. But it sounds like I dodged a bullet, because I was a pretty ordinary boy. Nobody would have looked at me twice either." She gave Emma a reassuring smile. "You do realize you were so much braver than me, right? You walked up to someone you had a crush on and you asked them. You were honest with yourself about your body and your sexuality. That's huge; that's something most people can't do, especially not in high school. Don't worry about what those people said."

"I cared. I wasn't thinking ' hey, i'm a lesbian. Let me find some hot girl to kiss in public'. I asked her, because i liked her, and I thought she liked me. I wasn't what I am now, had I been I would have received a lot more attention, from guys, and probably from girls as well. I mean, you. really really opened my mind to some things Flora..' Emma said reaching out and caressing the hem of Flora's robe. ' but 3 years ago. I wasn't very confident with myself. I asked her, on a lark, and because the guys had turned me down. It was chance , really. I think Marta saw it as way of rubbing it in her boyfriend's face, the fact that she was going to the dance without him. I was just a pawn really. But since I didnt have many friends at that point, i didnt have anyone to tell me to go with someone else, or to go with instead.."

"You opened my eyes to a lot of things too," Flora admitted, blushing as Emma caressed her robe. "I'd never really been with someone my own age...hell I don't think I've even carried a conversation with anyone but adults in years. After running away from school I got caught up in the gang scene where everyone was so much older than me. So it was nice getting to be with you privately. Even now." She knew she was rambling but she was relishing the chance to talk to someone who truly understood her and what she's been going through.

" Well you were into gang stuff huh? Well at least you weren't driving around shooting people for kicks and grins. And you didn't know any better. So Flora, how many girls have you kissed, besides me?' Emma asked. : if it's a lot, well you don't have to name all of them. But if it's less than 5, well, then I'm in a very select group' Emma blushed as she moved her face close to Flora's, their red lips inches apart. ""One I'm flattered to be a member of. So, how many, and what are their names?

"Just drug running," Flora added quickly. "Nothing violent. Usually." Her face turned red. "It was a tough crowd. Ummmm, as for kissing girls...well, I did kiss this one druggie at a concert that I'm mostly sure was a girl...but I didn't get her name." Flora's head was spinning; her instinct was telling her to stop talking and keep her sordid past to herself, that anything she told Emma was only going to scare her off. "And then one time I delivered to an island and one of the natives kissed me since it was their custom. Her name was Nuvia, and she was super hot. I couldn't even change into my bikini afterwards until my boner calmed down a bit, super embarrassing." Her brain continued to scream at her that she was horrendously dropping the ball, and finally it caught up with her mouth before she went into the night with an unconscious drugged-out Emilena. "And, uh, I think that's it, other than the girls I'm living with now. Marie, Marita, and Rose recently showed me a thing or two when we reconnected here in Iraq. So you're on a list of six. And if we kiss again, you'll be the only one who made the list more than once…" she giggled.

" Six huh? So you're comfortable kissing other girls then. Well You have more experience than I do, certainly.

"To be fair, four of you only happened in the last 48 hours," Flora admitted. "I wasn't exactly experienced before that…."

" still you have more experience than I do " Emma said ' besides, you seem to be confiding in me as much as i have been in you, even if it's been sort of a rushed ' I kissed this girl, then that girl.. That girl we got all the way' sort of stream of consciousness thing. Hey, I'm not one to judge. You lived your life the way you wanted. And I admire people who can do that. So, tell me more about your current girlfriends- Marita, Marie and rose. What are they like?. I assume, given the fact that you've kissed them, that they like girls.. Which i'm fine with. If I'm going to be an open lesbian, I need to learn from other girls anyway" Emma shrugged, reached forward and slipped her right paw under Floras robe and caressed her right breast.

Flora started to reply but her breath caught in her throat when Emma groped her. "Marita and...ohhh...the others? Well, of them, Rose is the bustiest, and has the most sexual experience, so she's a lot of fun in bed...Marie is very forward and likes to make love in different places like the shower or the floor...and Marita is into different sex acts like oral and boobjobs. So they're a pretty versatile bunch, and very open-minded, just depends on what you're interested in!" This talk and Emma's caressing had given her an erection her robe was doing a poor job of hiding. "Were you...thinking of sleeping with them too? I bet they'd be open to it."

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"Well, if they are as good in bed as you say, then sure i'll sleep with them, as a learning experience. But you first Flora. You're in the batter's box and I want you to take your best swing at me. Now.. lets kiss' Emma threw hers arms around Flora neck and kissed her firmly on the lips the dark red lips locking together passionately.

Flora's eyes opened in surprise as Emma kissed her. Her hands quickly grasped at the vixen's shirt and pulled it over her head. "Mmmmmmm…" Flora purred happily, unclasping Emma's bra excitedly. She slipped her hands underneath and cupped the girl's breasts, reciprocating the massage. *This time we don't have to worry about Kojurro walking in…* she thought contentedly. Shifting her weight, she took over the momentum of their kiss. Her robe came undone, revealing her flushed lower body.

Emma slid her tongue into Flora's mouth, and pressed her breasts against Flora's moaning in pleasure as she did so. She allowed Flora to undress her, her eyes taking in the folf;s form.

Flora's eyes opened wide in surprise. Quickly finishing undressing the vixen, she returned the kiss passionately. As she realized that Emma was just as interested in at least cuddling as Flora was, she pressed Emma into the covers and laid fully on top of her. Spread completely across the bed, their bodies pressed into each other as the makeout got hotter and heavier.

Emma felt Flora climb on top of her and vigorously probed Floras mouth with her tongue. Emma reached for Floras breasts and began to intensely fondle them Emma had bigger breasts than Flora, in fact they were likely twice as big. The breasts colliding together were like an apple bouncing against a watermelon. Emma felt Floras privates scrape against the inside of her leg, she could tell the folf wanted to mate with her- and she wanted that as well " Emma finally broke the kiss- ' Flora.. Make love to me ' She panted " i want to feel you inside me, rattling around."

Flora felt her mind light up as Emma gave her permission to do what she'd been desperately yearning for since they'd entered the room. Part of her mind was wondering if Emma had any condoms, but she didn't want to kill the mood. Besides, she rationed to herself, they live in a high-tech laboratory, there's got to be advanced forms of birth control a available, right? Worst case scenario, she'd buy a morning - after pill for Emma.

Positioning herself between Emma's legs, she felt the vixens crotch and found it more than adequately lubricated. *She really does want it,* Flora wondered in surprise. All her worrying that Emma was faking due to being a virgin evaporated, and she slowly pushed in. *Mmph...it's really--tight--*, she grunted, trying to force it in but not wanting to hurt Emma. "Tell me if I'm going too fast or if anything hurts," she told her lover quickly. She wasn't sure what was blocking her...was it the hymen? She kept prodding, and suddenly with shock she felt the resistance break and she slid in fully. "Emma are you all right?" she stammered with alarm, hoping she hadn't hurt her. "I think I just...took your virginity…"

Yeah, because thats happens when a girl makes love for the first time' Emma said,' there's a pack of condoms in the desk drawer. I got them for protection, in case i found a guy who was into me and wanted to get intimate. Wasn't expecting to find out my first lover would be a girl with a working pecker. Ahh ' she tensed as she felt Flora move around inside her. She kissed Flora passionately, scrapping her tongue against Floras and moaning as the folf made love to her.

Flora shuddered but with great effort forced herself to pull out and walked over to grab a condom. One quick unroll later and she was back on top of her lover. Sliding in much easier this time, she pressed her hands into Emma's giant breasts, their soft supple flesh enveloping her fingers with room to spare. Moaning with every thrust, Flora shut her eyes and focused on the sensations of sex.

Flora could tell Emma was enjoying herself completely, and decided that her goal for their first lovemaking session was to last as long as possible. With no pressure to finish, she indulged in Emma's body and lost all sense of the passage of time. Minutes ticked by, maybe hours, and Flora pumped away contentedly, panting and full of lustful contentedness.

After about thirty minutes, Emma pushed Flora off of her, the folfs juices dripping out of her privates. Emma panted heavily, her mind racing as the full impact of what had just happened slowly sank into her. " Wow.. You were great Flora. Just, er, give me like 20 minutes or so, to shower and clean myself, i've got a lot of goo down there..mixed with blood and secretions

Flora was panting heavily from exertion, and gladly let Emma slide their sweaty bodies apart and leave for the bathroom. Flora rolled onto her back and breathed in deep ragged gulps. The lovemaking had felt more intense than any she'd experienced up to this point; her slow but steady tempo caused her orgasm to brew slowly, minute after minute of increasingly intense contractions that never even brimmed over; Emma was apparently not experienced enough to tell when an ejaculation hadn't actually happened. Flora didn't mind; she suspected they weren't done yet.

Her fur was glistening with sweat, and her arms and legs were so tired from holding herself up that she couldn't even think about getting out of bed. Still in her dreamlike trance, she contentedly lay on the bedcovers and waited patiently for Emma's shower to finish. She hoped that Emma would be interested in snuggling under the covers after they were finally done; Flora had always fantasized about snuggling with someone her age, and Emma's ultra-soft skin made her an ideal candidate. *Thank god this bed's just big enough for two,* she thought dreamily.

Emma felt the hot water ran down her body, between her legs the water was a shade of crimson as she bled into the tub. She ran her Claws over her breasts and sniffed her hand, feeling the smell of flora on her fingertips. She knew that Flora had ejaculateed into her, she had felt the internal release as her lesbian lover had climaxed."I'm no longer a virgin, and I'm going to have to tell my family that i found someone..another girl." Emma said softly to herself, wincing slightly as she lay in the tub and felt the water lap against her privates which no longer had the protective hymen.She wasnt bleeding as much now, and the cum had washed off as well.. Emma finished and got out of the rub, draining it. She returned to the room, not bothering to put on fresh clothes." ding, ding' she said upon seeing Flora" round 2. This time I'M on top, dear Flora. Tomorrow morning you're going to wake up to me kissing you.' she said with a grin

Flora looked excitedly at her lover. "I'm ready!" she exclaimed happily. Her erection was already at full mast, and she continued to lay spread out across the bed, beckoning Emma to take her position. She relished looking at the vixen's body; the curves of her thighs and legs up to the locks of hair framing her round soft face. She'd never looked at anyone this way before, even her past sexual partners; somehow Emma felt different.

Emma jumped onto Flora and began kissing her passionately on the lips, feeling Flora beneath her..' Thank you, for this night Flora. I promise, it won't be a night i'll soon forget. After all, I'm not a virgin, thanks to you." Emma said with a grin on her face between kisses.

Flora felt herself slide into Emma far easier than the first time and with a satisfied groan quickly resumed thrusting. She couldn't resist staring at Emma's breasts bobbing as she bounced up and down on top of her, and as Flora slowly settling back into the cycle, she felt time slowly lose meaning as she became lost in the sensations of sex.

After such extensive stimulation from their first session, Flora knew she wouldn't be able to last long. Keeping her mind as blank as possible, she quickly found herself battling her body to keep her orgasm at bay. It was an intense balance of wills with herself, one that she couldn't hope to win. Her breathing became higher-pitched and she let out uncontrollable tiny yelps as she neared her climax. "Emma--" she grunted, trying to warn her lover, but Emma was pumping her past the point of no return.

Flora's eyes flew open and a load moan escaped the back of her throat as her climax coursed through her. After bubbling up for so long, the resulting orgasm filled her entire abdomen and the ejaculation felt so long she suddenly worried she'd break the condom. But it held, and with ragged gulps for air Flora once again relaxed limply onto the sweat-soaked blankets. "Oh...man..." she breathed, tongue draped along the pillow. "Hope that was as good for you...as it was for me..."

"It was amazing' emma said as she wiped herelf off with towel, then handed it to Flora " go take a shower, and once you are done, its time for bed. I.. don't have any energy left' Emma said resting on her side of the bed."Just , dont use up all the hot water' She added.' Flora, it goes without saying that you were amazing" she smiled. I'll probably be asleep by the time you get out, just to forewarn you."

Flora winced as she eased herself out of the bed. "I'll be really quick," she assured Emma. She didn't want to miss the opportunity for some post-coital cuddles. Disposing of the condom, she scrubbed herself off with a quick shower, wincing painfully as her muscles wondered irritably why they were being forced to do things again.

Before 90 seconds had passed she'd toweled off and was back in bed under the covers. "Looks like you weren't asleep yet," she smiled, wrapping her arms around Emma and spooning her lovingly. "I didn't want to miss the chance to cuddle with you while you were awake…"

" Well, You caught me just in time" Emma Said taking Emma into her arm. Sleep rapidly took it and her last move before falling asleep entirely was to kiss Flora on the lips. The dark red lips locked together for the last time that night and both girls were soon fast asleep, still kissing.

After a particularly memorable night,Flora's eyes snapped open at exactly 5 am. She had no idea why she woke up that early; she *never* woke up that early, especially not after an insane workout like she'd gotten she'd gotten last night. And why was her heart beating so fast? Was it love?

No. It was anxiety. Flora sighed silently. Now that she'd had a full night for her thoughts to marinate and the fire in her loins had been sated, she needed to resolve the situation she'd found herself. She'd gone from zero lovers less than a week ago to *five*, a staggering multiplication she'd hardly had time to come to grips with. And already these various lovers were coming to blows out of desire to spend time with her. It was a less pitiable problem than her previous forced chastity, but she didn't want to make anyone happy. But how much more can one folf do?

Not much, she admitted wistfully. And that's when an insane idea popped into her head. For several minutes she lay perfectly still, chest and legs pressed up against Emma's, almost hoping the vixen would wake up and remove any chance Flora had of exploring this idea of hers. After all the bed was quite warm, and there's no chance Flora got a full night's sleep. But finally she gathered up the willpower to extricate herself from the covers. She needed to resolve this soon as possible, for everyone's sake.

Hoping Emma didn't mind if she borrowed some clothes (her robe was in dire need of cleaning), Flora slipped on a skirt and blouse, blushing somewhat at how feminine her outfit was. Emma was definitely more girly than Flora, she didn't own a single pair of jeans or a T-shirt.

Flora slipped into the hallway and quickly retraced her steps to the part of the labs where Taga lived. Quickly she located the elder rat, who had indeed made good on his promise and decorated the walls with slips of white paper.

The man was sitting in a meditative stance, and cracked one eye open. "Hi. You're...awake early," Flora remarked politely, smiling awkwardly.

"I'm meditating. And you're interrupting," he answered simply, reclosing his eye.

"I'm sorry about that. If you want--" Flora started, but the man cut her off.

"No, its too late. Meditation is like a souffle; interrupt it before it's finished and it'll deflate before your eyes." The man got to his feet. "But I'll forgive you if you've brought me another gift."

"To, uhhhh, duplicate?" Flora gulped. "I might have. But I wanted to know a bit more about it first."

The man frowned. "I am not an exhibit on a guided tour!" he protested, folding his arms.

Flora sighed and fished around the pockets in her blouse. Locating a spare button sewn into the hem of the skirt, she pinched it off with her claws and passed it over. "I just want to get to know you a little. What's your name?"

"Marly," he replied eagerly, snatching the button and turning it into a short stack within a millisecond.

"And Marly, is there a limit to what you can duplicate? What happens to the original?" she asked.

"Duplicated items shouldn't stay apart for long," Marly replied, spreading his arms around his relatively barren cell. "Else I'd have decorated this place a hundred times over. I always re-merge everything before 24 hours pass. I can always tell which is the original." To demonstrate he selected a specific button and used it to flip the others along the ground like a game of tiddlywinks.

"Have you ever duplicated a living person?" Flora asked, mouth going slightly dry.

"Oh, of course. I used to charge people for the privileged." Marly flipped a button into the washbasin. "Got a little too successful, that's how I wound up here."

"What used to happen to those people?" Flora urged.

Marly began to detect the urgency in her voice and cocked an eyebrow. "Something tells me this isn't just innocent curiosity." Flora shifted her feet. "Those days are behind me, I assure you. But to answer your question; there were no complications, most of them loved it and I re-merged each of them within 24 hours. I got a little bit richer, they walked away happy, and I never asked questions."

"Please do that to me!" Flora burst out. "I need to be in two places at once! My friends are counting on me!"

"Girl, don't be daft." Marly duplicated a new set of buttons due to flipping all his old ones into the basin. "Management would know it was me in a heartbeat. I could get in a lot of trouble."

"I'd stay away from myself," Flora urged him. "And I'll bring you a new trinket every time. *Both* of me would! You can even make requests!"

Marly chuckled and shook his head. "I desire no particular items more than anything else," he assured her. "If you're hoping to sweet-talk me into this, it won't work. And have you considered not splitting apart your very essence just for the benefit of other people? Surely you don't me to tell you that's a bad idea."

"There must be something you need," Flora pleaded. "Something you'd never told anyone. This is your chance. I'll help you. We can help each other."

Marly paused. "You're making a mistake," he grumbled. "But there is something you can do for me." He held his hand out. "Deliver a message from me to Taga. Don't tell her it's from me."

Flora stuck her hand through the bars. "Deal!" She expected Marly to shake it, but instead he tapped her palm lightly, and suddenly there was a blinding flash of light. Flora grunted and covered her eyes, and when she looked again she was staring right into her own eyes. Another fully-fledged Flora, dressed in the same blouse and skirt.

"Oh my god!" Both Floras gasped.

Marly nodded approvingly. "Damn, that was a good one. I surprise myself sometimes, even got all the clothes right."

"Wait--" said both Floras, planning to ask who was the original, but then both broke off when they interrupted each other. Both looked at Marly, then at each other, then their jaws dropped open as they realized they were sharing identical thoughts.

Marly chuckled. "Here. Let's get some talking turns down. It'll settle out after that." He held his button up. "Smooth side up, lefty talks first, bumpy side up, righty. capiche?" He flipped the button. All three watched as it landed.

"So I get to talk first?" one of them said.

"Wait, I thought I was left," the other protested.

"Then why didn't you talk first?" the first asked.

"Cause you're in the way so I couldn't tell what side the button landed!"

"Ladies," interrupted Marly. "You're welcome. The less time you spend together the better the memories will be, trust me. And you've got a deal to follow through on." He glanced at left Flora. "You leave first. Go do your things. Other one, you can leave in like fifteen minutes, after delivering my message. Meet back up here by tonight and I'll rejoin you and put this all behind us."

Both Floras nodded, and the chosen one headed back up the hallway. Returning to Emma's room, Flora removed her clothes, put them neatly back in the drawer, and resumed her spooning of Emma. *I hope other me has fun with Yurei today...*

* * *

Meanwhile, the other Flora walked over to Taga to see if she was awake. "Hello?" she said softly. It was far darker at this end of the cellblock, and Flora couldn't even tell where the older woman was, or if she was awake.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 25, 2016, 07:28:35 PM**

As Flora approached her cell, Taga's eyes lit up from the corner.
"Ah, it's you again, Flora. Or... Should I say doppelganger of Flora?"
She chuckled, gliding her way up to the glass with a smirk.
"What brings you to visit little old me today, hmm?"

Down in the maintenance tunnels, Yurei slowly cracked one eye open, glancing around for a moment before getting up, checking to make sure that the bloodstains from the previous night weren't too obvious. Finally satisfied nobody would notice them, he slipped over to the elevator, phasing into it and riding it up to the floor his room was on. Once inside his room, he quickly made his way over to the bathroom, pulling out a set of long bandages and some antiseptic, which he quickly used to clean the set of cuts along both his arms. Wrapping both arms from mid-forearm down in the bandages, he nodded a bit, heading to his room to grab a change of clothes. Flicking through his closet, he picked a red and black version of his outfit, slipping into it and nodding a bit as he made his way back out the door and towards the elevator...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 25, 2016, 11:51:55 PM**

"Hey!" protested Flora. "What's that supposed to mean? I'm still Flora, the other one's the duplicate!"

She balled her fists, then realized she was disrespecting her elder. "Sorry, sorry..." she amended hastily. "How'd you even know I was split? And, uh, I've got a message for you. From a...secret admirer. They say, 'Hi Taga. How are you doing?'"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 26, 2016, 06:00:54 AM**

Taga chuckled lightly, grinning at the folf.
"Oh, it's as simple as your emotions, dearie. They're ever-so-slightly different than when you're whole."
She said, humming a bit as Flora delivered the message.
"Hmm, oh is that so? Who'd have thought a little old spinster like me could have an admirer. You tell him that I'm doing well, and I hope he is, too."
She said, a faint blush on her cheeks.
"Oh, and Flora? Don't worry. Yu will never be able to tell the difference."
She added teasingly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 26, 2016, 02:04:48 PM**

Flora committed Taga's reply message to memory. "You know I'm doing this for Yurei, right? He doesn't like how I'm spending time with other people, so now he'll have a Flora all to himself." Her eyes clouded. "You told me to help him, I'm a bit worried for him. Maybe he just needs someone who can literally give him constant attention."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 27, 2016, 05:29:32 PM**

Taga shook her head.
"Oh, dear. You should never do something for the sake of someone else. And I dare say you misread Yu. He's not the type for anger or possessiveness. Most likely, he was trying to avoid causing you trouble, and running scared because of it."
She said gently, shaking her head softly.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 27, 2016, 06:10:02 PM**

"Maybe..." replied Flora, not wholly convinced. Taga hadn't seen him last night. "Well, I'm off to see him now, so we'll see what happens. I've only got a bit before I get merged back, so I'll talk to you later."

She returned to Marly on the other side of the cellblock. "She says, uh, she's doing well, and hopes you are too."

Marly smiled dreamily from behind tiny stacks of buttons. "Thankye, lass. That'll be all, I'm sure you've stuff to do."

Flora quickly hurried to the upper levels. She was thinking of what Taga said. "*You should never do something for the sake of someone else...*" Well that can't be a hard and fast rule, otherwise nobody would ever help each other. She was convinced she was still doing the right thing.

Checking with the receptionist, she learned the location of Yurei's room and quickly darted over to it. She bit her lip. It was almost 6am, he was probably asleep.

She knocked anyway. She was pretty tired herself, maybe he'd be down to sleep together.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2016, 06:41:05 PM**

emma by this point was awake and making herself breakfast. she figured that flora had left to get some more tests run on her. her mind ran back repeatedly to the night before, all the passion and kissing the pair had shared. Emma had pinch herself a few times to be sure she hadnt dreamed it. ' the toaster popped up the bread she had been toasting breaking her out of

her reverie.
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marita stiorred from her bed, which she had shjareed with rose. the pair had shared a few deeop good bnight kisses the night before and wakuing up next to Rose was the feeling that always left Marita feeling happy about hersel;f.
-
rose was fliping through the channelas on the tv, looking for someting other than promos for the testing lab or various programs in arabic.
Marie was loooking through her knapsack, deciding which attire to wear that day.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2016, 06:43:53 PM**

Flora was shocked when she opened the door and found Emma making breakfast. "You wake up at 6am?" she exclaimed. Her mind started spinning, trying to come up with a justification for her being awake this early. "Err, how did you sleep? Good morning!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2016, 06:53:12 PM**

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morning. i'm normally an easy riser. comes with your school day starting at 7 am, and living a half hour away from it. so i had to get up at 6 and that habit became engrained, and even now i wake up around 6. how did the tests go? Emma asked. ' i mean i'm assuming you are up this early because of one examination or another.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2016, 06:58:01 PM**

"Oh, yeah, the...uh, circulatory test went well!" Flora stammered. "Everything's normal. You got school, huh? That sounds cool. What classes do you have today?" She knew what Emma actually meant by her school comment, but it would distract Emma to have to supply a correction. Flora suddenly realized she was still wearing Emma's blouse and skirt. "Er, sorry for borrowing your clothes. I didn't bring a change of my own from last night." Grabbing a bowl from the cupboard, she poured herself a bowl of cereal; she'll reimburse Emma soon, but right now she was really hungry.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2016, 07:07:23 PM**

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i dont have class. i'm saving up to go to college remember" emma replied.' so, why dont we go hang out with your other girlfriends so more today? Get to know them better at least." Emma said. ' she laughed as she saw the clothes Flora was wearing ' so thats where they went. eh, keep it. I can get more clothes once my paycheck comes in tomorrow ' Emma said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2016, 07:54:54 PM**

"Sounds good to me. Maybe they'll be interested in going swimming!" Flora finished her cereal and washed the dishes in the sink, including the ones that were there previously; washing the host's dishes is one of the ways a guest can show appreciation for their hospitality. "Yesterday's adventure in the desert has made me miss the water even more than before!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 31, 2016, 07:40:09 AM**

Yurei's ears flicked as he heard the knock on his door.
Who could that be...? Not like anyone knows my room number... Or cares...
He thought to himself, getting up off his couch and making his way over to the door, peeping out to see Flora. He mentally panicked for a second, quickly straightening his clothes before opening the door.
"Oh, uh... Hey, Flora."
He said softly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 31, 2016, 12:27:16 PM**

Flora smiled nervously. "Hi Yurei!" she smiled. "How you doing? I know it's super early, but I just wanted to say thanks for the wonderful trip into town last night. We're you still interested in showing me the red light district later today? Cause I'm totally down!"

She shifted her feet, wondering if he was going to invite her in or simply answer her question and politely close the door. She'd left his options open so as not to intrude on his privacy.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 31, 2016, 07:16:42 PM**

Yu chuckled slightly, smiling a bit.
"Oh, uh...Heh, you're welcome. I mean, I'm glad you enjoyed it. And uh... If you still want to, sure thing. I mean... I'd love to show you it, then."
He said, grinning shyly at her as he stepped aside.
"D'you wanna maybe come in? It's pretty early, and I could maybe make something to eat or whatever..."
He chuckled a bit nervously...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 02, 2016, 09:50:39 AM**

well, i'll definitely be up for swimming ' emma said ' i mean the place here has a pool,. but you only get 30 minutes at a time, and you cant undress while in the pool. we'd need a private pool for that." emma said giving flora a glance. ' i had a wonderful time last night , by the way.i hope you enjoyed it as much as i did.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2016, 04:16:11 PM**

Flora breathed a sigh of relief and accepted Yurei's offer. "Not gonna lie, had a tough time sleeping last night," she yawned as she stepped into his room. "Which is why I finally said screw it and came down here. Hope you weren't asleep or anything."

She glanced around his room. "Wow, it's...a lot neater than I expected, not gonna lie." she noted approvingly. "I've been in my room less than a day and it already looks worse than yours."

Flora smiled and wrapped her arms around Emma. "Last night was awesome," she replied, kissing Emma lightly. "It made me so happy, and I can't wait for it to happen again." She smiled. "As for swimming, guess I'll have to purchase a bathing suit. Bikini bottoms are kinda revealing for me, I might have to rock a Speedo and hope I don't look too silly."

She glanced at Emma's wardrobe. "Unless you've got bathing suits for me to borrow. If you do, would you be okay with my trying them on and seeing if they fit me?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 02, 2016, 06:30:10 PM**

Yu smiled awkwardly, giving a small nonchalant shrug.
"Well, heh... what can I say, guess I'm a bit of a neat freak, I guess."
He chuckled, quickly hiding his wrists behind his back.
"So, uh...sorry about last night. I was... It's a long story. And uh...Nah. I tend not to sleep a lot."
He stammered a bit...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 02, 2016, 07:41:41 PM**

i think i have a few bathing suits ' Emma said. ' try them out see if any fit. they're in the bottom drawer there ' Emma said. "If none fit well, you'll have to go out and buy a couple. Say do you have any of the girls numbers? I'd like to talk to them about that pool idea"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2016, 07:50:17 PM**

"Yup!" Flora recited Marita's number as she she'd her clothes and examined Emma's selection of bikinis. Finally deciding on a nice black one, she donned it and presented herself to Emma. "What do you think? I know the crotch is a little...bit of a bulge, but it's not *too* noticeable, is it?"

Flora placed her hand softly on his. "Hey, calm down," she smiled, "I don't mind. We all have our off-days, and this is really new for me too. I'm going to work on showing more concern for your feelings, so that won't happen again."

She sat down on his bed. "Today is Yurei today. I've got a completely free calendar and I'm ready to do *whatever* you want, go anywhere, try anything..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 03, 2016, 05:32:31 AM**

Yu sat down next to her, smiling a bit.
"A day with you all to myself, huh? That sounds... Nice."
He said gently, before smiling coyly and pulling Flora down onto the bed with a smirk
"Always wanted to do this~"
He teased...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 03, 2016, 10:29:02 PM**

"Hey!" Flora giggled as Yurei pulled her onto the bed. "Always wanted to, huh?" she said jokingly. "You mean since we met for the first time 24 hours ago, silly?" She warmly snuggled him back; she'd been in desperate need of cuddles since she and Emma were too tired to have any after their marathon sex session last night.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 04, 2016, 04:28:04 PM**

Yu smiled, lightly nuzzling into Flora's neck.
"Well, you ARE the most beautiful girl I've ever met, you know."
He teased, holding her close and murring softly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 05, 2016, 04:03:17 PM**

Flora giggled and gave him a light kiss. "You're flattering me!" she gave him a light kiss. "I'm not sure I even qualify as a girl, youve seen what Im packing. Don't let the skirt fool you!"

Said skirt wasn't doing a great job hiding her excitement, and she wondered if she should remove them before anything untoward happened; they weren't her clothes after all.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 05, 2016, 04:32:39 PM**

Yurei smirked, rubbing his hand along Flora's chest.
"Oh, I never flatter. Just tell it like it is."
He chuckled, his other hand rubbing just above her crotch.
"And I still think you're a girl. Just packing a bit extra is all~."
He teased lightly, nuzzling along her neck affectionately...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 05, 2016, 06:23:54 PM**

"Well, I'm glad you can see me as a girl even without my skirt," Flora's eyes lit up and she started heavily petting him back. She was extremely relieved to see he was so congenial; he seemed to have completely forgotten about last night. Pushing her advantage, she attempted to slide her hand into his pants. "Cause if I'm reading the signs right, I might slip out of these clothes soon enough so we don't make a mess on them."

She massaged his crotch. "Or maybe I'll keep them on. You're in charge today." Her eyes twinkled. "It's all up to your desires, oh captain..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 06, 2016, 10:51:53 AM**

Yu smirked and traced a hand along her body appreciatively.
"Mmm, feel free to slip out of those, lovely~.".
He teased, nipping her neck lightly as he ground against her...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 06, 2016, 02:52:42 PM**

"Your wish is my command!" Flora excitedly slipped her clothes off and pinned him underneath her. "Gonna meet me halfway?" Sliding her hands lightly under his shirt, she traced her fingers across his chest. "I like to see your body too you know..."

Flora gave Marita a call. "Good morning! We were thinking of going swimming at the pool! You interested in meeting us there?"

Title: **Around the Folf**

Post by: **Nick22** on **June 08, 2016, 10:59:13 PM**

Sue Flora! That sounds like a lovely idea. we'll bring our bathing suits, and a light light, so we can nosh on something, inbetween laps in the pool. i hope this place has a hot tub' Marita Replied." why dont we meet in, say 30 minutes?'

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No you're fine. i dont ever notice the bulge that much ' Emma said earnestly

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 11, 2016, 06:23:48 PM**

"Sounds good! Can't wait!" Flora hung up on Marita. "I'm going to head down and reserve our spot!" She told Emma, grabbing a towel from the bathroom rack. "Want to make sure we can get in, will probably also buy my own bathing suit from the shops so I don't have to keep borrowing yours." Emma's hips and curves were so much larger than Flora's that the bikini was barely staying on.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2016, 05:29:41 PM**

' we'll bneed to get you some clothes that actually fit ' Emma smiled.' your breasts are three sizes smaller than minem at least.' and overall yiou arent as curvy as I am."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 20, 2016, 06:08:41 PM**

The pool was indoors, a large white-walled rectangle that smelled strongly of chlorine. A Jacuzzi sat in a raised portion of the room, and a sign next to the empty lifeguard tower noted that the lifeguard came on duty at 10:00, an hour from now.

Flora knelt beside the deep end and nodded approvingly at the water's temperature. The pool was cold but not chilled, perfect for this sweltering desert environment. She resisted the urge to dive in immediately; she said she'd wait for Emma, Marita and the other girls to arrive. So instead she sat in the corner, watching the ripples and munching on a Pop-Tart from the vending machine.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 22, 2016, 10:41:09 AM**

Yu blushed a bit, shyly licking his lips as he traced down Flora's sides.
"Oh, do you now? Well, then,I guess it would be rude of me to say no~"
He teased lightly, lifting his shirt slowly...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 22, 2016, 08:48:23 PM**

Flora licked her lips hungrily, pressing her breasts up against his waist and sliding over him daintily. "You're so muscular..." she purred. Yurei's chiseled form was such a refreshing change from all the soft-skinned girls. "I'm so excited to be in bed with a real man," her eyes glinted. "I want you to take control of me, have your way with me." Her hand slid into his pants. "Make me your plaything..."

Suddenly she noticed the massive bandages on his wrists and let out an involuntary peep. "Oh my god, are you okay? What happened?" she gasped.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 24, 2016, 12:19:09 PM**

Emma came up to her a few minutes later wearing a pink bathing suit." Ah, you beat me down here, i was going to get us bot breakfast before the girls joined us, she said taking a seat beside Flora and dipping her toes in the water.. say.." She grinned , since no one else is around, you want to go into the jacuzzi?

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rose came up to them carrying a box of doughnuts which she had bought at a local shop which catered to the clinic. " Morning Girls. I got doughnuts " She opened the box revealing 24 doughnuts with a variety of toppings and filings. Take whatever you like, Just don't eat the jelly-filled ones. this are MINe" the Great Dane grinned. marita went into the Jacuzzi and turned it on, and bubbles began to fill the hot tub.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 24, 2016, 01:26:41 PM**

Yu looked away as Flora noticed the bandages on his wrists, fidgeting slightly.
"I-it's...I um...It's nothing...just..."
He shook his head, leaning in to kiss her softly, pulling her close

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Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 25, 2016, 03:28:38 PM**

Flora still worried, but acquiescently embraced him and buried her tongue in his mouth. Massaging his chest, she couldn't keep the anxious thoughts rushing through her mind. *Both wrists...it could have been an accident. But he's not acting like it...*

She unbuttoned his pants and hurriedly massaged his crotch. *I need to make sure he's happy...if I give him the most mindblowing sex possible, he'll be better...* Sliding her body along his chest, she flashed him a coy smile. "You know, nobody's ever taken my...um...'penetrative' virginity, if you know what I mean...if you've got any lube, I'd love for you to do the honors...right now..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 26, 2016, 09:15:49 AM**

Yurei smirked, grinding against Flora's hand a bit as he stroked along her back.
"Oh, is that so? Sure you wanna give something that important to me?"
He teased, moaning softly as he quickly flipped himself and Flora over, lightly kissing at the back of her neck as he reached over to one of his bedside tables...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 26, 2016, 12:43:43 PM**

"I want to...because you're worth it, Yurei." Flora gritted her teeth in anticipation, for once wishing his junk was a little bit smaller. "Just...try to be gentle..." She propped herself on her elbows and knees, fully presenting her hindquarters to him.

At least she knew he was STD-free; before coming to his room, she'd had the labs test both her blood and his semen stains on her robe. It was pretty embarrassing, but worth it. Otherwise, there's no way she'd be allowing him to bareback her, especially this early in their relationship.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 27, 2016, 08:46:28 AM**

Yu smiled softly, lightly tracing his hand along Flora's hips.
"Oh, don't you worry about that, Flora. After all, since you're going to give me something so important, I plan to make it special for you, too..."
He said, slyly trailing kisses along her back as he stroked up to her crotch...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2016, 01:13:24 PM**

Flora shuddered as Yurei stimulated her sensitive nether regions. For her part, she was trying to get some sort of stretching preparation by tightening and relaxing her sphincter, but she doubted it would help. *Maybe I should have prepared a bit before jumping into this,* she worried, but her only choice now was to trust Yurei. "J-just take it slow, at first, please..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 27, 2016, 01:53:33 PM**

Yu chuckled softly, placing a teasing kiss just at the base of Flora's tail, smiling softly.
"Oh, I promise I will, Flora. I wouldn't dream of hurting you."
He said reassuringly, slowly nuzzling down to her butt with a soft murr...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2016, 01:59:59 PM**

Flora peeped in surprise. "Wait, did you just...? Are you going to...?" she squealed in surprise. "Nobody's ever done *that* to me before either..." Nonetheless she found herself relaxing and giggling at how his nose and snout fur tickled. "Guess today is a lot of firsts for me..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 27, 2016, 04:17:24 PM**

Yurei chuckled softly, placing a soft, affectionate kiss on Flora's pucker with a soft purr.
"Well, I want to make sure this experience is wonderful for you. You're a goddess, and you deserve nothing but the best."
He said gently, blushing and taking a few deep breaths of Flora's scent...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2016, 10:27:44 PM**

Flora's mind was whirling. *Is he actually gonna give a rimjob? Maybe I'm reading the signs wrong.* She had no idea that somebody could want to do that, but part of her had always secretly wanted to experience one. "Do you...want me to clean it out first or anything?" she asked, just to be safe. Even if she's overthinking how far he plans to go, it's a valid question even for anal.

"Awesome!" Flora grabbed a chocolate-frosted donut excitedly. "I'm going to take a quick dip in the actual pool first, then let's jacuzzi!" Considering her goal was to cool off after spending so much time in the sweltering desert environment, she wanted at least to soak her body in the refreshing cold water. After finishing her donut, she took to the deep end with a hypocritical "Remember not to swim right after you eat, Emma!"

Taking the diving board at full bounce, Flora careened through the air at a speed that surprised even herself. The elasticity of the board sent her arching dangerously into the middle of the pool, which was luckily still deep enough that she decelerated before hitting the floor, though it was close.

She came up gasping for air. "Cripes! Careful with that board, it's scary springy." Swimming for the ladder, she was halfway there when she realized her breasts felt a little...free. "Aah!" she gasped when she realized Emma's over-sized bikini top had completely slipped off her from the dive.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 27, 2016, 10:55:53 PM**

Yurei grinned, his tongue flicking lightly along her crack.
"Mmmm, you're fine just how you are, Flora. Every..Single...bit of you is absolutely perfect." He said reassuringly, punctuating the last bit with slow, circling licks around her entrance...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 28, 2016, 07:23:18 PM**

Emma laughed as the bathing suit flosted near her ' Well, girl we are defintely going shopping after this. you need an outfit of your own. mine..arent going to the job, clearly. just get out and head to the jacuzzi. the bubbles will cover your tits for now.

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marita and turnerd on the ' rainbow bubbl;es' feature, which covered the jacyzzi with a variety of colors. Rose set down the box of doughnuts on a benmch and climbed into the hot tub opposite Marita.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 28, 2016, 09:11:26 PM**

Flora peeped quietly, her brain having trouble handling the sensations. Unlike most of the other sexual activities she'd tried in the past few days, she had never really given much thought to this one, so she had no fantasies to compare it to, and so far it wasn't comparing to anything she'd felt before. It felt oddly uncomfortable, far more taboo than her past relatively vanilla activities, but it felt like that feeling of doing something forbidden was part of the allure.

"Guess it's nothing you girls haven't seen before," Flora grinned, slipping out of her bikini and into the jacuzzi. Keeping her hands outside the water so she could have a second donut soon, Flora directed her attention to Emma. "Hey, you should tell the girls a little about yourself. You haven't really had a chance to meet them without distractions like Yurei's tour." For her part, Flora planned to keep silent for a bit, let her girlfriends talk among themselves and get to know each other better.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 10, 2016, 12:00:22 PM**

Well, I guess i start talking with Marita first I suppose. you're are the eldest, right? Emma asked ' Yeah, by a year.' Marita said " but no need to start talking about your backstory until we are all in, and the bubbles are flowing ' Marita said motioning at the pool.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 10, 2016, 12:23:52 PM**

(OOC: RP'd with nick via google docs)

Flora looked at the girls in the hot tub with her. Emma was getting the chance to really meet Marie,, Rose and Marita without distractions for the first time. She wondered what they'd choose to talk about, and planned to keep her own input to a minimum. After all, everybody knew Flora quite well by this point.
" so tell me about yourself Marita " Emma said " I'm guessing Flora's told you a bit about me. I'm 18, got a job here in order to pay for school, and well I havent had much luck with my personal life..' " Well, I'm 25, i graduated with a degree in Computers- Maintenance, upkeep, spam cleanout, that sort of thing. Puts creds in my pocket, and I'm very good at it.Flora's told us some things- like you're a bombshell' Marita smirked. " and if you forgive my frankness, she was understating it.You're supermodel level beautiful. We're talking Vogue or Cosmos." Emma blushed nearly as red as her lips." You Flatter me.' She said. laughing nervously."
"It's true, don't be so humble!" Flora teased. "Ask Rose, she has a lot of experience in her background when it comes to feminine beauty, you can take her opinion as professionally informed!"
" Well, not to put too fine a spin on it, but I was a dancer at a nightclub' Rose said " So I got to see the whole gamut, literally." A stripper?Emma blushed ' Yes, yes, and it was about as unglamorous as a job can be. But over the years I got a good sense about the sexuality of my customers. I found the lesbians tipped the best.' Rose reached forward and cupped Emma's face in her paw , and gazed into Emma's eyes intently for a few seconds. A smile slowly spread over Rose's dark red lips. "So, you discovered yourself in high school, huh? Pretty regular, if you are into girls. It was about that time I started noticing Marita over here, although we didn't start having a full-on relationship until college." "Um.. In High school. I wasnt anything like I am now' Emma said " I was a late bloomer."
Flora smiled at how forward Rose was being with Emma's personal space. The vixen is going to have to get used to the girls' more touchy-feely attitudes, especially with females they find attractive. "What do you think, Marie?" Flora asked, hoping to get everyone into the conversation.
" Marie chuckled ' Rose has the strongest gaydar I've ever seen. A short glance in the eyes, and she can tell which way you swing, even if you don;t know it yourself yet. It's eerie, really. Me, I was a co-worker with Rose at the club. Wasn't a dancer though, I served drinks, and occasionally slipped Rose some creds when she was low on them. Rose and Marita, are very open about what they are. They like girls, and aren't afraid to show it. 50 years ago or so, they couldn't do that, they would have had to cover up who they are, and marry some dudes for propriety's sake. As for me personally I'm 23, went to school to study art, believe it or not. But art doesn't sell unless you're Van Gogh or something, so I took what jobs were available. Flipping burgers, dressing up as a clown for kids parties, and finally as a ' waitress' at this bar." Marie said. " thats where I met Rose here.
Flora nodded. "I'm bummed I never got to visit the Electric Sheep, it sounded like a pretty pimping club." She regarded Emma. "Your turn to talk a bit about yourself! You've got such an amazing story, all you've accomplished going into modeling after high school." Flora was just making sure Emma felt comfortable talking about herself; sometimes shy people need help starting the process of coming out of their shell.
" Yeah, i'm studying to be a model' Emma said ", like you see in those perfume commercials snogging with a studly guy. But those model colleges aren't cheap, unfortunately . Which is why I signed up for the gig. I wore braces in high school and didn't go out much- i tried to go out with a girl named Marta- she ended up being a huge bitch, should have gone with my friend Cindi instead.. I have 2 older brothers Matt, who's 4 years older and Morris who's 3 years older. They're great guys, and I'm not just saying that because I'm their sister' Emma laughed
"You should invite them to visit Sartonic!" gasped Flora. "They sound awesome, I'd love to meet them!" she fiddled with the nozzle so the jets fired harder; she liked her Jacuzzis intense. "Let me know if it gets too hot for you girls," she grinned, increasing the temperature. "I usually prefer my water either scorching hot or frigid cold. Just a weird preference of mine."

" well, they are busy in school unfortunately. Matt is a senior, majoring in law, and Morris is a junior and wants to be a doctor' Emma said.' As for the water temperature, I like it warm, but not too warm.. Warm enough to be relaxing, but not warm enough so it's scalding. But whatever makes you comfortable, Flora, is what we go with, you are by the bath controls after all.

Flora smiled contentedly and shimmied down into the bubbles. Truth be told, she was feeling somewhat sleepy after waking up so early, but not sleepy enough to go randomly falling asleep in a public pool. It was just a languid drowsiness that helped her lose track of time, just immerse herself in the heat and let the water soak through her fur.

‟ So you have family ‵ Rose said. ‵ i was an only child, both my parents were miners in the Saratoga Mines. They managed to save enough money so I could go to school. I managed to get accepted to a college, and managed to graduate with a degree- art history.

Seconds turned into minutes, the bubbles cycled through every color of the rainbow and the water around Flora got ever hotter. It felt like days had passed while the young tired folf marinated in the tub, a folf who had lived through enough excitement for a week in the couple dozen hours since joining Sartonic. Despite her best efforts and the fascinating conversation her tub mates were having, Flora drifted off into a peaceful nap.

Rose approached Emma and took the vixen in her arms, giving her a winning smile.Emma blushed as she got a close look at Rose, who was, to her, stunning, upon close inspection.” are you going to kiss me, Rose?” Emma asked softly ‵ of course, my lovely . Just not yet. Lets see your chest, and in turn I will show you mine.’ Rose smiled, showing her canines in a broad smile. ‟ Marita took a brief glance at at the pair then moved over to the controls and turned the temperature down by 20 degrees from 110 to 90. Emma Took off her top with some trepidation, and set it aside. And Rose followed a half minute later. Rose then leaned in, pressing her breasts to Emmas and the dark red lips locked together as Rose kissed Emma firmly on the lips, 9drawing a murmur of surprise from the vixen.

Flora was completely missing the peep show happening right in front of her. Her head tilted back to lay on the concrete tiling surrounding the jacuzzi, her breasts bobbed languidly in the bubbles, and her arms floated buoyantly under the force of the jets. light snores escaped her throat thanks to the somewhat odd position of her neck, and a jet shooting bubbles directly into the small of her back was giving her the unconscious satisfaction of a dreamless massage.

Emma and Rose settled into a vigorous passionate and demonstrative sexual session, as both girls fondled each others breasts and butt, their lips locked together and their tongues ensconced in each others mouth. ‟ Marita grabbed Flora by her shoulders and shook her awake, one paw on her shoulder the other on Floras breast.

Flora let out a single snore as Marita gently shook her awake. “Whu…?” she blinked sleepily, then glanced at Rose and Emma scissoring passionately. “Oh, excellent, are we doing sexies right now?” she mumbled, recovering slowly from her disorientation. Drowsily stimulating herself, she spread her legs and pushed the bubbles aside. “Who wants to make love to the cute folf?” she asked sleepily.
You’ll get tag-teamed’ Marie said coming up to Flora and kissing her on the lips. Marita joined in as well, and began kissing both Flora and Marie. Emma and Rose made love passionately for nearly an hour until the sauna timer ran out and bubbles stopped flowing. Emma finally broke the kiss, and panted loudly as she lay limp in Rose’s arms ‵ Damn. Flora told me you were real good , Rose. but MAN, did she undersell it. ‟ Well, my dear Emma, i’ve been doing this sort of thing for several years now. I’ve seen just about anything, even guys packing female breasts. You get used to it in my line of work. For a girl just discovering the fair sex, you were real good Emma. Good body, nice soft breasts, wonderfully kissable lips. You’ll make some girl a fine wife, or if you wanna join our little group, you can have as much girl-girl sex as you like. We really enjoy these kinda flings.’ Rose said with a smile as Emma finally put her swimsuit back on.
Flora was panting loudly from being double stimulated. Marita and Marie had been giving her a double handjob along with the makeout session, and it was turning her on out of her mind. “Oh my god, you two are driving me insane, but I don't think I'm going to be able to finish inside this hot tub,” she confessed. “At least, not from a handjob…” Her eyes flashed mischievously. “Okay, if you girls don't want to do it, say so, but we’re in a pretty ripe position to tick a big box on my list of sexual fantasies. Emma, since you're not naked could you guard the entrance and warn us if anyone’s coming in, and the rest of you, could I have a tagteam underwater blowjob? I swear I’m so close to finishing already…” she shivered in excited

anticipation.

Marita dove under the water and began performing on Flora passionately,while Marie, Rose and Emma, acted as if there was nothing going on. A lifeguard walked past ‘ Morning ladies. You just get in? The canine asked carefreely ‘ yes we’ve only been here for about ten minutes.” rose said ‘ well, then dont let me bother you. I’ll be over here by the diveboard.

It's a good thing the bubbles were completely covering Marita, because Flora turned red as a beet when the lifeguard showed up. Not even trusting herself to stammer a reply, she worked on suppressing a squeal as Marita worked her magic under the water. It was taking all her focus not to prematurely finish already, so she hoped somebody tagged Marita out soon so the girl could catch a breath. Gotta last at least two girls...so it counts as an underwater tag team… she thought with conviction.

Marita popped out of the bubbles a minute later ‘ your turn Marie ‘ she said, babbles dripping down her face. Marie smiled at Flora then dove under the surface, where she began stimulating Flora hard. ‘ Marita rested alongside Emma, with Rose now on the opposite side of the tub.

Flora was biting her tongue to keep her characteristic pre-orgasm peeps from starting up. It was her first sex act in a public place, and the excitement was pushing her over the edge, even if it hadn't been a fantasy come true. Just thinking about the fact that she actually achieved the impossible dream, an underwater tagteam jacuzzi blowjob...and then it was too much. With an overly loud squeal that caused the lifeguard to look over in alarm, Flora arched her back and shot her load into Marie’s mouth. “Uhhhhhhh, sorry, I stubbed my toe!” she stammered to the lifeguard, sinking deeper into the bubbles with embarrassment.

“Well just be careful. It can be slippery in the tub. There’s a first aid kit on the wall over there.’ the Lifeguard said, sighing as he looked away and watched as a small group of pool goers appeared and began using the larger pool. Marie popped out of the bubbles area a couple minutes later, spitting out water mixed with cum. “You’ve been holding that in girl.’ she smirked. Marita went up to Emma with a smile on her face ‘ Well Emma, You and Rose had a nice fling. Now, do you want to try me out?’ She said and Emma blushed visibly.. “ Well, I think just a kiss for now. People are starting to come in, and i don’t want them to see us making love in public.” Marita smiled, leaned in and kissed Emma on the lips.

Flora meanwhile was trying to slip her bikini back on while hiding under the bubbles. She remembered Emma had said bathing suits were required in the public pool. "I'm getting a bit overheated, do we wanna either move to the main pool or get out and go somewhere else completely?” she asked the others. They could even go somewhere more private, if Emma and Marita weren't interested in waiting. Flora didn't care what they did, she was still basking in the afterglow of her own sexual achievement from their time in the jacuzzi.

Marita broke the kiss with Emma and Turned to Flora “getting overheated? Well I think that means it’s time to get out.” I’m ready to go too ‘ Marie said, squinting as she washed her face with the treated and warm water in the tub. ‘ I’m starting to turn prunish, so i guess thats a majority’ Rose said as she got out and went over to the control panel. a button there caught her eye “ Clean Pool? She murmured, before turning off the bubbles and temperature, then pressed the “clean’ button. An opening at the bottom of the hot tub slid open, and water began to drain out slowly.

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Emma was the next to get out, adjusting her swimsuit slightly and reflecting on the kisses she had shared with Rose and Marita. Both girls had been open about their sexuality, and very open about how much they liked her, Emma thought. And she appreciated that they thought she was pretty and a good kisser. They were just the second and third girls she had ever kissed, although she hadn’t exactly told them that, they had acted as if they knew she was a beginner. Emma thought both Rose and Marita were gorgeous, although her mouth had been way too busy with theirs to tell them that.

_ Marita and Marie got out next, feeling the cold from the surrounding air as they got out of the 90 degree water.” this was fun ‘ Marie said, dabbing her eyes with a nearby towel “ we should do it again sometime.

As the girls left the pool area, Flora ironed a kink out of the small of her back and grabbed the final donut out of the box. "Looks like I got a blood test coming up," she commented, glancing at her phone, "It'll only be a minute. Emma, are there any cool locations or events happening at Sartonic we should check out today? I'm feeling explore-y."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 10, 2016, 04:32:55 PM**

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well, theres the Blueberry festival which is.. um..in ' the garden sector of the grounds.. I have a map.. but i left it in my room ' emma said.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 14, 2016, 03:13:29 AM**

Flora's blood test went well, and thirty minutes later she emerged with a smile on her face. "This place has a garden? Let's do it!" She glanced at the map. "Oooh, a *rooftop garden*? How do they even keep that going in this climate? Let's go!"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 21, 2016, 10:02:42 PM**

Lots and lots of water I take it' Marita said as they began walking toewards the gardden which was on the 12th floor of a building, which sold earrings and other jewelry which was too expensive for the girls, so they could only look. Emma made her way to the stairs, as Marie looked longingly at a jade necklace.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 25, 2016, 02:22:50 AM**

Flora led the way to the elevator and hit the highest button. "Huh. This only goes up to the 12th floor. Guess we'll need to take the stairs to the roof," she commented. She glanced at Emma. "What sort of thing happens at a blueberry festival? Is it all about fruit or what?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 25, 2016, 03:23:27 PM**

Well, theres all sorts of things made of blueberries- jam, pies, sauces, and so on.. but theres more there than just blueberries, theres other festivals there, we just came during the blueberry festival" emma said with a smile as the group headed towards the stairs.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **July 25, 2016, 08:55:09 PM**

Yu murred teasingly, stroking Flora lightly.
"Mmmm, my goodness do you make cute noises~. Wonder what would happen if I..."
He trailed off, placing a slow, deep kiss right on her butt, tongue slipping into her a bit with a low murr...

Title: **Around the Folf**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2016, 01:04:19 AM**

Flora squealed shamelessly. It felt so...*wrong*, what Yurei was doing, but it also felt so good. She yelped in surprise as he probed deeper. She couldn't keep a furious blush off her face; it was embarrassing being so exposed to someone in such an intimate and taboo way. She didn't dare to talk, not sure what she could say. Instead she just curled her toes and closed her eyes, surrendering her other senses and focusing on the indescribable feelings Yurei was causing her to feel.

The rooftop garden festival was relatively subdued, due to it being midday; Flora suspected that as it got later and the desert cooled down, the festival would grow more active. On the bright side this meant they had almost unrestricted access to all the events and stalls, which were mostly showing off exotic treats like fruits, seeds, and delicacies.

Flora gasped in wonder at a speckled orange-purple fruit. "What's a...pluot?" she said curiously, reading the sign.

"It's a genetically-crossbred fruit!" the man exclaimed. His labcoat suggested her normally worked as a scientist at Sartonic. "It's a hybrid plum-apricot, first created genetically back in the early 21st century. Only recently have we created fertile self-sufficient orchards."

"It's...a hybrid?" Flora grabbed a pluot and studied it. "Like me..." she bit into it and her eyes lit up. "I think this is my new favorite fruit!" she exclaimed, causing the shopkeeper to chuckle. "How have I never heard of these before?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2016, 10:14:45 AM**

because its a rare hybrid, and we don't have it back home ' Marie said, as she looked around at the various foods and plants, many of them strange-looking hybrids.' marita loked in her purses for some creds, but was only able to scrounge up about 50.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2016, 10:22:51 PM**

Flora squealed instinctively as Yurei continued pleasuring her. It wasn't a sexual activity that felt like it could end in orgasm, more of an experience to enjoy as she lost track of time. But as her fur became matted with sweat, she began to worry that her sphincter might get overstimulated and too sensitive for what comes next.

"I...think it's ready..." she murmured back to Yurei, casting an excited look over her shoulder. Her muscles felt loose, and despite his girth she felt like he'd more than prepared her for the upcoming penetration. "I don't want to cum, I think it'll be better if I'm still horny when you stick it in. Just please apply lube, and then it's all yours..."

Flora took another pluot for the walk and continued observing all the events of the festival. "Okay, I picked the pluot stand, your turn to choose an activity!" she said to Emma, throwing her arms around the vixen playfully. The pluots had put her in a particularly good mood.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2016, 10:34:03 PM**

Well we could go over to that fruit weighing stand ' Emma said motioning to a table wth an array of simply gigantixcc fruits. each one looked like they weighed at least 500 pounds- thats a lot of pies." waterberries? Marie asked skeptically as she read ' a micing of watermelon and strawberries..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 13, 2016, 07:56:46 PM**

Yurei smirked lightly, pulling his tongue out and lightly nuzzling up Flora's back, grinning.
"Mmm, well then, I'll try to make you cum too~."
He said lightly, placing a soft lick along the base of her ear as he reached over to the nightstand and pulled out a small bottle of lube, spreading the cool gel over Flora's butt...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 13, 2016, 11:07:51 PM**

Flora's heartrate quickened, and she prepared herself for the moment of entry. "Don't worry about me," she panted, "this is your reward. You can get me off after you've had your turn..."

"I wanna try a waterberry!' Flora exclaimed, stepping forward, but the booth owner stopped her.

"These are for the weighing contest. they are not for consumption."

"Do you have any that ARE?" Flora asked, eyeing the alien fruit with relish.

"They have been mostly made into pies," the man gestured to the table. "150 credits apiece."

Flora looked at her friends. "What do you think? kinda a bummer we can't try them first to be sure we even like them..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 13, 2016, 11:24:31 PM**

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the pies were huge, but emma pulled out her creds card ' we'll take 2' she said to the stall owner ' and he produced 2 big pies after the creds transfer went though ' Marita was handed the pies to carry and the girls continued walking around, looking at other stalls.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 15, 2016, 05:05:33 PM**

Flora wrinkled her nose after a single bite. She'd never been a watermelon fan, and unfortunately waterberries didn't have enough strawberry to cancel out the flavor.

A few hours later, they'd seen everything there was to see at the festival. Flora was feeling a little drunk from the number of booths offering alcoholic samples. "Thank god for--*hic*!--the drinking age being sixteen!" She grinned as she found somewhere to sit down. "This festival was awesome. I wonder how late it is, maybe we could go do something out on the town."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 16, 2016, 04:03:17 PM**

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its 915" emma said loking at her watch " we could try going around some more, or head back. Up to you Flora.' We're fine with doing a bit more shopping " rose said, and she wrapped the remaining pie for later. " Depends on whats open at this point."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **September 22, 2016, 10:32:05 PM**

Yurei smiled a bit, leaning in to teasingly lick along the base of Flora's ear.
"Mmmm, now now. I want this to be a reward for both of us, sweetheart. After all, someone as lovely as you deserves nothing less~"
He teased, slowly pressing his tip into her as he reached around to stroke down her chest...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 12, 2016, 10:32:45 PM**

"Yurei, I'm glad you're thinking of me, but it's been..." Flora checked the time on his bedside alarm clock, "...almost three hours, and you haven't even stuck it in yet. I mean, if you're nervous, I don't want to pressure you into anything, but really, I think my body is as primed as it could possibly ever be."

Flora yawned as they left the festival. "I dunno, I might be tuckered out." She also didn't want to possibly see her other self with Yurei in the city streets. "Maybe we should head back to the room. See if there's any good movies on TV. Our bed can fit five, right?"

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 13, 2016, 04:39:13 PM**

Sure It can fit 5, just don't expect much personal space " MArie said . Emma, as our guest, can have first crack at the remote. First hour is yours " she smiled at the teenage vixen, who smiled back at her.. " i like shows that show off clothing emma sauid " I watch them and imagine myself wearing them.. course its just a dream..

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 14, 2016, 04:58:27 AM**

Flora led the girls back to her apartment. "Bed party! Get cozy everybody!" She tossed Emma the remote. "Also hope y'all don't mind, but I'm done being dressed in this desert heat." Peeling her clothes off, she took the spot dead center on the bed.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 17, 2016, 09:16:08 PM**

" taking the best seat for yourself, eh?' Rose smirked, as she climbed onto the left side of the side. Emma climbed in, next to her, Leaving Marie and Marita to take up the right side. " i'll pass the remote down once I'm done" Emma said, Smirking at Floras bare form. " Couldn't wait to drop trou Flora? Well you've certainly got self-confidence.."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 20, 2016, 04:01:33 PM**

"Mmmm, why would I want clothes when I'm surrounded by a bunch of gorgeous girlfriends?" Flora snuggled into the little spoon position, pressed somewhere between Emma and Rose. "Cause nobody gets to date me unless they're okay with heavy cuddles..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 20, 2016, 05:05:43 PM**

Emma Smirked " so this is the "wild side " the girls told me about.. She said as she wrapped her arm around Flora, and Rose reached behind Flora and Pulled Emma Closer." Well Flora does have good taste Rose said " she found you, Emma , after all." I take it Flora's not the only one interested in me, then?' emma said, and a smile pl;ayed on Rose's dark red lips. " OF Course not Love. I don't french girls that don't like frenching other girls, although truthfully Girls tend to be more open to same -sex relationships up through high school graduation than guys - "Gay until graduation" is a real thing" Rose said " with me, I really didnt realize I was gay until I started dating Marita, once we were in a relationship , it just.. felt right, you know?"

Well, Flora was my first kiss ever, and you girls are numbers 2 through 4. I'm glad you girls have been so welcoming and accepting " Emma Said." Who's next with the remote after you? Rose asked "That would be Flora " rose said. "Well emma, I think you and I will be busy during your hour with the remote." Rose said" oh, Flora and I have had sex before, so you wont be the first girl i've made love to" emma said shooting Flora a grin " But I've got a LOT more experience in making love than she does " Rose said."Once you've had a whiff of my flower, dear Emma, you'll want more."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 22, 2016, 02:54:57 PM**

Considering Rose and Emma were laying it on thick but had both elected to sit on either side of her, Flora suspected her body was about to be used as a sexual prop, like what happened with Rose and Marita in the hotel room. *Well, there are worse fates*...stretching her back and purring, she simply continued cuddling Emma, too content to worry about what was on the television or going through her bedmates' minds.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 22, 2016, 08:49:01 PM**

Care to join us Flora?' Emma Said to her" don't want to leave you out girl" She said honestly.." i mean it.' shhe said muzzling Flora Warmly and Giving her a hug.
I'll go get some popcorn girls ' Marita said as she got out of the bed. " any partocular flavor ypu girls wanmt?

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 28, 2016, 05:52:52 PM**

"Don't worry about me," Flora yawned. "Been a busy day, and besides, this is a good time for you to get to know each other better." She snuggled closer. "That being said, I'm not getting out of the way so I hope you're okay with me making myself comfortable on the bed..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 30, 2016, 09:56:00 AM**

oh, you're fine right where you are, and no, this time you won;t be a prop for a makeout' Rose said as she stroked Flora's fur.." What sort of shampoo do you use flora? Whatever it is, you need to let me use it, I have split hairs all over, but you dont have a split hair anywhere on your head>' she asked.

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Might just be the difference between foxes and dogs ' emma said ' Foxes dont have split hairs very often.' she explained.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2016, 10:18:06 PM**

"Recently? I use whatever the hotels have in the little bottles." Flora nuzzled Emma. She was rapidly falling asleep, but wanted to at least stay awake long enough to ensure Rose and Emma got along without issue.

Other Flora was falling asleep. Her face and chest were slumped into the blanket and a thin bead of drool was dribbling onto the covers as her butt remained shoved invitingly in the air.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 05, 2016, 10:35:57 PM**

Oh, so Just a regular shampoo then/ that keeps it simple " emmsa Said and she kissed Flora passionatey on the lips, throwing her arms around the folfs neck. Emmaslipped her tongue into Floras mouth and murmurred happily in the process. Rose watched the makeout with interest.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2016, 11:41:42 PM**

By miraculous coincidence, both Floras fell asleep at the same time.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 16, 2017, 05:58:41 PM**

Rose tucked flora into bed, and wiped off the drool from her pillow. " poor girl must be absolutely beat." she said to herself. " I'll let her sleep. The coauch will do for me tonight " she said as she made the fold out bed on the coach.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 16, 2017, 10:13:05 PM**

Many months later...

Natalie Parker reached her massage parlor at 9am, as always. She quickly turned on the neon Open sign and crossed to the computer to check her appointments. She wasn't the most highly-requested masseuse in her area, but she usually got two or three appointments a day.

Today, however, she saw to her mild disappointment that there was only one appointment on the books. In thirty minutes, she'd be seeing three new customers, two female great danes and a vixen. The vixen was newly pregnant, so they wanted a massage that specialized in prenatal therapy. Well, she could certainly do that. They'd not specified an end-time either, so hopefully they would enjoy themselves and stick around for long enough to make her drive to work worth it.

Then Natalie saw the addendum, and one of her eyebrows raised. They want a happy ending? *Not usually the sort of customer to ask for one of those, but I guess money's money…*

* * *

Marita drove the car down the road. " almost to the massage parlor, girls " she said with a smile. " How's the back seat, Emma? Comfortable enough for you?' she said looking in the mirror at the beautiful vixen lying down in the back seat. "We got you a surprise as well' Rose said, a smile on her dark red lips. " It cost a bit more. But well, you're worth it girl"

Emma nodded, with a small smile. "I'm excited to see what it is. Thank you both so much!" Inwardly, she was wondering what they could have gotten her that would require such a far drive out of town. They weren't even in the same city as Sartonic anymore.

She focused on the desert environment outside the car as it zipped past. This could be a great chance to get to know Marita and Rose better. She'd get so caught up in work that she never thought to visit them at their apartment. But part of her worried she wouldn't have enough interesting things about her to keep them interested, considering they're into wild girls like Flora.

" You're very welcome Emma. Anything else you';d like? This is an " Emma gets whatever she wants ë day, because you always give expectant mothers anything they like. You know, to avoid pregnancy-fueled rants" Marita smirked." sky's the limits, love. You want to go see a flick? Dine out? Play scrabble? Name it, we'll do it for you."

"Hmmmm…" Emma thought for a bit. "Let's turn on some music. What's your favorite genre of music, Rose? I pretty much like anything except country and rap."

ë You and me both girl. Can't STAND country, with all the sappy stuff about the wife running off with the dog. Bleeech" Rose said.' But I love the oldies Emma. Eagles, Aerosmith, Queen. They get my inner karaoke going.' " She's got a damn good singing voice too' Marita said,. " Girl can sing opera, for goodness sakes." stop, Marita. I'm not Aretha Franklin' Rose protested." You get to pick the station Emma.' she smiled.

"You should sing Rose!" Emma urged, smiling. "I want to hear your voice!" She listened as Marita thumbed through the channels. "How about the first song Rose recognizes, we stop and listen to her sing?"

Deal" Rose said " as Marita stopped on a Queen Channel " Warm up the Pipes Girl. Next song is " Who Wants to Live Forever" Rose began to take a breath and began to sing - and she was.. incredible ë There's no chance for us .. It's all decided for us" Rose sang with a crystalline, clear and tender voice. Marita listened with a big smile on her face.

Emma smiled as she listened to Rose belt out the song. If she'd known the lyrics she'd have sang along, but as it was she simply enjoyed having their company. "You're a natural!" she laughed. "You should have been a pop star!"

"The opportunities just didn't present themselves when I was younger"Rose said. " Maybe one day, i'll take a chance to go into a recording studio and sing for them, but for now other things take precedence. I'm basically a housewife to this chick' Rose smirked as she pointed to Marita."Now, of course, there's caring for you Miss foxy" She shot Emma a grin." Flora's in no financial position to do it, and Marita's jobs pay well, even if they are hush hush."

Emma smiled. "Thank you both for all your support. Really, it means a lot to me." She patted her stomach, which was beginning to show whenever she wasn't wearing a baggy enough shirt. "It's good to know I have so many people supporting me!"

Well, you need the support, Emma' Marita said with a smile.." so, the day is yours. Anything goes. Literally anything. Whatever you want to drink or eat. We'll get it for you. Want to watch something on TV, our remote is yours.   Need that baby bump massaged, let   us know. And as Flora has likely told you, We are very open-minded about things of an intimate nature- let us know if you have any fetishes, we'll be glad to fulfill them. We'll do anything for a girl as lovely as you are Emma. Name it honey, the world is your oyster."

Emma flushed red as a beet at the forwardness at Rose's remarks. "I'll let you know if I really have a hankering for something," she replied hastily. "Um, I'm a little inexperienced in those ways...maybe you'd like to suggest something? I'm pretty open-minded myself, I'm prepared to try anything really."

Well, how often have you French kissed?" Rose asked.' Marita and I really enjoy it, it's one of the things we do when we begin a romp..and well, just because you have a bun in the oven , doesn't mean you stop being able to have sex. The desires, needs and passions are still there, along with all the extras that a pregnancy carries with it.' and if things get too hairy between you and Flora you are always welcome to crash at our place.'

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 01, 2017, 09:52:22 PM**

So what do you say Emma? " interested? Rose said " if not, we understand. Totally up to you. " dont pressure the poor girl , Rose" Marita said, a grin forming on her face all the same. " you're an open book Rose. When you like something, you show it."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 01, 2017, 10:11:57 PM**

Emma couldn't decide, she was never good at making decisions...but after mulling over her decision, she decided that she could decide, and decided yes. "I decide...yes!" she decided loudly, smiling at her decision.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 31, 2017, 03:27:21 PM**

Yurei sat in front of his computer, resting his forehead on his hand. Staring at the lab results from the latest batch of the project he was working on. Sighing, he shook his head and slumped back in his chair.
"Ugh, damnit... Still causing unpredictable spikes in power activation..."he
He muttered, closing out the files...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2017, 12:39:56 AM**

From his bed, Flora stretched languidly. "Something the matter?" she muttered, blinking sleep out of her eyes. She rolled her head and looked sleepily at the bathroom. She kinda had to pee, but not enough to actually drag herself over there and leave the warm covers...

When Yurei didn't immediately answer she rolled back over to settle into the warm spot of the bed. With Emma and the girls on some sort of road trip to a masseuse, Flora was spending her nights in Yurei's room because it had video game consoles and a shorter walk to the dining commons. Before closing her eyes again, she spared a single glance at the bedside clock. *9 am? The fuck am I doing awake...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 02, 2017, 07:42:55 AM**

Yurei glanced back over his the chair, smiling at Flora.
"Ah, nothing. Project I'm working on has hit a dead end is all."
He chuckled, spinning the seat around and hopping up before joining Flora in bed.
"Just checking on it while you were asleep."
He said as he wrapped his arms around her waist from behind, tracing a hand up her leg...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 02, 2017, 03:32:58 PM**

Flora grinned and snuggled up close to him. "Mmmmm, well, welcome back..." she pecked him on the cheek. "Why are you wearing clothes in bed?" she teased sleepily, "We're not expecting company, are we?" *Though that would be kinda cool...I should ask sometime if he's down to try a threesome...*

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 02, 2017, 04:53:40 PM**

Yu grinned, shifting back a bit and quickly stripping down.
"Heh, good point~. And even if we were expecting company, why not give 'em a show, right?"
He teased, pressing back up to Flora with a murr...

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 04, 2017, 03:37:27 PM**

Flora grinned and climbed on top of him. Pressing her body into his, she wrapped her arms around his neck and pecked him again on the cheek. "I'd kiss you, but I think I've got morning breath," she smiled, "so maybe I'll put my mouth to better use elsewhere..."

With a series of kisses, she made her way slowly down his chest and stomach, before focusing her attention on her favorite part of his body. "You need to stop getting up before me," she joked before her mouth was full, "because I keep planning to wake you up with one of these..."

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 04, 2017, 06:04:44 PM**

Yurei smiled, stroking his hand along Flora's head smiling a bit as his foot teased at her crotch.

"Mmmm, you know that I don't mind that, Flora~. Your kisses are just about the best thing ever."
He said, moaning softly as Flora found her mark.
"Mmmm, and if you want to surprise me, you'll have to get up pretty...mmm... early. Besides, I've been planning a few...surprises for you, too~"
He murred

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 09, 2017, 02:08:33 PM**

Flora increased the pace as her other hand massaged him gently. *Hmm, that reminds me...* She hummed a low rhythm from the back of her throat, a tuneless sound that vibrated her lips and cheeks as she pushed him deeper into her mouth. It was a trick she’d always thought would feel amazing, and Yurei seemed like a good opportunity to try it out.

Title: **Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 09, 2017, 06:54:31 PM**

Marita saw the turnout for the treatment center and pulled off ' we'll be there in about 10 minutes girls. " there wasn't much out here, just a strong of fast food places, where you could get a quick bite to eat. ' You want anything Emma? We can get a burger if you want one..' she said kindly.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 23, 2018, 08:45:29 PM**

Emma thought. "Hmm...yeah, I think I could go for something," she smiled. "Are there any Mexican places? Flora talks about burritos a lot, and I've been meaning to see one for myself. I've never really understood what they're supposed to look like..."

Flora choked when Yurei's door suddenly came flying off its hinges. Three Sartonic guards marched into the room, rifles drawn. "You," the lead guard snarled, jabbing his finger. "To the brig. NOW."

"What?" She stammered, leaping out of bed and raising her hands in the air. "What did I--?"

"Move it!" One guard pointed his rifle pre-emptively at Yurei in case he tried to stop them.

Flora slinked nervously to the door, tail between her legs. "C-can I at least grab--?"

"I said MOVE IT!" he snapped, eyes bulging. Without further ado, their trio of rifles escorted her roughly out of the room.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 26, 2018, 07:41:53 PM**

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remember that we aren't anywhere near Mexico" Rose said " Given the country we are in , and its culture, you aren't going to find any Mexican stuff here,as for burritos, they are similar to tacos, except they completely enclose whatever toppings are in them. beef, chicken, rice, etc. From what i see, these fast food places are mostly ice cream stops, which rather stinks."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 26, 2018, 11:13:18 PM**

"Aww, bummer. Maybe another day," Emma smiled. "Cause that sounds super delicious. Maybe we should just get Mediterranean, I know this city's full of those."

She checked her watch. "We've still got time before the massage. It's always nice not having to rush while eating. I wonder if Flora and Yurei are eating right now."

Flora was marched roughly down the hallway, the guards not even giving her time to make eye contact with anyone walking by.

"Flora?" asked Nash, a human test subject heading for the Circulatory lab. "What's going on?"

"I'm not sure, I--" she started, but the guard elbowed her roughly in the side. "No talking, no slowing down," he informed bruskly.

Finally they herded her into the brig and threw her into the first available cell. Flora took several seconds to catch her breath, and only once they'd assumed guard positions outside the brig entrance did she timidly stagger to her feet. Shivering in the drafty cellblock air, Flora debated the merits of once again asking for something of an explanation, before a fiery-haired raccoon scientist named Cherlins suddenly marched into the brig. "You've got a lot of explaining to do!" he snapped, rattling her cage bars and sending her leaping backwards in alarm.

"I will! I'll tell you whatever, I promise!" Flora stammered. “Just tell me what about!”

“You thought you’d deleted the security footage,” he leered. “And nobody would discover that *you* were the one who freed Experiment L1F3. (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dAN9sL4zP1mWDmxmh0n0Ep-5SsWJNB-FwsapErnEPxU/edit)” He smiled grimly when realization played across her face. “But one of the new test subjects can restore damaged film, and now we’ve got it on video.”

Oh crap… Flora gulped. “I, um…” She took a deep breath. “Okay, yeah, I may have done that…” Her eyes widened and she raised her hands quickly when he drew a silver-barreled taser. “Whoa don’t shoot! I’m sorry!”

“Not yet you’re not!” Cherlins snarled. “Why? Why did you jailbreak the most dangerous experiment Sartonic has ever held? Do you have any idea how valuable she was?”

“Yes, yes, I know…” Flora couldn’t keep her heartrate in check. “I broke all the rules, I don’t really have any excuses. I just thought the way we were treating her was inhumane.”

"We're not paying you to think..." Cherlins growled. “Tell me *everything* from the moment the two of you left Sartonic, or you die right here, right now.”

“We escaped over the west courtyard wall,” Flora confessed, eyes still locked onto the taser barrel. “We were gonna head deeper into the desert, she promised to take me with her. We headed directly away from the city, hiked for a day. You should be able to follow our path, she kept growing flowers and stuff everywhere she stepped. That night, we slept on some sand dunes, and when I woke up in the morning she was gone.” Flora felt her face redden remembering how L1F3 had abandoned her. “So...I just came back. Pretended I’d spent all that time in my room.”

Cherlins had grown beet red himself. “You are so goddamn stupid!” he screamed in frustration. “We could have furthered humanity and gotten rich at the same time. She could have given us the cure for aging!”

“She wasn’t going to give you anything!” Flora snapped back. “We both know that. You were just going to end up killing her.”

“I guess we’ll never know…” Cherlins shot her in the crotch. Flora’s eyes widened and she screamed as she collapsed to the floor, losing control of all her muscles. “Unfortunately Van Der Merwe says we can’t kill you yet, so we’re just going to leave you here for now.” He didn’t bother to hide the threat in his tone as he deactivated the taser and left her crying and spasming erratically in the fetal position. “Enjoy it while it lasts.”

Gnashing his teeth furiously, he stomped out of the brig.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 27, 2018, 11:30:22 PM**

Marita stopped at the nearest fast food join, which was blamed icy Iraqi ice cream. there was a mix of classic flavors,-chocolate, vanilla, twist, met twist oreo twist- with new ones like ' camel's milk, crescent cream. tigris toffee and baghdad berry. " hmm " lets go in girls. they seem have a lot of choices here> Any preference as to flavor Emma?' Marita asked as she stopped the car and got out.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 28, 2018, 02:28:59 AM**

"Baghdad Berry sounds *berry delicious*!" Emma joked as they walked into the ice cream store. "I've been having cravings for fruit since hitting second trimester, that would hit the spot."

She let the girls go first in case they needed more time to decide what flavors to get. *Huh, the sky seems a bit darker than it should be,* she observed, looking idly out the storefront windows. *Considering it's only 2 o'clock...*

It was a long time before Flora regained enough motor function to crawl pitifully around her cell, and she spent most of it cradling her family jewels and trying frantically to come up with her next move. She'd always avoided Cherlins because she'd heard horror stories from any test subjects that worked with him, and now he was out for her blood. *Can Yurei bail me out?* she wondered, glancing at the pristine white walls of her cell. *Odds are good they planned* *ahead for ghostform or any other psionic power. But if he can talk his way past security, he could slip me something...*

Crawling to the front of the cell, she staggered to her feet using the bars as a crutch. She could see the guards were still standing at attention outside the brig, armed and stonefaced as before.

I don't think I'm going to be able to rely on Yurei this time. She looked around. Her cell contained only a sink, toilet, and cot bolted to the wall. Not a lot to work with...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 02, 2018, 05:38:21 PM**

Marie went up to the counter to order her ice cream, she settled on a regular hiot fudge sundae with lots of whipped cream. Marita got oreo mint twist, in a dish and covered its in nuts , whipped cream and sprinkles. Rose got Tigris Toffee in a cone. ' anything you ladies want to drink?' Marie asked.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 02, 2018, 09:57:20 PM**

Emma shook her head. "I'm trying to avoid sugary drinks or alcohol. Just drinking water until she's born," she patted her stomach. "Or he? The doctors seemed a bit confused on that part..."

The clerk handed Emma her ice cream and she started enjoying it. "Should we eat while driving to the masseuse, or keep eating here?" she asked. "We've probably got time for both, but we'll be cutting it close if we stay here..."

Cherlins glared at the cheerful wolf fixing the potted plant he'd knocked over while walking through the door. "Dr. Kojurro. What the hell are you doing in my office?"

"Walter! It's been so long, how are you my friend?" Kojurro beamed, showing a wide mouth of teeth. "You're always so busy working with your experiments in the quarantine section, you've haven't come to any of our department's good old-fashioned sitdowns in months!"

"I hated those; I just wanted the free beer, but eventually it wasn't worth listening to everyone's idiotic banter." Cherlins narrowed his eyes. "Speaking of which, please leave."

"Of course, I don't mean to bother you..." Kojurro turned to leave, and Cherlins had halfway refocused on his paperwork when the wolf abruptly spun around and continued "...BUT there was something Van Der Merwe wanted me to tell you. If I could request just a minute of your time…"

"Van Der Merwe is in Denmark meeting with shareholders," Cherlins raised an eyebrow. "As you damn well know."

"Exactly! And that leaves you in charge of the base! And Van Der Merwe explicitly told me to inform you if anything unusual happens in his absence." Kojurro bowed flamboyantly. "And, well, to that effect I must report that we're getting the strangest weather readings any of us have ever seen."

"'Weather' readings?" Cherlins checked his email, and only then noticed several panicked emails from other personnel at Sartonic. "Strange how? Are we talking humidity, temperature, atmospheric phenomenon?"

"Yes. To all of those." Kojurro leaned over his desk and pointed to a specific email. "I can't be any more specific because none of it makes sense. It looks like we’re about to be hit by a tropical storm, a mudslide, a tornado, a heat wave, a cold wave, an earthquake, and a snowstorm. At almost the exact same time.”

Cherlins’ eye twitched. “But--but--we’re in the middle of the desert!” He burst out. “We never get *any* weather. And it’s meteorologically impossible for all of that to even occur at the same time!”

Kojurro nodded in agreement. “It certainly requires urgent investigation. Hence why we’re all being rather pushy with requesting your orders.”

Cherlins read the document over again. “Don’t do anything,” he finally decided. “Sartonic is more than built to withstand any and all of these. I’ll have the maintenance crew reinforce windows, but otherwise I’d rather we focus our energies on finding out what’s causing this extreme weather to manifest.”

He hit the button to summon Sartonic’s elite security guards. “Because whatever it is, we need to capture it.”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2018, 01:29:28 PM**

We can eat on the way' Rose said, as she headed out of the restaurant carrying a tray full of large sodas and a large cup of water for Emma. ' Alright , girls we have about 20 minutes or so to eat our lunch ' Marie said looking at the clock on the dashboard and taking a soda, she had eaten about a quarter of her ice cream.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 07, 2018, 09:38:18 PM**

Emma nodded, eating her ice cream as they returned to the car and pulled out of the parking lot. "Could you roll your windows up?" she asked the driver as they hit regular cruising speed and raindrops started soaking the upholstery. "This is just bizarre, getting rain at this time of year. But it might actually improve the massage, honestly. Rain makes such a peaceful, relaxing sound when it patters against glass."

Flora bit her lip as her claw scraped against something metal for the umpteenth time. She was trying to pick the jail lock like she'd seen Emilena do, but it was proving just as impossible as she'd expected.

"What the hell are you doing?" Cherlins glared as he appeared from the other side of the brig. Apparently there was a second entrance.

"Nothing!" she stammered, leaping backwards and covering her crotch defensively.

"M-hmm." Cherlins folded his arms. "I came for the complete list of Experiment L1F3's powers."

"Uhh, mostly just plant-growing stuff..." Flora curled into the furthest corner of the cell. "And making things older or younger. Oh, and growing all those vine-tentacles. Also she turned my nipples into flowers that one time, but somehow they got better--"

"What about weather alteration?" he interrupted. "Especially once you two were outside the lab."

Flora thought. "I don't remember anything like that. Why?"

"There's a..." Cherlins paused to think of the right word, "...very unusual tropical storm coming our way. Our sensors are detecting her psionic signature from it."

Flora's hair stood on end. "She's coming back?" She leaped up. "Let me talk to her! I might be able to get her to stand down."

Cherlins laughed. "Stand down? We don't give a crap about her standing down. Sartonic isn't worried about some measly storms. But..." He held a pen and short written agreement through the bars. "If you promise not to run away, we could use you as bait. You help us draw her out, and then we can re-capture her."

Flora's eyes widened. "I..." she took a deep breath. "Will I be fully pardoned?"

Cherlins narrowed his eyes. "*Only* on successful recapture of the specimen."

Flora gulped. "...Okay." She raised her hands to take the contract, then squawked in alarm when he took the opportunity to tase her in the nuts again. His laughter was still ringing in her ears as he walked out of the brig.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 08, 2018, 12:43:41 PM**

Marita pressed a button which rolled up both the front and back windows ' This is strange. Deserts usually dont get major storms, but this one looks like its gonna be a whopper ' Marita said ' We;d better get to massage place and pronto. Dont want to be caught on the road if part of it floods. ' So everyone eat your ice cream, quickly, theres a bag by Maries feet for garbage." Marita said, she had eaten most of her ice cream already. marie took a sip from her sida. Outside the rain began falling harder and harder.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 08, 2018, 06:54:58 PM**

Emma finished her ice cream and tossed the cup in the designated bag as they pulled into the massage parlor parking lot, right on time. "I'll go let the masseuse know--oop!" She gasped in surprise as she stepped out of the car door and slipped on the slick ground, but caught herself in time. Within seconds her skirt and leg were soaked with ice-cold pelting rain. "I'm okay! Good lord..." She covered her face and stumbled to the door.

Natalie Parker looked up from the receptionist's table as Emma entered. One look at her belly told her that this was the client. "Miss Maple! Welcome!" She hurriedly grabbed the girl a towel.

"Where on earth did this storm come from?" Emma wondered aloud. "It was bright and sunny this morning!"

"The weatherman's been wondering too," Natalie nodded to the silent television in the waiting room, where a panel of meteorologists was discussing the breaking weather alert. "Luckily the rain won't bother you in here." She smiled. "Head into the back. You get yourself dried off, feel free to remove as many clothes as you feel comfortable, and lay facedown on the massage bed." According to the booking, her handlers would be covering payment and negotiating the details of the transaction. "I'll be with you shortly."

The two Great Danes were parking the car. Natalie waited patiently for them to arrive; to avoid being stiffed, she usually requested that new customers paid half in advance.

Cherlins looked out the window at the darkened stormclouds closing in on the base.

"Sir," reported Kojurro, "every window in the base has been reinforced, as ordered."

"And not a moment too soon..." Cherlins murmured. He stood up and closed the blinds. "All personnel have been locked safely indoors. Now we just wait this out."

"Should we plant Flora in the courtyard?" Kojurro asked. "We're running out of time to use her as bait before the storm hits."

Cherlins shook his head. "First I want L1F3 to realize how fruitless her little storm is." His eyes steeled. "Get her really desperate and frustrated. Then she'll be ready to walk into any trap we set."

Kojurro nodded. "Assuming her storm is really as weak as you claim...she is the first experiment to escape from Sartonic in over fifty years."

"This time she won't have help on the inside," Cherlins growled. "I swear if that folf tries anything, I'll shoot her myself."

Kojurro gulped.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 12, 2018, 06:32:05 PM**

Marita and rose entered next folowed by Marie, the rain was starting to come down harder and harder, even though they had parked close to the fromnt door they still r4ecieved a drenching. marie tossed their garbage away in a bin close to the front door and Marita approached the front desk ' Hi! We're the Miss Maple Group. I'm Marita, I'm here to pay for the massage " She said to Natalie who was standing behind the counter ' Now you said half in advance, right, lets see, that would be 600 creds. " Marita said pulling out her creds card.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 15, 2018, 03:10:03 AM**

Natalie Parker to put a CLOSED sign on the door. "Absolutely not letting any walk-ins today," she quipped, locking the door. "They'd be insane to go outside in this weather anyway."

She smiled at the pair. "600 is fine, of course, with the other 600 upon completion. Pleased to meet you, Marita. I'm Natalie." Wiping rainwater from her shoulder, she activated the cash register and cleared the purchase.

"You know," she smiled. "With this weather, you might be stuck here a while. If either of you wants a massage once I'm done with Emma, I'll drop the price down to 950 per person." That was only slightly cheaper than her normal rainy day discount anyway, and it would make her trip to the office today slightly more worth it. "Heck, for only 700 flat I'll give you two an open massage room and you can take turns on each other."

The wind whipped the trees in the courtyard violently, uprooting several of the smaller saplings. The wind howled with anger as rain battered the beleaguered station.

Cherlins stood in the main lobby, watching the tempest outside through reinforced glass double-doors.

Kojurro walked up behind him. "Things are holding. For now..."

"What do you mean, 'for now'?" Cherlins asked, not breaking eye contact with the storm. "We should be able to hold this out indefinitely."

"Well, uh, the lightning seems to know all the right places to strike. We've lost our auxiliary generator, and the storm has completely disrupted outside communications. We can't contact anybody."

"We shouldn't *need* to contact anybody, goddammit!" Cherlins balled his fists and whipped around to glare at his fellow scientist. "Why are you all treating this storm like it's anything but our best opportunity to recapture--?"

His tirade was cutoff when the lights in the room suddenly flickered on and off. "What the hell?"

Kojurro quickly tuned his radio. "Ummm, not getting signal." He gulped. "I'll go check main power. The storm shouldn't even get that far."

"Yes, go do that." Cherlins sighed as Kojurro and returned his gaze to the windows.

And then it hit him in the cheek. A single solemn drop of water. The smallest of cracks had formed in the largest skylight in the lobby.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 18, 2018, 10:23:52 PM**

We;'ll take the 700 and give each other massages ' Marita said handing Natalie her creds card ' Which room would you say is the best for massages , of the ones you have?" she asked. Rose and Marie sat down in a couple chairs near the doior trying to dry off as much as possible.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 20, 2018, 08:51:07 PM**

Natalie threw Marita a keycard and a bottle of oil. "Take the one down the left corridor. There'll be towels and extra lotion in the cupboard to the right of the door. And make sure you clean up after yourselves." She headed for the hallway to the back rooms. "Since y'all paid for a full four hours, I don't think you have to worry about finishing before I'm done with Emma..."

Emma found herself in a small room very similar to the one Marita, Rose, and Marie will soon be seeing. She blushed as she remembered what Natalie said about removing her clothes. Deciding to keep her underwear on, she slipped onto the bed and nervously lay down face first.

Cherlins bolted for the exit to the lobby as glass shattered from the skylights and frigid, pelting rain started pummelling the linoleum floor. The raccoon dove through the double-doors startling the maintenance worker performing routine checks. "Get this door sealed!" Cherlins commanded urgently, as the door waved erratically in the tornado winds.

Elsewhere, Kojurro was tiptoeing through the maintenance corridors. Most people were holing it out in their apartments, and he didn't hear anything except the pitter-patter of rain. He reached the primary power supply and quickly scanned the room. Everything seemed okay--

He suddenly leaped backwards as a heavy spark emanated from the primary generator. "What?" he muttered, drawing a flashlight as the room was plunged into blackness.

Another flash sent him covering his eyes. quickly donning rubber gloves and removing his labcoat, so that only his rubber-soled shoes would touch the sides, Kojurro leaped onto the generator and slowly climbed up the side.

His first sign of trouble was when driplets of water kept hitting him in the face. "We're far too deep for the storm to reach down here..." he pondered to himself. "What's else is around here anyway?"

His nose hit the ceiling far sooner than it should have. This close, he could see the ceiling was almost bowed with how much weight it was under.

He hit the radio. "Rico!" he asked the security guard on camera duty. "What room is right above the primary generator?"

"Mmm, let's see. Uhhh...a locker room." Kojurro heard fingers typing on keys. "Oh, my god! There was a rupture in the ceiling! That room is literally filled with water!"

Kojurro realized was Life's plan was at the same moment an earthquake sent the entire foundation rumbling. Jumping with ninjalike reflexes, Kojurro barely absorbed the damage of a huge fiberglass ceiling tile smashing into his face as an entire locker room's worth of water collapsed on top of Sartonic's primary generator.

Flora yelped in surprise as the room shook from a freak earthquake. *What the hell is happening out there?* she wondered, leaping to her feet as a massive crack in the floor sent her bed tumbling into the earth. Scrambling for the far wall, Flora tumbled to her knees as another shock wave rocked the entire room.

She could hear screams from elsewhere in the labs. It was becoming all too clear that Cherlins had under-estimated the effectiveness of Life's hybrid storm...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 29, 2018, 05:03:34 PM**

I'll Give rose a masage first , then Marie ' Marita said as the three of them gheaded t the room, listed o the keycard Natalie had goven them. Marie carried the large bottle of lotion in her claws as they reached the room. The Room door slid open with the use of a key and the heavy smell of incense wafter out , hitting their nostrils.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 05, 2018, 09:39:53 PM**

Emma looked at the bed and gulped. She'd never had a professional massage before, was she really supposed to remove all her clothes? She decided to keep her underwear on just for decencies' sake.

She had finally laid down facefirst on the massage table when she heard Natalie enter the word. "Oh my. Dear, you're supposed to put the towel on over your legs," she chuckled.

Emma peeped in surprise. "Sorry!" she tried to stammer, but the massage table pillow did a good job making it unintelligible.

"Not to worry," Natalie couldn't keep a playful tone out of her words as she draped the towel over her patient's backside and lathered her hands in warm oils. "You're in good hands. Just close your eyes, and let your cares drift away..."

Kojurro's vision slowly returned as he vaguely heard someone shouting his name. Groaning, he rolled out, and somebody started helping him to his feet.

"Doctor!" the technician repeated, splashing him in the face. "Wake up! We've got to leave this section!"

Kojurro stumbled to his feet. "Ugh..." His head was killing him. "What happened?"

This whole section is flooding!" the technician helped Kojurro walk. Behind them, the massive puddle from the now-ruined power generator was pushing them out of the room. "But careful touching any water; I saw two electrified puddles while making my way out."

Two floors later, Kojurro bid the technician adieu and met Cherlins outside the lobby. "Walter. What are you...?"

Cherlins was overseeing two workers soldering the door shut. "Lobby has been compromised," Cherlins reported grimly. "News on the primary power supply?"

"It's completely dead." Both men stopped talking as the lights flickered. "Walter, I think it's clear we don't have this storm under control. It's only going to get worse."

"To hell it is!" Cherlins growled. "We change plans, she'll think she has the advantage. We can't back down now."

"What? Are you insane? She's *has* the advantage!" Kojurro protested. "If we don't convince her to parlay, her storm is going to kill everyone in this base!"

"Your opinion has been noted and logged," Cherlins replied coldly. "but I'll be the judge of that. Now leave."

"You're making a mistake, Walter," Kojurro warned, but the raccoon angrily waved him out of the room, refusing to hear another word.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 19, 2018, 03:58:01 PM**

There were two guards blocking the hallway to the infirmary. They were Cherlins' most loyal of guards, and Kojurro knew it. They weren't going to listen to reason, so they needed to be eliminated.

"You ready, Nash?" he muttered into his satellite brick phone.

"*I, uh, think so...*" his partner in crime answered nervously. "*I'm in position to extract her at least, if the guards weren't there.*"

"Well, I'm going to give you that shot. Start the countdown." Kojurro walked around the corner and revealed himself. "Evening, gentlemen," he curtsied to the guards.

They moved to block his path. "Nobody's allowed in the infirmary," the smaller one grunted.

"I am but a scientist," Kojurro pointed out. "What could I possibly get up to? I just need a moment to speak to the prisoner."

"Too bad." the larger guard folded his arms.

Kojurro sighed. "Very well." With lightning-fast reflexes, he drew a katana from under his labcoat and brandished it.

Both guards quickly drew their firearms. "The hell is that?" the smaller one snapped.

"This?" Kojurro grinned wickedly. "This is an Heirloom Kibagami katana. Its shattered blade was obtained through hard diplomacy with the American border patrol, and its handle through blackmailing a pair of old friends who never wanted to see me again. I reforged it through a painstaking process that required the most delicate and powerful smithing machines Sartonic could buy!"

He pressed a button on the sword's hilt, causing it to instantly shatter. "Whoops. Note to self; next time I reforge the Kibigami katana, avoid the vibrate function."

Both guards opened fire, and Kojurro sprinted as fast as he could back down the hallway, dodging bullets with the reflexes of a ninja.

The storm raged on. Critical systems were shutting down one by one. At one point, the lights flickered off in Flora's jail cell, and they never came back on.

Flora sighed. She'd spent most of her hours fitfully sleeping in the furthest corner from the no-longer flushing toilet and wondering if anybody was ever going to rescue her or bring her clothes or food. She had no idea what was happening outside beyond what little she could see of the hallway, but she could tell things were bad.

"Flora!"

She suddenly sat up in alarm as someone burst into the hallway. "Stay away from the door," Nash warned, pouring some sort of substance on the lock and handle. Lighting a match and tossing it at the coated metal, both averted their eyes as the entire chunk of door superheated and melted into slag.

"Nash, what are you doing here?" Flora asked, wasting no time in hopping gingerly over the molten puddle and escaping her imprisonment.

"Things are bad out here, Flora. But it's only going to get worse." Nash handed her a hooded bathrobe and peeked outside for sign of Kojurro. "Put this on and try to keep your identity hidden. Most of the faculty are siding with Cherlins, but Kojurro thinks you might be the key to convincing Life to stand down."

"Wait, that psycho plant lizard? *She's* back?" Flora felt her fur stand on then. "What am *I* supposed to do?"

"Convince her to spare our lives. If anyone has a chance at swaying her, it's you." Nash activated the flashlight on his cell phone and led the way out of the infirmary.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **September 27, 2018, 10:18:03 PM**

Marita was slowly working up and down Rose's back, and trying to ignores the tensing Noises Rose was making. You've got a lot of knots in your llower back; Marita norted. ' yeah, comes from sitting a lot, and stress. Which is what this trip was supposed to re;ieve. " This trip is mostly about Emma having some fun, before she has her baby. After that, its all diapers, little sleep and rest." Marita said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 05, 2018, 09:51:53 PM**

Nash and Flora didn't get far before reaching the gym. The room was completely dark, so both were sprinting at full speed not bothering to stay silent, when a zippo lighter turned on and both gasped in surprise. "Who's there?" a voice snarled.

"It's just me!" Nash stammered. "Nash Browns and, uh," he glanced at Flora, "Taga!"

"Taga?" the person stepped forward. Flora recognized a bull from the cleaning staff. "What the hell is she doing out of the quarantine cells?"

"She was evacuated, because of all the flooding!" Nash answered, grabbing Flora's arm and trying to keep her out of the faint light. "But she remembered something important she left in her cell, we're trying to retrieve it."

"You can't," another voice said, one Flora recognized as an older female bobcat whose name escaped her. "The roofs are collapsed up ahead. The hallways are too dangerous to continue."

Several more figures stepped into the light. Nash and Flora slowly stepped backward. "Welp, uh," Nash gulped. "Thanks for the heads up. I'll just, return her to the fortified apartments then..."

"Good call," the bull nodded sagely.

Nash exhaled in relief as they quickly backpedaled. "My bad," he whispered. "We still might be able--"

Suddenly Flora felt someone grab her bathrobe's hood, dragging her backwards. She felt a pair of hands grasp her robe and abandoned it with a terrified squeal. "That's what I thought!" The bull roared. "It's the rogue test subject!"

Flora sprinted into the darkness as the bobcat tackled Nash to the ground. A serpentine test subject came flying out of the darkness and wrapped itself around her head, but she wrestled free and threw him into an ab machine. A woman wielding a pair of weights cut off her escape, so she vaulted over the treadmills and stumbled for the locker room.

She slammed the door shut as somebody smashed heavily into it. The locker room was pitch black and Flora decided to keep it that way, though she paid for this decision when she slipped on a puddle and smacked her shin painfully on a changing bench. Knowing she only had a few seconds, she turned on every shower and climbed under one.

The door swung open and her assailants poured into the room. "Lights are down!" the bull announced to his posse angrily. "Spread out! She can't have gone far!"

"Why's it so...wet?" asked the serpent, checking the floor. "Is this area flooded?"

The bobcat checked in Flora's shower, so Flora pushed her and sent her smashing into the ceramic wall with a strangled cry. Hosing the bull down with the prehensile showerhead, she crawled for the door as the water drenched his Zippo and plunged everyone into darkness. Several bodies stumbled over her in the ruckus, but they slipped off her slick fur.

Flora was hyperventilating with panic when she slid back into the gym. "Nash!" she whispered desperately. "Nash?"

Her ally was nowhere to be seen, and she didn't have time to find him. Sprinting as carefully as she could through the gym, she reached the far exit and flung the door open.

A hallway full of hissing, sparking wires greeted her.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 13, 2018, 06:09:24 PM**

At the massage parlor, a falling tree suddenly smashed through the front window. The burglar alarm went off, but the storm was far too intense to expect the police to arrive. Not to mention the waiting room was flooding dangerously fast...

Flora heard her pursuers bearing down on her. "Don't even think about it!" The bull warned, realizing she was considering charging into a hallway full of live wires. "You'll never reach the other side alive!"

Flora took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and sprinted forward. Almost immediately she felt sparks whip across her legs, leaving blackened burns in her fur. Something snapped her in the chest, sending her fur standing on end. She swatted her arms desperately as the wires left scalding stripes across her body.

She barely made it halfway down the hallway before collapsing from multiple electric shocks. Her pursuers stood stunned, not daring to follow.

Just when Flora was sure she was going to die, the wires all turned off and fell to the floor lifeless. Weakly, she opened her eyes to see her pursuers fleeing. *Wha...? Why are they...?*

She heard another set of footsteps. Softer ones, coming from the flooded underbelly of the base. With all of her remaining strength, Flora rolled over to see a plantlike serpentine figure observing her with an unfathomable expression.

Life had found her.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 21, 2018, 10:01:49 PM**

Emma was enjoying a relaxing massage, but her comfort vanished when the masseuse looked down in confusion at the pool of water at her feet. "What the hell?" she muttered.

Crossing to the door, she opened it curiously, then cried out as it swung open uncontrollably with a torrential flood of water.

"Oh god!" Emma screamed in terror as the water filled the room. "Marita, Rose--!" was the last thing she could scream before the water filled the room with her in it.

"Life..." Flora muttered faintly, feeling herself slipping away.

The serpentine creature finished its walk and stared at the folf lying at its feet. "I hope you don't expect me to save you," it said. "Death is part of the natural cycle."

Flora shook her head. She smiled faintly. "I'm just glad...I got to see you again..." She coughed. "Why did you...leave me? All those months ago..."

Life sighed. "I'm sorry. But your place was not with me." The room shook from a rumble of thunder, sending plaster raining down on their heads. "I am one with all beings. But I cannot favor any one being over another."

Flora shook her head weakly. "That's not what you said before," she struggled to breathe. "You said we could go on adventures together. Be together for all eternity...as timeless friends."

Life looked away. "That wasn't exactly true," she confessed. "I don't lie easily, Flora, but I lied to you." She sat down next to the dying folf and took her hand. "The truth is, I've grown too old. It's been my time to go, for some time now. I thought...I thought the humans would help me transition."

"...Transition?" Flora murmured weakly.

Life's gaze grew dark. "To the other side. To where all beings must someday go." She waved her hand and tore the roof off of the hallway. Flora gasped as they looked at a brilliant summer sky. They were in the eye of the storm. "But your kind betrayed me. They locked me up and tried to study my powers, to claim for themselves what I'd hoped to give freely." She clenched her fist. "You were the only one who showed any compassion. Any promise. The only one who I thought could replace me..."

Flora teared up. "I didn't want to replace you. I just...wanted to be with you."

"I know." Life sighed. "I realized that. I see now that I must carry these burdens with me for the rest of time...my curse is to never see the other side. To never finish my cycle."

"Well..." Flora murmured, eyes dimming, "I think I'm about to complete my, uh, cycle...and I'd really like to experience the other side with you." She used the last of her strength to take Life's hand. "Relinquish your powers...Give them to nobody. Come with me..."

Life tried to yank her arm away, but Flora held on tight. "What? I can't do that!" she stammered. "This world needs me! It needs someone regulating the cycle of life!"

"Every parent thinks that..." Flora smiled, "but eventually you need to let your children take care of themselves." She closed her eyes. "Let go of your responsibilities. Trust the world to handle itself. Finish your cycle."

Life was silent for several seconds. "I..." She gulped. "I want to do that," she confessed. "I want to come with you. But I can't. The powers must go somewhere."

Flora held her hand tighter. "Then give them to me," she offered. "I know these powers can't be used to heal oneself. I'll die with or without them, and you and I can cross to the other side together...and we'll see what happens after that."

Life placed both of her hands on Flora's. "You would do that for me?" she finally whispered in amazement.

Flora smiled, and her eyes closed. She grew limp in Life's hands. Life took a deep breath and shut her eyes as well. Leaves started growing all over her body. Slowly, they traveled down Life's skin, gathering at her hands, and passed onto Flora.

With nary a sound, Life collapsed next to Flora's lifeless body.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 22, 2018, 11:31:35 AM**

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the the glaass walls shattered, from the water, sending emma into the neighboring stall, where mArita and rose were trying to do a masage. ' Dear Gos_' rose said, hers eyes becoming white as the water rushed in . Marita pushed forward and grabbed Emma, before noticing a flight of stairs heading upstairs ' Upstairs! Now! marita shourted, pointing . ' Rose was the first to reach the stairs , as the water rapidly started ti fill the room. the water sent the massuesse into the room as well. Marita reached the stairs and began to climb, glass broke as water rushed in. the other rooms. theior only hope was to get to the upstairs.. Rose helped Marita carry emma up to the flor where marita began to perform CPR on the vixon, first mouth to mouth them chest compressions.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 22, 2018, 12:01:28 PM**

Emma’s eyes fluttered open. “Rose...” she whispered, eyes wide with panic, when the whole floor gave a violent shake.

The massage parlor shuddered under the weight of the barrage of water. The walls started cracking. In seconds, the floors would collapse and the three girls would fall into a torrential and very dangerous whirlpool of splintery pulp...

———————-

Kojuuro backflipped to avoid a collapsing wall. The storm was getting really bad, and Sartonic's meager defenses were finally failing. The apartments were flooded, but the occupants had nowhere to evacuate to. Bucketing hailstorms and lightning clouds prevented anyone from seeking shelter outside the facilities, which would collapse in a matter of seconds.

Kojuuro recognized a hopeless situation when he saw it, and decided to die on his own terms. Surrendering himself to the storm, he kneeled down and pressed both hands together in a ninja prayer. He became an island of zen in the unforgiving chaos around him.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 22, 2018, 01:18:24 PM**

we need to get out of here' Marita said ' so much for a nice relaxing ' fun time'.' she sighed. ' this place is going to collaose.' rose lifted up emmas head, and pressed her dark red lips to emmas dark red lips. if they were going to die, at least they were with [people who mattered to them, and rose felt one last kiss would be a nice way to say good bye to this life.

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marie stumbled out of the apartment section, the water following her at every srtep, as she moved down the steps she found the water lessening in its intensity. ' of cpourse, hurricanes have eyes ' where there is a brief window of calm , before the second, most potent part of the storm hits.' as she reached the bottom of the stairs and turned she saw, Flora lying on the ground in the mifddle of the hallway, next to what looked like a leafy spriggan. Marie sank to her klnees next to Flora ' Flira? Flora? Can you hear me ' the golden retrievr said sharply. Flora was cold to the touvch, and marie raised her eyes toewards the heavens .

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 22, 2018, 01:25:31 PM**

Emma returned the kiss, finding comfort in Rose's embrace. She understood how close they were to dying, but she placed herself into Rose's protection. In the end, it was enough to have someone to hold onto.

When Marie touched Flora, she suddenly felt imbued with a great power. Leaves sprouted from her hands, and the storm recoiled from her body. She'd gained miraculous abilities, among them the ability to control the storm and heal the sick or wounded...even ones as recently deceased as Flora.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 22, 2018, 02:51:13 PM**

marita pulled both girls into her enbrace and resteed her head on roses shoulders.
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Marie gasped as she felt ebergy surge through her, what.. is this?' she said she put her hand back on Flora. this time, she fet a small movement, and slowly she felt floras body begin to warm back up. " Ok.. Ok. you're still alive ' marie said softly. ' ok.. we need to ge t out here, this place is about to collapse .' She said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 22, 2018, 04:01:03 PM**

Emma kissed Marita just as passionately as she'd kissed Rose. She may have found herself in more romantic situations with Rose over the time they'd known each other, but she loved them both equally, and hoped that Marita understood that in the end.

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Flora found herself in a black void. Nothingness all around her. *Where am I?* She looked down. She couldn't see her body. She couldn't see anything. *Is this what being dead is like?* she thought, fighting to keep panic from rising in her chest. Wait...chest?

She could see herself again. And she wasn't alone. "Flora," smiled a strapping young fox, cleaner and more handsome than she'd known him in life. "Didn't expect to see you so soon, but it's good to see you again."

"Nairda?" Flora wondered aloud. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm dead," he admitted. "Died in Egypt, shortly after Foley. Who, speaking of which, is on the way."

"Wait, so is this the afterlife?" Flora asked, looking at the infinite blackness around them.

"Kinda, this is *your* afterlife. But you haven't shaped it yet." Nairda snapped his fingers, and Flora was suddenly draped in a fashionable white and turquoise dress that perfectly accentuated her fuchsia fur. "In time you'll make it into whatever you want. Until then you're welcome to live in mine. I'm a rock star, with millions of adoring fans." He bowed, generating applause from an unseen crowd.

"Honestly, Nairda, I don't know how you aren't bothered that the crowds aren't real," a young boy teased, appearing from out of nowhere. "At least my WoW guild is composed of other actual deceased souls."

Flora gasped, and the youth anticipated her reaction and quickly added, "I'm Foley, by the way. This was me before I got fat. You get to look like whatever age of your life you most enjoyed. I'm not surprised you just look like yourself, to be honest."

Flora's head was spinning from all this new information. "What about Hal and Emi?" she asked.

"Emilena hasn't died yet," Nairda shook his head. "But she'll be here some day. Hal's right behind you."

Flora turned around to see Hal, wearing his old bashful smile. Tears were running down Flora's face, and she hugged each of her old gangmates. "I never thought I'd see any of you again," she whispered joyfully. "I'm so sorry for what happened to you all—"

"No no, you don't need to mention it," Foley assured. "Forget about when we were alive. That was *nothing* compared to what we get now." He snapped his fingers, and a portal opened to his afterlife, where Flora could see a towering room containing the most high-tech gaming rig imaginable. "Perfect ping, tons of traffic for every online game, nothing ever breaks or needs reinstalling," he grinned. "It's fucking paradise."

Flora stepped forward eagerly. "Yes, let's play games together! Just like old times!" she exclaimed, but suddenly all four of them felt the same thing. Flora was leaving. "Uhhh, guys?" she asked nervously, as her body faded.

"Don't worry about it," Nairda assured as Flora felt herself being pulled away. "We'll still be here when you get back. And so will any new friends you make along the way."

"Not to spoil," Hal added, "But Marita, Rose, and Emma are coming sooner than you think. We'll keep them company for you!"

They waved goodbye as Flora returned to life.

—————————

Flora groaned as she opened her eyes. She felt the pain from her various wounds fade away, until her body was whole. It was an even more comfortable restoration than the times Aurora or Lily had healed her.

She opened her eyes to see Marie. "Marie..." she breathed, looking in awe at the Golden Retriever. "I was dead. You brought me back to life!"

She tried to recollect...had she seen anything while she was dead? The memory was getting foggier by the second...but before it was all gone she recalled a last-minute warning. "Marita and the others are in trouble!" she exclaimed, leaping to her feet. "I...can't explain...but I think they're in serious danger *right now*!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 22, 2018, 09:54:41 PM**

Marita gently put her tongue into emmas mouth, feeling the vixens body against her own. the shaking was getting worse and worse, as the water continued to rise.

_
 great, just great!' marie sughed ' you seem to beb ok, but i have no idea how i'm going to get to the massage shop the girls were going to. they took the car , after all. ' unless thees a car around here that we can, um borrow " MArie said " Come in Flora, lead the way to the garage."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2018, 01:45:21 AM**

Flora let Marie help her to her feet. "The garage..." she thought aloud. "I'm not sure if there'll be a car we can access in the garage. We won't have the keys."

She looked at the sky above. "The storm hit so suddenly...I bet there were drivers on the road who didn't make it home before it ran them off the road. If we could reach the streets, that's our fastest way to get a working car. When Life and I escaped Sartonic, she used her vines to help us scale the courtyard wall. Can you do the same thing to get us onto the roof?" She knew they could run through Sartonic, but the roof would give them a straight line to the parking lot and shave whole minutes off their journey.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 23, 2018, 07:20:58 PM**

i have no idea, we'll have to find out' Marie said.' course of the storms ripped up the walls, we can simply walk out through the openingas. you know the way better than i do , flora, lets go. I'm not sure how powerful these powers are, and i'm even sure i can control them, but i have to try. after all, its not like i have an option."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2018, 09:03:41 PM**

"Okay, close your eyes," Flora urged. "Concentrate on your inner self. Look for the part that feels new, that you didn't have before." She knew Marie was their best chance of surviving the storm; charging into it without Marie knowing how to utilize her powers would be suicide. "Let's focus on vines, I know Life could make those. Imagine where you want the vines to be, what you want them to do. Trust me, we'll get to Marita faster if you can learn your new powers and keep us alive!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 23, 2018, 09:12:43 PM**

Life? whats Life? or should i say, WHO is Life? I'm sorry, but i'm really really confused. and I'll need , like, a ton of explanations here" Marie said ' i mean I've never had powers before, of ANY sort. So first things first. we can go rushing off, until get at least SOME idea of what is going on..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 23, 2018, 09:30:36 PM**

"That's her name," Flora motioned to the deceased spriggan. "She died, but you've got her powers. And we'll need them to survive in the storm." She took off sprinting down the hallway, but it was slow going due to the collapsed walls and massive cracks in the ground from earthquakes. "Just, concentrate on growing leaves on your hands. Let's start with that. A nice easy thing," she urged, tripping over a severed I-beam hiding within a murky puddle and going sprawling.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **f-22 "raptor" ace** on **November 30, 2018, 10:51:58 PM**

Kojurro was rushing through the collapsing room searching anywhere for shelter. But he was unable to find any cover sufficient enough. He heard the cracking of beams above him and something heavy hitting him from above. He strained to get out from under the debris to no avail. He heard a roaring sound from all around him then nothing. Darkness enveloped his world.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2018, 01:53:21 PM**

Marie focused stretched out her hand to her amazement, vines shot outt of her hands and embeded themselvves into the fall wall, growing together until they formed a lader, a vone ladder to be sure but one that was comfortable.
-
Massage parlor.
water drained out of the shop as the water flowed out of the broken windows. ' the entire building groaned, as the sheer downpour had left the building structurally unsound, and liable to collapse.
Marita looked over in the floor, she , Rose and Emma were on, the staff, miraculously had found their way up here, they were soaked to the bone, and huddled together under a part of the roof, that moved away from the main building. debris banged again the remains of windows below and the sound of glass falling into the murky water could be heard.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2018, 04:21:26 PM**

"Thats it! Perfect" Flora scrambled up the makeshift ladder, shielding her face from the stinging rain as she climbed to her feet on the roof. "Oh man...the eye's closing. We need to get to the streets quickly!"

The wind picked up as she helped Marie onto the roof. "We can make it if we hurry!" she urged, beginning a delicate sprint across the pockmarked laboratory roof. "We'll drop into the parking lot from above the main--"

Suddenly a sheet of solar panels ripped itself off of the roof and flew right at both of them. Flora was blindsided and barely had time to scream as it bore down on her, but Marie had a split second to react...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 26, 2018, 05:04:39 PM**

Marie threw up her hand and vines shattered the panel in half, the wind took both pieces and sent them off in different directions, missing the pair, by inches.'Geez, that was close " Marie said ' lets keep doing " I'll keep throwing out these vines to deflect any other debris that comes our way . I almost feel like a hero in the comics, like Spiderman or something, well with vines instead of Spiderwebs. Oh, and I dont have a costume. well, time for that later" She said as they continued along the roof.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2018, 05:23:30 PM**

Flora covered her head in fear, but Marie's rescue came just in time. "Holy crap, you're getting good at this!" she gasped, stumbling forward. "Sartonic might be paying you as a test subject and an employee after this!"

The two continued their journey across the roof, stopping only occasionally as Marie protected them from flying objects. The wind was getting really bad, and Flora occasionally felt like she was fighting to keep her feet from flying out from underneath her.

"Here we are!" She called out once her sense of navigation warned her theyd reached the garage. "Look around for a weak spot so we can oooop!" The ceiling collapsed under her weight, sending her plummeting into the completely-submerged garage with a splash.

She surfaced with a splutter. "Um, good news and bad news!" she called up to Marie as she tread water. "I didn't fall to my death, but that's because the garage is completely flooded! I don't think we can drive a car after it's been... actually wait, hold on..."

Taking a deep breath, Flora dove underwater. The water was murky with grit and concrete particles, and there was only a little light from the massive hole in the roof, but she got a glimpse of what she was looking for; the *Turtle*. An armored buggy designed to operate as either a car or a boat, mostly used for transferring supplies from Sartonic to offshore affiliates.

She swam back to the surface. "Sartonic's amphibious vehicle is in here, and it doesn't look damaged! If we could get the garage door open, we could drain it and drive the *Turtle* to pick up Marita and the others!"

She took another deep breath and dove back under. *Most garage doors have an emergency release cord...* she squinted, making the most of what little light she had. Luckily, the tip of the cord was glow-in-the-dark. Pushing a floating tool shelf out of her way, Flora tugged at the cord helplessly. It activated, ennabling the door to be opened manually, but despite her best efforts it was too heavy to life on her own.

She breached the surface and gasped for air. “I can’t get the door open,” she panted. “It’s not your typical garage door, it’s really heavy duty. Think you can give it a try? I saw Life once rip a wall out of its foundations with her vines.”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 01, 2019, 10:12:09 AM**

Marie gestured and vines shot of her hand , racing through the hole and into the water, vines wrapped around the pull cord asnd marie pulled on it from her position, straining with the effort, a crack appeared under the door opening, as it began to rise, water began to rush out, draining the level of water in the garage. cars moved around, carried by the water, as slowly the level dropped. Marie waited, for the level to reach a certain depth, deep enough to cushion her fall, yet low enough so she wouldnt run the risk of drowning.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2019, 11:27:33 AM**

Flora tread water, avoiding various debris as the current carried it out of the room. When there was enough room to breathe, she wedged herself underneath the door and helped push it upwards. "Okay...we're in the clear!" she panted as the water reached a drivable level.

Grabbing a sunken toolbox and staggering to the *Turtle,* she climbed through the sunroof and unlocked the doors from the inside. "Just give me one minute..." she murmured, working with a screwdriver and pair of pliers to manually activate the ignition. "There! We're in business!" She announced as the engine roared to life.

She drove the car under the hole in the roof so Marie could drop down onto it. "Let's go save our girlfriends!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 11, 2019, 01:35:11 PM**

Flora peeled out of the garage as soon as Marie was in the Turtle. "So this thing's pretty armored, we should be able to handle the storm even without your--" she started, but abruptly yelped as a tree trunk hit the front windshield, leaving spiderweb cracks radiating outwards.

Flora swerved to dodge the tree itself, and they could hear the wind howling through the new cracks. They'd completely left the eye and were now suffering the full brunt of the storm. "Okay, never mind, I spoke too soon!" she gasped, shuddering as they careened off a mailbox submerged by the water. "We're probably still going to die."

Luckily it wasn't a long drive to the massage parlor, because Flora didnt even know where half of the bangs and collisions were coming from. She didn't see the upturned sidewalk until it was too late, and the Turtle crashed into it with the screech of grinding metal.

Pushing the airbag out of her face, Flora caught her breath and glanced outside. "There it is!" She pointed across the street at the pockmarked and waterlogged massage parlor. "Less than a minute sprint!" She tried the engine, but the Turtle was wrecked. "We'll have to run. Which is basically suicide, unless you can keep us safe." She took a deep breath. "Lead the way, if you think you can handle it. I'll be right behind you!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 18, 2019, 10:17:48 PM**

marie staggered forward, her claws sending out vines which formed themserlves into a shield-like screen. the wind howleed through the screen, hitting Marie in the face, causing her ees to water terribly. marie managed to reach the entrance to the massage parkor, only to final glass bits of stair cases and debris all over. ' Gawds, what a mess ' Marie sniffed as she saw the sheer mess inside the building which groaned terribly.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 18, 2019, 10:47:23 PM**

Flora shivered as she followed Marie onto the flooded street. The water went up to their calves, and the pelting rain chilled her to the bone. She winced as something heavy glanced off Marie's screen. The storm felt it was winding down due to Life's death, but not quickly enough that either of them would have lived this longg if it weren't for Marie's powers.

The massage parlor was one of the only standing buildings still on the street, mostly thanks to leaning heavily on a chainlink fence to its left, but it was looking liable to collapse at any moment. The walls were bulging with water damage, the windows had fallen out of their frames and the floors were spongy and partially disintegrated. "Fuck, I hope they're okay in there..." she stammered, wrapping her arms around herself to try and conserve warmth. She really should have grabbed some clothes before they left...

She dropped to her knees as a dumpster bounced down the street and flew just over their heads. "There's no time to waste! I'm going after them!" she shouted, vaulting over the shattered front door and landing awkwardly in the flooded lobby. "See what you can do to keep the building upright till I've got them out!"

Sloshing her way into the back rooms, Flora yelped as she poked her head into a massage room and the wall crumbled into pulpy sawdust at her touch. *I don't have time to search all these,* she realized, biting her lip and calling out Emma's name.

Then she spotted someone; a body floating facedown, one hand draped along the stairs leading to the second floor. Flora's heart dropped into her stomach, but once she'd reached them she realized it was the masseuse. *She was heading for the second floor!* "Emma!" Flora cried out, taking the stairs as quickly as she dared. "Are you up here? We need to go!"

Outside, the massage parlor shuddered. With the additional activity inside, the building was losing integrity, and the walls started falling outwards before Marie's eyes...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 20, 2019, 08:52:16 PM**

Marrie sent forth vines from her fingers, catching the falling building as it began to lean, water sloshed out of the windows, a slurry of debris, glass and crumbled walls. the vines grew broader and higher spreading across the entire structure.
 Emma heard floras calling from in the corner where she, Rose and Marita were huddled ' Flora? We;re up here!' Emma calloed back down. ' we dont have anywgere to go! Marita said ' the entire place is flooded!

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 20, 2019, 10:00:30 PM**

"Emma!" Flora cried, gasping as her foot went through one of the stairs and her leg got caught in the resulting sinkhole. "Auugh! Dammit..." Extricating herself, she limped slowly towards the sound of Emma's voice.

Finally, she rammed the door open with her shoulder to see the three girls safe and sound...at least for the moment. But plaster was raining down on them as the building started falling apart. "Follow me!" she panted. "There's an armored car outside. You're right, we don't have time to leave down the stairs...but there's another option!"

Staggering to the far window, Flora pushed it and winced as the glass slid out of its frame without further ado. This side of the massage parlor faced an alleyway, and the alley walls were high enough to completely submerge it with 10 feet of water. "Marie's keeping this place upright, but not for long! Jump!" she urged them, leading by example and vaulting over the alley wall with a heavy splash.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 21, 2019, 10:00:41 PM**

Emma reluctantly jumped, folowed by rose and marita. all 3 barely cleared the wall, as behind them the building beggan to collapse with a loud crunch, as the frame of the building (which wswas basically all that was left- finally gave way..
 Marie released her hands, and watches as the vines magically vanished leaving the building to finish imploding.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 21, 2019, 10:45:49 PM**

Flora covered her head as she surfaced, raindrops the size of golf balls stinging her face. "This side, over here!" she spluttered, swimming to the alley entrance leading into the street. It was blocked by a fallen awning, but Flora only needed to wrestle with it for a moment before it broke down and sent all four girls spilling into the street on a slalom of floodwater.

"Marie!" Flora shouted, staggering to her feet and waving frantically. She hoped her fuchsia fur stood out enough to catch the Golden Retriever's attention. "Everyone, head for the armored car!" she urged, helping Emma to her feet and pointing frantically in the direction of the Turtle. It had a concrete divider wedged into its front axle and certainly wasn't going anywhere, but it would serve as protection from the storm.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 22, 2019, 08:29:07 AM**

Marie waved the 4 girls over, and headed back to the armored car, which was not going anywhere, unless Marie's powers extended to fixing broken things. the turtle would fiot all of them but it would serve basically as an igloo, and igloo with armor plating.. Marie pulled the side door open and held it open for the others to climb inside. Marita helped Emma along the vixen wheezing as she reached the Turtle ' Hopefully the baby is ok.' Marita said ' Its fine. Its its small enough yet so it doesnt make its presence known. Otherwise i couldnt do a massage. That poor woman!' Emma said ' she didn't make it , did she?

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 22, 2019, 02:27:25 PM**

Flora was the last one to enter the Turtle, slamming the door shut behind them and panting in relief as the freezing winds stopped battering her backside. "Nope," she shook her head. "I saw her body on the first floor. I'm sorry." Climbing over the seat, she hugged each girl in turn. "But I'm so grateful you all are okay," she cried. "I can't believe we got here just in time!"

She wiped a tear from her eye and smiled. "I don't know if you saw, but Marie's a little different from the last time you met her..."

Outside, the wind and the rain pounded against the armor, but the vehicle endured. They were finally safe.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 24, 2019, 08:29:40 PM**

Yeah, I er got these.. powers ' Marie said as she huddled across from rose and emma. ' Powers? as in those you might see in movies or comic books?' Marita asked " Yeah, kinda like that. she can can create vines that form into ladrs, shields, open doors.. think sorta like Spiderman ' Marie shrugged. ' Its a long story, and even I still dont fully understand it. Flora knows more about it than i do. Ask her."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 25, 2019, 02:51:32 AM**

"You don't have to keep them if you don't want." Flora was still hugging Emma with glee. "Those powers belonged to Life, an ancient being who'd held them for longer than any of us have been alive. They've been passed down for centuries, and their owner is supposed to protect the earth and everything natural."

She pressed her body against Emma; since neither of them were wearing any clothes, it was the only way to stay warm. "But you never signed up for that," she continued explaining to Marie, "and the powers can be transferred easily. You can either find someone else to carry the burden, or even just let them disappear. Maybe the planet's ready to take care of itself."

She gave Emma a loving kiss. "But on the other hand, it can be kinda fun to have powers. And Sartonic is the best possible place to be if you want to learn how to control them. It's up to you. "

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 09, 2019, 07:00:00 PM**

"I'll keep my powers' Marie decided with a shrug. ' we wouldnt be here without them, and learning about then will be fun. " ' Anyway to turn on some heat?' i'm really cold" marita shivered. ' we were soaked in the upstairs area.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 09, 2019, 07:25:16 PM**

Flora extricated herself from Emma's embrace and tried the AC. "No luck, the damage broke the engine, and cars use the engine to generate heat," she reported sadly. "We're stuck here for the time being."

"Everyone should remove any wet articles of clothing and huddle together for warmth," Emma chimed in, thinking back to what she learned while studying to become a nurse.

Outside, the storm was getting worse. Something heavy pinged off the top of their armored vehicle, and the sides shuddered as torrents of water threatened to sweep the car further down the road; only the concrete divider rammed through their engine was keeping them in one place.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 19, 2019, 01:52:33 PM**

After several strained minutes, the Turtle shuddered in a way that sent Flora falling off her carseat. The force of the water had been slowly dislodging the vehicle from the concrete divider, and it was finally starting to give way.

“Hold onto something!” Flora warned before a terrible screeching sound heralded their chassis dislodging from the divider and sending their car hurdling down the road in a flood of water.

The occupants were pushed to the back of the car, which was a blessing in disguise as the shift in weight prevented the car from flipping and going into a deadly roll. Careening off a fallen telephone pole, the car fishtailed and popped all of its airbags before skidding with a loud *crash* into the side of a large concrete building.

“Is everyone okay?” Flora stammered, getting shakily to her feet. She glanced out the window. They were pressed against the main wall of the Morrell Financial bank. The water was slowly angling the car away, they had less than a minute before being swept further down the road into a newly-created faultline. “We have to abandon the car!” she gasped, glancing at Emma who was closest to the right door. “If we keep the car between us and the water, we can reach the entrance to the bank!”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 19, 2019, 02:26:42 PM**

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emma pushed out the door to the car and it gave way causing her to spill out of the car landed inside the hole the car had punched through the side of the building. inside the smell of murky water was everywhere, above them water dripped in from the broken window " so much for getting dry ' Emma sighed ' Come on, we've got more wading to do girls ' Mariita scrambled out next, landing into the water with a splash ' Yuck!" she groaned as she poked her head out, green slime covering her upper body. ' i look like the ' thing from the Green Lagoon" " better that then dead ' Rose said simply as she was the next out, and took a look around. they appeared in to be in the lobby of the bank. rows of screened teller booths sat in the corner, where normally a teller would handle your banking. " " Ok' we'll needed to find a dry area to rest and recuperate ' rose said. " and we'll have time to catch up.. and hopefully, find some clothes. " even bank uniforms is better than strolling around in the buff. ' ' there are worse things to see then other naked ladies ' Emma said with a chuckle. ' this isnt the time for modesty girls. we literally have no clothes. might as well as used to seeing butts and breasts. and in my case, a vixen in her sixth month of pregnancy' Emma said "
- just get further in girls before i push the car away;' Marie saud as she waited for flora to get out. ' just head up the stairs obver there and we can take stock of the situation. she aid before reaching out her paw.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 19, 2019, 02:35:15 PM**

Flora accepted Marie’s hand and delicately slid out of the car, trying to avoid the green goop and sticking to the flooded portion of the lobby. “Oof...” She exhaled in solidarity seeing Marita’s state. “I bet we can find you a water fountain or a bathroom to wash that off.” She grinned at Emma’s comments about their state of undress. “You won’t hear me complain about us all being naked,” she teased. “I’m always trying to get you all to go to the nude beach. Who wants to wear clothes if you can help it?”

She shook her body like a dog, trying to dry herself off as much as possible. “Whew, we made it!” She exclaimed happily. “So long as we avoid the new hole in the wall, I think we’re finally safe from being swallowed up by the storm.”

She glanced around the darkened bank lobby, shivering in the cold. “That being said, this place was clearly evacuated before the storm hit. We’re probably not going to find anyone else here...”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 19, 2019, 02:46:44 PM**

Marie grunted and sent out vines against the car dislodging it from the hole. the onrushing water took the wrecked vehivcle and carried it diewn the streety. Well.. thats done ' she sighed as a the vines vabnnished.. ' she turned to Rose ' ok, we need to give you a secret identity " Plant Girl , or Vinera.. actually vinera sounds cool. All you ned is a costume. ' Unfortunately these powers dont include creating clothes.thats a different magic line, apparently.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 19, 2019, 03:22:22 PM**

“Poison Ivy from the comics didn’t always wear clothes, did she?” Flora pointed out, leading the girls as they walked through the lobby seeking warmer and drier places. “She had like a leotard or a dress made out of leaves. Same with Zyra from *League of Legends*, her leaf bikini was part of her body. Actually, if you practice growing leaves on command, you could have one of the best possible powers to run around as a technically-nudist superhero.”

They reached a bathroom, and Flora tested the sinks to find they were working. “You’re in luck, Marita!” she exclaimed, setting the water to hot and squirting soap into her hand. “Anyone who wants to wash themselves off, this is the time to do it. My last shower was over two days ago, with Yurei, and I’ve been through a lot of unpleasent places since then...”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **February 24, 2019, 08:54:47 PM**

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we need to find a shower ' Marita said, as she cleaned off her hands in the sink, seeing the green gunk slide off her claws and into the sinjk. Marie and rose did the same in the other sinks, relieved that this still had hot water, and that this part of the bank was dry. outside the gushing out of water through the hole created by their entry. the loud rush drowned out the water coming from the sinks. " hop in the shower flora ' Emma suggested ' like you said ' you've been needing it.'

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 24, 2019, 09:38:56 PM**

"Thanks, but anyone who wants the shower can have it." Flora had finished scrubbing herself down with hand soap and splashing herself clean with the sink. "I want to explore the bank a bit more. There isn't room for all of us in that shower anyway."

She peeked outside; the lobby was still flooded, but the water level had equalized and the back rooms were okay. "I'll be back soon. Anyone who wants can come with!"

She tiptoed through the metal detectors and crept deeper into the building; there was still a chance other storm victims might be holed out here, and she was wary about encountering strangers. However, she grew bolder when room after room was abandoned. The kitchen was out of power, but she was still able to raid the fridge and eat several slices from an old cake. The staffrooms were deep enough to completely muffle the sounds of the outside storm, but she couldn't find any clothes in their closets. *I guess this is one of those banks with a 'suits and blouses from home' dress code,* she thought wistfully as she walked through another door...and suddenly her fur stood on end.

Sitting before her was a massive, gleaming vault. the door was sealed shut with a large circular lock, big enough that it would take two people to open. *Holy shit...* She tried it experimentally, but of course it was locked. *Hmmm. You know, if we **could** break our way in, we could claim we were just trying to hide safely from the storm...* The vault was on a raised platform, but the rest of the room was lightly flooded due to a hallway connecting to the lobby. A pair of glass-paned receptionist booths led to the safety deposit boxes. *If they're gonna keep the keys somewhere, it'll be in there.* Flora examined the gap between the glass and the counter; she could probably fit through that, right?

Wheezing and grunting as she stuffed her head and upper body inside, Flora exhaled with an "Oof!" as she arched her back and shimmied a few more inches...then another...then... "Uhhh, gals?" Flora wriggled helplessly, her feet kicking in the air as her hips were wedged in the window. "Someone came with me, right? I need help, I'm...kinda stuck..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 02, 2019, 08:47:15 AM**

Marita entered the room where Flora was. ' what ARE you doing flora? Marita said . ' i dont think they left the vault keys in there. come to think of it, there isnt anyone else here.So i dont know why you are sneaking around.' marita added as she came up to where Flora stuck ' now the question is: in or out?Do you want to go in there, or get out"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 02, 2019, 01:32:44 PM**

"No, I can see them!" Flora protested, dangling her arm over the counter where a rack of keys hung just out of her reach. "They won't go to the vault, but I bet they open the safety deposit boxes. Push me forward, I just need a little nudge!" She struggled fitfully for a couple more seconds before giving up in frustration. "Look," she panted, "there's a killer storm outside and we're fighting for our lives. Maybe someone stored something useful in these? We're not stealing, we're scavenging for survival, like Tom Hanks in *Castaway*."

But despite her assurances, Flora knew the burden of choice was on Marita. If she wanted to help Flora loot the deposit boxes, or if she decided that was unethical and instead pulled her out of the window, Flora would have to go along with what Marita decided.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 09, 2019, 09:35:55 AM**

Fine I'll help you" Marita said. 'hold on i'll give you a push' she said gping up to up to floria and oushing on her but. ' just.. squeeze in your gut' Marita said, as she pushed ' and reach for something to pull yourself towards"
- Emma and Marie were trying to clean themselves off in the sink as best they could. ' this stuff is nasty ' Emma sighed as she filled a sinbk with greeen gunk. ' could be a lot worse." marie said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 09, 2019, 05:20:32 PM**

Flora huffed and puffed and sucked her stomach in as much as she could. Scrabbling her fingers for purchase, she gasped in surprise when her hips popped through the window frame and Marita's push sent her flying into the far wall with a crash.

"Nice...job!" Flora encouraged dizzily, stumbling to her feet and rubbing her head. She staggered to the booth's door and opened it, giving Marita access to the deposit boxes. "There are two keyrings, let's split up and see what we can find," she urged, tossing Marita the set for the near wall and crossing to the further one.

The keys were marked, but not with the number of the deposit box, meaning that it was a slow and laborious testing process to find the key that opens each box. The first three were empty; the next contained someone's will. Two empty boxes later, she gasped in surprise at the set of military medals in a fashionable case. "Okay, we're leaving this one here..." she muttered, looking in alarm at the different colored ribbons. "Last thing I want is to make an enemy of somebody with this much military history."

The next deposit box contained the first real score; a handful of glittering gold coins. The next had several rolls of foreign dollars Flora didn't recognize. "I wonder why they didn't store these in a bank..." she murmured, nevertheless retrieving and throwing them in a plastic bag with the coins. "Hey, wait, there's something else here..." With the bills out of the way, she fished out a metal rectangular device with four rows of nine blinking lights. Each light had a name next to it, and a thin black button sat in the center guarded by a removable transpart cover. "What the hell is this?" She raised her eyebrows, opening the cover and experimentally pressing the button.

The device beeped loudly and Flora almost threw it back in the deposit box, fearing it could be a bomb, but then it stopped beeping and died down. <*"Results forthcoming,"*> a computerized voice informed.

Flora blinked. "Marita, you have any idea what this thing is?"

——————————-

Kojurro was still lying in a crumpled heap somewhere in Sartonic. He would have been perfectly content to keep doing so, but his tontine augment suddenly activated. Detecting his semi-conscious state, it sent a pulse to his brain asking if he was dying. When the brain didn't respond, it flooded him with stimulants, causing him to gasp and roll over reflexively.

“Augh! Ugh...” Kojurro rubbed his forehead. “Where am I...?” He looked around. “Goddamn, the storm is still happening? I hoped to wake up in sickbay...drugged out on morphine...”

The tontine augment sent another signal to his brain, seeing if he was alive. This caused his fur to stand on end...every member of the tontine promised never to scan for a status update unless they knew another member had died. He’ll need to return to his deposit box and see which names remained; last he remembered only four of them were still alive after all this time. *Tontine augment,* he asked, *which participant requested the update?*

It reported his own name, and he gasped in surprise. Someone had access to his tontine status indicator? He quickly crossed to the nearest window, shattered it with a spinning kick, and fled into the torrential storm. If someone had broken into his deposit box, there was no time to waste.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 10, 2019, 04:40:22 PM**

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i have no idea, best to put it back' Marita shrugged ' better hope its not a detonator to a bomb or something. lets see what else these boxes hold. Also is there any other way out of there? Or do i have to pull you out the same way?

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 10, 2019, 04:55:06 PM**

"Naw, the door opens from the inside." Flora crossed and pushed the door aside so Marita could enter. She looked at the rectangular device again, then set it aside and continued unlocking deposit boxes.

About thirty minutes later, she'd found a fair amount of valuables among the mostly-useless contents (usually notarized documents or birth certificates) but had to leave a number of items that would be difficult to fence, like passports and land/property deeds. "That wasn't as successful a search as I'd hoped," she admitted. "Most of this is only useful if we find ourselves needing to purchase something. You find anything good?"

She glanced at the mysterious rectangle and jumped when it suddenly lit up. Each of the little lights next to the names was now red, except for one that was blue. She checked the name: 小十郎よしひろ. *Hmmm, if we can find a working computer we could translate that to English.* Glancing to make sure Marita wasn't looking, she slipped the device into her bag of money. "We should probably get back to the others, see if they're still showering."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 15, 2019, 06:20:17 PM**

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no, let then have their privacy.' maritas said pulling out her phone.. i have an app can translate different languages.. let me look sat that thing..' just for a second.. ' she said running her phone over the letters ' ok, its Japanese. its a name yoshihiro Kojurro.' marita said. ' wonder why its on that list..' She said before puling the phone away,. ' Not lets go see if we can find anything and i mean anything to eat.. i wouldnt turn my nose up at a hot dog or a bratwurst ' Marita said. 'she opened the door to the room they were in. ' come on Flora...

_

the water slowly ran down over Emmas front as she scrubber the gunk off of her with a var of soap. Marie had created a vice screen to replace a yucky , moldy screen had had been in its place before. ity would serve as basically a large , disgusting floor mat. ' Just remember to leave some soap for me.' Marie said from behind her. the showe area was small as they were real close to each other, emma currently in front closers to the howerhead which was spraying water straight down and only some was washing over Marie.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 15, 2019, 08:36:29 PM**

"Kojurro?" Flora asked. "I wonder if he's related to the Dr. Kojurro at Sartonic." Now that they had a name to go off of, she decided to hold onto it. Hopefullly it wasn't actually a bomb or something... Then Marita mentioned food, which broke Flora out of her contemplative ruminations. "Ooh I'd found a room with food! There was a fridge back in the break room!" Flora led the way back down the hallway. "I wasn't brave enough to go rummaging through old forgotten lunches, but there was a partially eaten cake that wasn't bad."

However, when they entered the break room, the floor was now flooded. "What? That couldn't have come from the ground floor." Flora followed the source of the water and found herself at a stairway going up. she followed it, and eventually found herself creeping through concrete corridors straining and shuddering from the full brunt of the storm. The walls were badly leaking, and eventually she decided it wasn't safe enough to continue.

"Bad news," she told Marita somberly, returning to the flooded break room. "We won't be able to go much higher; the bank's ceiling is slowly eroding; water's flowing in from the top floor down. I think we're fine for the time being, but we have to hope this storm doesn't last forever..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 18, 2019, 07:20:23 AM**

it wnont last forever, naturally. earths atmosphere is simply not stable enough to keep storms going indefinitely. jupiter which has storms that last for literally hundreds of years, is what you are thinking of. " marita said ' come on, lets go find something to eat. at this point "i'l eat just about anything.
-
rose had finished cleaning her paws as best she could in the sink. ' just dont hog all the hot water , you two. i'm going to need a shower muself pretty soon. " dont worruy' emma replied . marie and I are almost done..'

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 24, 2019, 02:40:46 PM**

"We've got one more option," Flora nodded. "I saw a vending machine on the upper floor."

She led the way to the staircase. "Be careful," she warned, as water was leaking from the ceiling and the walls were showing signs of disintegration. "Things are a lot less stable up here."

The vending machine contained a decent supply of chips, pretzels, gum, and other snacks. "Oh man, that fish jerky would be perfect..." Flora panted, pressing her face against the glass. "Let's see. If we can find some sort of heavy object to break the glass..." She spotted a potted plant and lugged it over. "Help me with this. Three...two...one...HEAVE!"

The succulent smashed against the vending machine glass, bounced backward with alarming elasticity and making Flora dart out of the way with a startled cry. Simultaneously the floor collapsed from underneath them and sent the plant, folf, and machine plummetting down to the next floor.

"Marita! Are you okay?" Flora called out in alarm, rubbing her hamstrings from the sudden unexpected fall. She'd ended the tumble unharmed, albeit in a crumpled heap and covered in sawdust. "I think I'm okay--*whoa*!" Abruptly the floor gave out again, sending her plummeting into the lobby with a heavy splash. Luckily the water level was high enough that it completely dampened her landing. "Oof..." she groaned, paddling to the surface. "Good news, Marita, most of the snacks are okay!" she called out, gathering handfuls of the bags. "Get down here!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 03, 2019, 06:45:02 PM**

just gran me some chips ' marita said as she came down..
Emma and marie locked lips in a warm and deep kiss, the golden retriever sliding her tongue into the vixens mouth as the pair brushed against the vine screen covering the shower. Maries claws moved down from emmas chin and down over Emma;s chest and finally to the bulge in her belly. Emma moaned in pleasure as she returned the kiss to Marie, feeling her tongue collide with Marie's inside her mouth. after about 5 minutes, Marie broke the kiss, and stared at Emma.. ' you've been wanting that for awhile, havent you? Emma smirked. ' y-yeah actually ' Marie blushed , as Emma stroked her cheek with her claws. ' well, consider this an open invitation for future kisses.' the vixen smiled. 'for now though, lets get out of the shower, because Rose will want some hot water for her shower. Marie moved the vine screen aside and the 2 girls exited the shower and Rose moved into the space they had just left." thanks for leaving me some hot water girls. just dry off as best you can while you wait for me.' she said with a smile, as Marie moved the vine across the opening to give rose some privacy

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 03, 2019, 07:00:47 PM**

Flora swam to the safety of the stairs, clutching as many waterproof snacks as she could carry. "You're lucky the collapse missed you..." she panted to Marita. "That was terrifying! I may be soaked to the bone again, but all things considered I got off easy."

Collapsing on the marble tiles, Flora got a glimpse of the outside world from the ruined lobby. "It's nighttime...we might want to start considering finding a good place to sleep. That staff room had two couches we could push together to make a bed." She sat up. "Wonder if the others are still showering, or if they've gone off to do some exploring of their own. Should we go check the bathroom?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 11, 2019, 06:20:36 PM**

no,we should get the beds set up first .' Marita shook her head. ' theres no question of finding clothes to sleep in, we will just have to get used to each others curves..not that i mind that ' she smirked. ' the sooner we get them set up the sooner we can we get some sleep. we would also get our choice of sleeping spotds as we were first, Emma, rose and Marie would just have to take what was left. last to come, gets whatevers left after all ' Marita said. she glanced at the snacks, which ran from chipds of various flavors,. to fgronala bars, to packaged fruit pages to pretzeks ' seems like we have a bunch of snacks to munch on, so thats something at least."
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emma sat near the sink, lettinmg the warm temperture in the room dry off the watr on her fur. Marie was looking at herself in the bathroom mirrir, trimming some over-long eyelashes. Rose wss humming softly to heself in the shower washing off all the gunk. which swirled around the bathroom drain.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 11, 2019, 08:04:03 PM**

"Okay, let's do it!" Flora agreed, hoisting herself to her feet. "We're certainly getting our cardio for the day, going up and down these stairs."

Carrying the snacks back to the second floor, Flora walked into the break room and nodded approvingly at the pair of couches. "It's gonna be a tight squeeze, getting five of us onto this double-couch, but at least that'll help keep us warm." It was getting colder as the sun set outside, Flora felt a chill travel through her fur as she and Marita dragged the couches into the corner and pushed them together into a decent makeshift bed. "Actually, this looks pretty big," Flora corrected herself, flopping onto the center with an exhausted sigh. "Oh yeah, I can fall asleep on this. Give it a try!" she encouraged Marita.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 14, 2019, 02:30:58 PM**

marita climbed in in next to flora. ' yeah this isnt that bad. ' Cushions are reasonably soft, all we are missing is a blanket to cover us. otherwise we'll just snuggle together and use each others body heat to stay warm.' Marita said as she settled in. ' i dont know about you, but i'm too wired to sleep at the moment. we could have some of those snacks you brought, as whatever passes for dinner.' She shrugged as she reached for some of the snacks flora had piled up. marta picked out a pack of sour cream and onion chips

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Rose finished her shower then pushed back the vice screen so she could dry off in the relatively warm room.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 15, 2019, 04:29:25 AM**

Flora grinned and grabbed a bag of salt-and-vinegar chips. "This is kinda fun..." she admitted, stuffing her face. "I mean, now that we're not in imminent danger. Just sitting in bed together, eating junk food...it almost feels like a sleepover." She sighed. "Sorry, I know that sounds weird. It's just, I never got to have those when I was young. My parents didn't even let me have friends. This is firing some dendrites I'd long forgotten about."

She flashed Marita a warm smile. "You've kept a really level head through all this. I've seen the other girls looking to you for emotional support. Thanks for helping us all get through this ordeal in one piece."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2019, 08:46:20 PM**

you never had a sleeopver?' marita said ' really? Ok, okj, then we'll have a sleepover. so, flora what do you want to do first. Games, chat. or gossip? i would have some sleepovers with my friends growing up.. we would basically use it as an excuse to play games talk hair styles, and fashion. it wsnt until i was 11 or 12 that we started french kissing each other at these sleepovers , the first time i ever did that was with a girl i knew named Kora. she was a lionesss, liked to tell jokes, was real good at video games, and she and i were best friends until we graduated high school.   she went west for college i stayed local. then i got hooked on biproxytol, and that was not a good time for me ' Marita sighed as she fished inside the bag for some more chips,. ' biproxytol is serious stuff. very expensive, very addicting, usually takes loads of treatment to detoxify you. sometimes, however, you can get clean cold turkey. i .. was one of the lucky ones that was able to quit. its not a proud time in my life and i've only rarely talked about it ' Marita said. '

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 17, 2019, 09:45:47 PM**

"You french-kissed your friends?" Flora gasped. "Is that normal?" She'd noticed that Marita's circle tended to live rather-open-minded lifestyles, but she'd never thought she was encountering people like that at an early age. "Do people normally kiss each other at sleepovers? No wonder my parents wouldn't let me have them." She sighed. "I guess I shouldn't be too hard on my family. I never saw either of my parents, both spent days and nights at work. I have more memories of the maids and cooks than either of them." She finished her bag, crumpled it into a ball and flung it at the trash can, where it fell far short. "Homeschooled, no church, no television or video games allowed... it was just me alone in that mansion all day. Except for my demon of a younger sister, and my older sister who was kicked out of the family before I turned five."

She shook her head to stop the flashbacks. "But enough of that. What sort of games do you play at a sleepover? Let's play some!" she bounced excitedly.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2019, 09:53:40 PM**

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yes we did. usually as part of truth or dare. we would only go to that, after all the other games were done.' Marita explained. ' and yes theres some of that stuff at sleepovers. its innocent stuff really, its not like we were fondling each other and strippingoff our clothes or aqnything or anything. at 11 or 12 you're still innocent about the ways of the world. and I was and we were.' marita said. ' As for games we could play.. hmm. 20 questions. you think of something, it can be a name of a person place or thing, and i have 20 questions to guess who or what it is.. other games we could play are charades or pictionary or guess that wordf. those were always fun at our parties..Kora usually won the pictonary games, come to think it she usually won just about every kind of game we played.. so. we made her a judge so that others could play and win ' Marita said with a grin..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2019, 02:13:19 AM**

"Damn, Kora sounds like a boss!" Flora exclaimed. "I wish I could meet her. You have any idea what happened to her after college, or where she is now?"

She tried to ponder a good secret item to use for 20 questions, so she'd be ready after they were done discussing Kora.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2019, 05:33:48 AM**

Yes actually. shes living in San Diego, where she is a professor at the local college. She teaches archeological history. not a surprise, that. she was always scary smart. Shes single, too busy with work to tie herself down. now lets see, when was the last time i talked with her? hmm. it was prior to all this.. so, a couple months ago. i have her number in my cell phone, we've been meaning to reunite but after this recent disaster thats gonna be awhile..' marita said shaking her head. ' Shes great, you'll see quickly why we were so close for so long. ' Marita said ' you want me to call her?' she asked puling out her phone..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2019, 05:40:26 AM**

“Sure!” Flora crawled over and laid her head on Marita’s shoulder so she could listen. She couldn’t contain her excitement; this was such a sleepover thing to do, calling friends on the phone to gossip! *Maybe sometime in the future, after everything settled down, Marita could take me on a trip to San Diego to see Kora*, she thought. Flora had always wanted to see California, but drug-running with Emi’s gang rarely had involved enough time or money for vacationing.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2019, 05:58:05 AM**

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maritsa dialed the number and the uimage of a gorgeous lioness with bright blue eyes appeared on screen. she was seated at a table with a stack of papers in front of her ' Marita! kora laughed as she responded ' so nice to hear from you.. its only been 5 week s 5 days 12 hours andf 17 minutes since you last called.. what exactly have you been up to..' its a long story ' marita began. ' you do realize that is a timeface call. i can see you;'re in the buff ' Kora laughed as Marita blushed . " thats a long story too. the entire town has been trashed, and our clothes fell apart.. ' and its not like theres a surviving department store in town. " yes i heard about some weird storm out where you guys are. some 'act of god', they were calling it. it doesnt surprise me that you're involved somehow, you were always the adventurous type.. ' she stopped as she noticed Flora resting her head on marita.. " Oh! a frioend! Marita why didnt you introduce us? Manners dear.. Hi, I'm doctor Kora, professor of archeological history.. as i like to joke to my class, we study history's screwups and hope we dont repeat them . usually i get eyerolls from that line, but it works. and your name is?' kora asked Flora.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2019, 06:08:04 AM**

“Hi Doctor Kora!” Flora waved. “My name’s Flora, I’m Marita’s roommate. And yeah, normally I’d be wearing something when I meet someone for the first time, but as weird as this sounds, this storm actually did destroy our clothes. It definitely isn’t a normal storm, we’re still getting to the bottom of it.”

She blushed. “I heard you live in San Diego, that’s so awesome! Have you ever done archaeology work in the Middle East? There’s a bunch of ancient ruins out in the desert near where we live, not sure what culture they’re from though.”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2019, 06:41:09 AM**

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hello flora nice to meet you. yes the Middle east is filled with ruins. Mesopotamia was after all the first major civilization that we know of. the entire region is covered with ruins from the various kingdoms and cultures that lived in that region throughout history. Babylon for instance was one of the ancient worlds 7 wonders, well at least the gardens were. I've been fortunate enough to do some excavation work at Nineveh, which is mention in the bible , all the residents of that city put on sackcloth and sprinkled themselves with ash to show repentance of their sins before God, so that he would not destroy the city.
anyway my connection tells me you are in the Nubian desert in northern Sudan.' Kora said ' the Nubians were great pottery makers, some examples of their work are in the Louvre in France . it was part of the ancient Egypt kingdom in antiquity. "

you could talk like this all day ' Marita cracked. what are those papers on your desk. ' Kora sighed ' final exams for my class. ' I'm about halfway through them, some of the kids get it, some dont. flora, you're a folf, aren't you, a wolf- fox hybrid? that's so unique, and i love love, love that shade of pink in your fur! its gorgeous!' Kora said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2019, 07:06:37 AM**

Flora beamed. “Why, thank you! Can you believe it’s natural?” She swept her pearl-white hair back, as if playfully modeling. “Marita’s met all sorts of odd characters since coming to live at a psionic research institute. I’m one of the more normal ones, if I do say so myself!”

She grinned. “Best of luck grading those final papers! I bet you’re excited for the quarter to be over, you’ll get a bunch of time to relax and enjoy San Diego. This is the perfect time of year to visit the beach!”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 18, 2019, 05:12:06 PM**

this isnt quarter papers, this is end of year papers ' Kora said ' in some cases these grades may determine if kids graduate or not. so theres pressure there. this college is quite prestigious and i make good money teaching there.and yes San Diego has its scenic attractions. I love the Zoo here for instance."" she said. ' so flora, how did you run into Marita here? I would imagine she's talked about me a bit, we were after all best friends for many years." Kora said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 18, 2019, 09:07:47 PM**

"She did! I've heard all sorts of great things about you!" Flora beamed. "Hope I get to meet you in person someday." She decided she'd better lie than go into detail about meeting Marita while saving the world storming a flying warship. "Marita and I met at Sartonic! I'm also from the United States, actually, but I moved from Cornova to become a test subject. The pay's not great, but the free lodging and chance to immerse myself in a whole new culture has been more than worth it."

She perked her ears at Kora's mention of a zoo. "I've never been to a zoo! What sort of animals do they have at yours?" she asked.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2019, 10:01:05 AM**

they have all kinds ' Kora smiled ' lions, tigers elephants, monkeys, some of the rarest creatures on Earth call the San Diego zoo home, and its one the leasding zoos in the world for animal habitat conservation. " she smiled ' it really is a sight to see1"
-
marie left the bathroom heading out to find where Marita and flora were . this left rose and Emma alone together to finish cleaning up which they soon did, and followed Marie out the door.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 25, 2019, 10:57:16 AM**

“Rare species like lions and tigers qualify for zoos, huh?” Flora’s eyes lit up. “As a folf, I’m one of the rarest on the planet, in fact I might be the only one in existence! How much do you think a zoo would pay to have me as an exhibit? I think I could get used to that life!”

She looked over as Marie and the others walked into the room. “Hi gals, we’re on FaceTime with one of Marita’s friends! Kora, this is Marie and Rose, they’re Marita’s girlfriends, and the vixen is my girlfriend Emma!” She scooted to make room on the bed. “I know that’s a lot of names to just dump on you like that.”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2019, 11:45:28 AM**

I've heard of rose before' Kora said. " Marita talks about her pretty regularly. " Hi Kora! Rose smiled ' Hows California treating you? and Is there any chance we could finagle, like, two weeks to crash at your place? we'd gladly pay.." Kora laughed. ' as guests, sure! as renters, thats another story. you'd need good money to live out here ,even for a month. Housing prices just keep going up and up. and a months rent, at my place, is easily 10000 bucks. i can afford it, because my university pays me very well and covers some of my housing costs. t As fort San Diego, the scenery is beautiful the folks are beautiful even if most of them have had ' work' done, and its sunny nearly all the time. unfortunately all that drives up the cost of living here. as for how i am doing, i'm doing well. '

She then turned to flora ' well unique specimens are treated differently , its why they spare pink lobsters, and other rare colored lobsters when they find them. .its a question of whether they would treat you as an outlier within your species.

There are other folfs in the world, Flora , you arent unique in that regard , but your coloring is definitely unique. folfs usually range from brown to black to grey in darker colors, and white to yellow in lighter colors, although there are few that are red or orange. . with folfs, usually theres magical or psionics abilities involved, it comes with the combination. There's actually a folf at my university, he's a professor of chemistry, and hes pushing to ban animal testing. things like dogs, cats, other creatures and the like. Professor Fennis is his name. nice chap, his a mixture of gray and black and cream fur." Kora said. " hes been at the university close to 20 years.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 25, 2019, 01:37:28 PM**

"Other folfs?" gasped Flora. Her mind was suddenly alight with possibilities. "Others like me?" She's never thought to do any research into her kind, since she'd assumed she was alone in the world. "Yeah, if we ever visit I'd love to meet Professor Fennis, or any other folfs!" This last sentence was punctuated with an uncontrollable yawn; the adrenaline of their action-packed day was finally running dry, replaced with a weariness stronger than any she'd felt since her first night after arriving in the desert. "I hope you three like the bed..." she mumbled to the three newcomers, blinking sleepily. "It's not much, but it's what Marita and I could make considering the circumstances. We don't have a blanket, but we can snuggle for warmth... also, there's some pretzels and other snacks if you want a bit of food before you fall asleep."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2019, 03:50:13 PM**

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hi kora! marie waved to kora ' i'm emma ' emma waved with a smile. ' very nice to meet you, or well, at least get introduced to you.' Pleasure is mine , girls ' Kora said . ' You girls look tired so I'll let you girls get some sleep. remember you ladies are roughly 12 hours ahead of me, so 3 pm here is 3 am where you ladies are. And Marita, dont worry about calkling me. I'll be in touch, and it will be far sooner than the nearly 6 weks it took you to call me. Ha Ha. Have a good night, girl. Pleasant dreams. Kora oUt" kora broke off the call, and marita turned to the others.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 25, 2019, 04:44:39 PM**

"She seemed really nice, Marita!" Flora yawned. "Oh man...I don't know about the rest of you but today is catching up to me." She almost drifted off, but then nature called and she staggered off the bed. "Actually, if you're all done with the bathroom, I gotta pee. I'll be right back."

Kojurro vaulted over a flying car. A tornado was hot on his heels, threatening to drag him to his doom, but he found evermore-hidden energy reserves to increase his pace. Vaulting over a collapsing building, he combat-rolled under a sparking powerline and skidded down a fallen billboard. His labcoat had been long shredded to bits, leaving only his tattered ninja catsuit.

He winced when he landed on a diesel truck and almost slipped on the oil leaking from the ruptured engine. *I'm getting old...* Gritting his teeth, he twirled with inhuman reflexes to avoid a lightning strike and gasped when the lightning ignited the gasoline and sent him flying from a terrible explosion.

He hit a snowbank and spared himself only a 15-millisecond power nap before backflipping to his feet and continuing his sprint through sheets of stinging hail. *It's possible I should have waited until after the storm to rescue my tontine box...* He deflected a flying chunk of sidewalk with his fist, *...but too late to turn back now.*

His estimated he'd reach the bank by early morning.

Flora returned, a bit too quickly to have made the trip all the way down to the first-floor. "I'm back!" she announced, looking guiltily at the potted plant in the hallway. Washing her hands in the staff room sink, she glanced at the sleeping arrangements. "Is everyone settled for bed? Cause I'm knocking out."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 27, 2019, 11:13:48 AM**

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we're all settled in.' rose said from the right side of the bed. marita and flora got the premium , middle spots. emma was between rose and flora. marie was on the far left, trying to get as much room to move around without falling off onto the floor.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 27, 2019, 08:30:55 PM**

Flora yawned and snuggled into the partners on her left and right. The exhaustion roared up on her quickly, and before she'd even realized it, she'd already fallen asleep.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 29, 2019, 07:57:31 PM**

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emma stirred next to flora, her arm feeling bumb from having it laid on by rose., ' morning girls ' she murmured as she shpook the sleep put of her eyes./ ' do we have any sour cream and onion chips left? i gotta taste for them." she said failing to stifle a yawn.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 29, 2019, 08:02:41 PM**

It was early afternoon when Flora felt herself rousing from her dreamless stupor. Stretching lazily, she blinked in surprise when someone's calf got in the way of her foot. "...Whu?" She tried to turn over, and found Marita’s chest in the way.

Finally her thoughts started settling as her brain recollected the events of last night, and she remembered she was crammed in a bed with four other naked women. *...Maybe I don't need to get up just yet.* Snuggling back in, she settled herself into the curvature of Emma's back, closed her eyes, and just enjoyed the warmth of the morning sun shining through the office window.

Then she heard Emma's question and realized she'd woken her girlfriend up. "I didn't see sour cream & onion," she yawned, "but unless somebody else ate it, there was a bag of cheddar & sour cream Ruffles." Assuming Emma was hoping to leave the bed, Flora rolled over and snuggled with Marita instead. "'Morning," she smiled. "How did you sleep?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**

Post by: **Nick22** on **May 21, 2019, 07:43:36 PM**

i slept okay ' Marita said. ' these couches arent exactly meant for sleeping on.' She said as she stretched. ' i suggest we explore more of the bank today.. and if possibble, the rest of the town. see if any clothes stores have stuff lying around.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 21, 2019, 08:03:10 PM**

"Awesome," Flora yawned. She snuggled deeper into Marita's side. "Do we have to get up right away?" she murmured. "I'm actually rather comfy in the middle. And you're all keeping the bed so warm..."

Abruptly the window shattered as someone rappeled through it, sending a rainbow of glass skittering to the ground and punctuating Flora's startled scream. "Hands off the tontine box, you thief!" Kojurro commanded, combat rolling and coming up to a perfectly balanced Yoga tree pose.

"I don't know what that is!!" Flora scrambled backwards under his murderous gaze, bulldozing over Emma and Marie as fell off the bed with a startled whoop.

"Girls?" Kojurro asked, tilting his head in surprise. "I certainly didn't expect to see you here. Nor to be the best-dressed person in the room..." His nighttime sprint had done a number on his equipment; other than his subdermal augments, his shredded ninja catsuit was the only article of clothing to survive the trip, and it wasn't leaving many of his scratches and surface wounds to the imagination. "Whatever transpired to leave you five in this state?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2019, 11:26:02 AM**

long story kojurro' marita said as she got up off the bed " a very long story. " you dont happen to know of a clothes store where we could find some new clothes, do you?" She asked. " just asking out of curiousity, you see."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2019, 11:41:58 AM**

“Most buildings I saw were leveled, your best bet would be the underground floor of the shopping mall. The mall itself was demolished when I passed it last night, but I know it had clothes stores in the subterranean level. Can’t tell you much more than that I’m afraid, I was a bit pre-occupied surviving the storm,” he apologized. “However, we have something *far* more important to sort out!” He swiveled an accusatory finger at Flora, who peeped in surprise and fell back on the floor. “My sensors indicate you have my tontine box! Hand it over!”

Flora shakily grabbed her sack of valuables she’d looted from the deposit boxes. “Um...would it hold up in court if I claimed I just found this bag on the floor and was totally going to return it?”

“I have no interest in what you do with the rest,” Kojurro assured, withdrawing the black box. His name remained the only one with a green light next to it. He pressed his thumbprint against the same button Flora had before, and the box whirred and opened up. Flora gasped as the box projected a 3d hologram.

“During the Scorched Earth war, I served in the Vulture Scavenger Corps,” Kojurro explained. “I was part of Lt. Raleigh’s squad, we usually competed with the Kibagamis to be the most successful scouting unit in the corps. And we’d probably have beaten them more often if we hadn’t all been backstabbing scumbags. But one day, my squad discovered this map in a ruined museum.” He skipped around the map by flicking his finger. “It showed the route to a fabulous treasure, here in the Middle East. Of course, we were in the middle of a war, and nobody had time to go chasing treasure. Plus, we weren't in a line of work with great life expectancy."

He closed the box down. "So we formed a tontine. We would all keep a digital copy of the map, only usable when a single one of us remained alive. It's been so many years...but I am finally the last one." Tears stained his eyes.

"Is that why you came to this region?" Flora asked.

Kojurro nodded. "And it appears I wasn't the only one; it's highly unusual for this many members of the tontine to die so quickly. Apparently this storm hit much more than just Sartonic." He regarded the collected girls. "But this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you all. I'll need assistants on this expedition. If you will come with me, we can follow this map and all become rich. A fabulous treasure awaits us!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 04, 2019, 07:51:58 PM**

Treasure?' Count us in " marie said " only .. well we'll need clothes and supplies.. and someoine who is good at geograhpy, landmarks and all that.." Marita started to laugh. " We have just the gal for that. or should i say, professor?' She grinned ' Kora is an expert in this field, although I dont think she's been on too many "treasure hunts" she knows a LOT about ruins and artifacts. . I'm sure she'll help us out. we'll need to get some stuff for her while shopping, and well, a general idea of when and where to meet up with her..' She pulled out her phone.. " ok, we are currently in North Kush.. theres an airfield in the north of the city.. hopefully its not completely and utterly trashed. ..'
"Lets go shopping.. or more accurately, looting ' Emma said ' because much as I have gotten used over the past day or so to seeing your bare forms , ladies, we do need to cover up..not just for modesty's sake, but from protection from the heats sake. This is a city in the desert after all."
Lead the way, Kojurro" rose said " I'm in the mind for a purple drress and umbrella combo. not quite southern belle, but one with ample coverage of most of my body." The group began heading down the stairs toewawards the bank enterance. Opening the door, however, bropught a quick remindfer that it was about 30 degrees warmer outside than it was inside the bank.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 04, 2019, 10:14:16 PM**

"Yeah, I'm all for nudism but this is getting ridiculous." Flora scarfed down a bag of stale chips as they descended the stairs for the back door. "There've been other times I spent a whole day without clothes, but never when this much shit was going down around me."

"To be fair, many wartime infections come from dirty cloth getting in wounds. You might be doing yourself a favor considering how many minor cuts and bruises you've suffered," Kojurro pointed out optimistically. "And as for your suggestion Marita, an expert in local archaeology would be a welcome addition to the expedition. This map takes us through several ancient sites, some populated and some not, and I'd love to have an experienced academic telling us what to do."

Flora staggered back when the door opened and a blast of hot air hit them like a truck. "Holy cow! The storm turned into a heat wave overnight!"

"Indeed." Kojurrro held out his hand. "At least the rain stopped. And we all have fur, so nobody will get sunburned."

Flora marveled at how badly the town was destroyed as they hiked towards the mall. At times she spotted a few other people, but everybody was evacuating the commercial district for the residential neighborhoods. Nobody paid the group any heed.

Thirty minutes later Flora was drenched in sweat and her legs felt like pudding. "Can I please drink some groundwater?" she panted, climbing over a collapsed highway fence and shaking her fur like a dog to get soaked hair out of her eyes. "Just a bit. I'm gonna pass out."

"As your doctor, I could never allow that! Don't worry, it's right there," Kojurro declined, pointing at a massive pile of rubble and waterlogged concrete. "I could carry that bag of valuables you stole from the bank, if that would help."

Flora only clutched it closer to her chest. "How can you even tell?" She squinted at where he was pointing. "It looks like every other destroyed building in this town."

"It's easily thrice as large as anything around it." Once they'd passed the faultlines spidering across the parking lot, Kojurro tried to move a boulder without any luck. "I don't think we'll be able to excavate a way to the lower levels," he confessed. "Not without specialized equipment, or a bulldo--"

"Over here!" Flora called, waving. She'd found the entrance to the underground parking lot. "This is a lot more open. Dunno if it goes all the way inside, but we can at least escape the sun!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 11, 2019, 08:02:36 AM**

emma sweltereed as she made her way into the parking lot enterance, or more accurately, what was left of it. the temperature inside was roughly half that of the outside, so the sweat dripping off of her quickly cooled and becsame sticky to the touch. ' we;; this is a lot better' Marita said as she entered ' the temperatuire, not the state of the garage. we're lucky its intact enough to hold up the lower flooors . ' we'll need to get inside the mall, and hope like heck the stores are intact enough to sell stuff. " " i dont know about you girls ' marie said , " but i could go for a nice stuff drink right about now.." she said wiping swat off of her chest.

Title: *
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 13, 2019, 10:11:59 PM**

Flora tiptoed her way through the rubble. "Keep your eyes peeled!" she warned. "There's broken bottles there, and I think that's shattered windshield fragments around that upturned car. Lotta crap was blown into this parking entrance and couldn't go anywhere else."

Covering her crotch for protection as she waded her way delicately through crashed I-beams, splintery tree trunks and other waist-high debris, Flora sighed in frustration when she reached the inner double-doors to find they were shut. "Ugggh..." she sighed, collapsing against them. "We're locked out!" she shouted back to her allies after trying in vain to push the door open. "The doors open outward, and all this crap is blocking it!"

"*...Hello?*"

Flora's fur stood on end when someone replied from the other side of the door. "Hello?" She asked, dropping to her knees and attempting to peer under the crack.

"*Oh god, someone's out there!*" the voice shouted deeper into the mall. "*Please help us! We're trapped in the mall, there's no way out!*"

"Um, I think we might be able to clear the way out..." Flora bit her lip. "Gonna take forever, though..."

"Well, no time like the present!" Kojurro dug his nails into a telephone pole and rolled it sportingly out of the way."

"I guess there are six of us..." Flora sighed. "Hang on in there!" she called under the door. "We're paving the way!"

Hours later, Kojurro and the girls were covered in grime and trash from their dirty work. Flora panted with exhaustion as Kojurro held an I-beam out of the way as she forced the door open. "Come on, come on!" she growled through gritted teeth as a small party of mallgoers and employees rushed their way into the parking lot.

"Oh, thank you and thank Providence!" an armadillo raised his arm to shake the hand of their rescuer, then decided not to when he observed how filthy she was. "We took shelter from the storm, but there was nothing to eat or drink! Do you have any food or water?"

"We don't even have *clothes.*" Flora admitted. "You're gonna want to head for the residential neighborhoods, we saw medical and rescue personnel there." She glanced back inside. "Is this all of you?"

"No, we had...a minor situation." The armadillo shifted his foot and some of the others traded guilty glances. "There was a lizard who kept somehow finding fruit and seeds to eat...but she didn't want to share. We got...desperate...and she fled into the air ducts. We searched for her all night, but she kept slipping away."

"What, were you trying to kill her?" Kojurro gasped.

"Survival brings out the worst in anyone!" a panda defended herself. "I wanted to *live*. On that note, I'm not spending another second in this hellhole!"

Flora wrinkled her nose as the townsfolk left without further ado. "Well, we better find that lizard girl..." she muttered, taking her first step into the dark and abandoned mall. "Though hopefully in a way that lets her know we come in peace."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 15, 2019, 07:06:56 PM**

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well offeruing her the peace sign isnt going to help. " marita said, shaking off as much grime as possible. here and there light fizzled off and on. some of the lower floors looked almost pristine, but the higher up you went the greater the damage. ' looks like this place had a food court' marita said looking at a still standing kiosk . ' Lets see if anything there still works. ' even if it is only a soda machine. " marita had her phone out as a quasi flash light to illuminate the floor in front of them, which was uneven .

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 15, 2019, 07:22:05 PM**

Flora gulped as she tiptoed into the food court. “Erm, Miss Lizard…?” she called out. “Please don’t hurt us...we’re not here to kill you. You can come out!”

“Should we split up?” Kojurro asked, grabbing a mop from the ground and brandishing it like a sword. “We can cover more stores that way.”

“Mrrrph.” Flora grumbled, looking at her grit-stained fur. “Honestly, I’d rather find a way to wash off first. They said there’s no running water, so I dunno how exactly we’re supposed to do that…”

"There might be pots or buckets of water in the kitchen,” Kojurro suggested, steeling himself and his improvised quarterstaff.

“I’m not sure you’re sending the right message by arming yourself…” Flora gulped and hopped the counter. But all their trepidation was for naught; she couldn't even access the kitchen. "The ceiling straight-up collapsed!" she gasped. "And there's water leaking from the ground!"

"That might explain why the water lines are down," Kojurro nodded. "That means we can probably repair it, if we bypass the busted pipe...what are you doing?"

Flora was scaling the collapsed ceiling. "I don't care where it's leaking from, I want this crap washed off me!" she answered. Delicately, she reached the apex of the blockage and tried to begin her hike down into the kitchen...and slipped on her grease-stained paws and tumbled into the blackness.

"Flora!" Kojurro called. He darted around, but there was no other way into the kitchen. "Are you okay?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 15, 2019, 07:40:04 PM**

Emma was loking around for anything to drink, or the very least wash her hands.. ' marita was aside abnd overturned tablew when she beheld the glow from a large soda machine ' ah this is one of those ala carte olones ' Rose saidv as she came closer ' its the one where theres loads of choivces. Lets see if it works.. ' She presed the screen and choose the ' diet option" oh boy! lots of choices. Diet Coke, diet Dr peper, Diet sprite Diet Root Beer.. " wE hit the soda jacjkjpot ' She said. grabbing a cup from a nearby dispenser and filling it to the brim with Diet Coke. ' marita filled a cup with water and used it to clean her hands and fur as much as possible. Emma put her claws out to get them washed by Marita

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Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 15, 2019, 07:43:22 PM**

Flora hit the ground with an "Oof!" and a heavy thud. Groaning softly, she blinked and lay still, catching her bearings.

She heard Kojurro calling for her. "I'm fine!" she replied dizzily, rubbing her head. "Just a bit of a tumble." She staggered to her feet. "I...*woah!*" She'd stepped in a wire snare; before she could take another step, a makeshift pulley system flipped her upside down and dragged her into the air with a terrified shriek.

"You assholes want water that bad?" a voice snarled from the blackness. "Then *take this!!!*" Flora screamed in terror as a hose nozzle shot her in the chest with stinging water. She spluttered for mercy, shielding her face desperately as her assailant stepped into the light and cut the stream. "Wait...Flora?"

The folf gasped as she recognized the blue-skinned desert lizard. "Sharal'tar! What the hell are you doing here?" Sharal'tar was another test subject at Sartonic, and Yurei's ex-girlfriend. She was one of the few test subjects with more than one psionic power; she could control plants and affect their growth rate, and she could shrink down to the size of an ant.

"Me? I'm trying not to die." Sharal'tar glared, lowering her hose. "Why are *you* naked in the mall again?"

"I've been fighting for my life too, outside in the storm!" Flora protested, flushing red. "I didn't get the luxury of camping in a basement the whole time."

"Wait, Sharal, what exactly did you mean by '*again*'?" Kojurro asked from the other side of the blockade.

"Oh, she never told you that story? Her dress got caught and eaten by the escalator." Sharal'tar smirked. "Is that why you came back? You hoping to maybe find what's left of it down here?"

“Sure, yeah, laugh it up,” Flora folded her arms, trying to maintain her composure despite being bound and hung like a captured animal. “You just tried to murder me!”

“Forgive me, my last 24 hours haven’t exactly been peaches!” Sharal’tar snapped. “It was fucking *Lord of the Flies* in here, just because they couldn’t understand I was *growing the food fast as I could*, not hiding it!”

“Wow. Personally, I’m shocked that your award-winning personality couldn’t clear that up,” Flora retorted sarcastically. Then Sharal’tar shot her in the nuts. “Ow, fuck! Hey! Stop it!” she protested, trying and failing to protect herself as Sharal’tar blasted every part of her body in succession. “Jesus, that hurts!”

“What? I’m cleaning you up, just like you wanted.” Sharal’tar dropped the hose after turning Flora into a sopping chandelier of frazzled fur. “Who else is here, anyway?” She pushed the stove aside from where she’d barricaded the side entrance to the kitchen, letting anyone else enter if they wish.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 15, 2019, 08:08:48 PM**

the door opened and rose entered carrying a large cop of Sprite ' she stopped as she saw the soaked and clear;ly miserable Flora hung upside down from the ceilimng and then noticed Sharaltar ' Oh.. so your the one we've been loking forward ' I'm Rose.. thios is marie , Marita and emma. Pleased to meet you.' Marie used her vine poewers to break up the debris by crushing the stuff into powder. ' i think i'm kinda getting the hang of these powers ' Marie said before nioticing that Sharal'tar was looking at her " yeah, sorry, i have these powers ' Marie said slightly embarased

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Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 15, 2019, 08:18:44 PM**

"Hey Emma. And yeah, I've seen you three around Sartonic." Sharal'tar blinked in shock at everyone's state of undress. "Seriously though, where are *all* your clothes?"

"Can someone let me down...please?" Flora muttered weakly. "All the blood's rushing to my head..."

Sharal'tar ignored her. "You'll all want to follow me," she said. "There are clothing stores deeper in the mall." She glanced in surprise at Marie's vines. "Wait, you're a plantbender as well?" she gasped. "How did I not know that before? I thought I was the only one at Sartonic!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 16, 2019, 09:57:40 AM**

they got shredded in the storms' Marita said. And Maries only recently come into these powers. she hasnt exactly mastered them, but they've saved pour bacon on several occasions. If you have similar powers, Sharal'tar, perhaps you could teach her to control them? the last time she tried opening a door with them, she tore the door off the hinges>"

_
Well in the meantime, we do ned to get some clothes and suppplies. oh, and we neeed to get Flora down from there ' Marie said. She gestured with her clwas vines wrapped around floras legs and with a pull flora was sent sprawling to the ground.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 16, 2019, 02:41:53 PM**

Sharal'tar winced as Marie's vines snapped Flora's snare trap and dragged Flora into the linoleum. "Yeah...you could definitely benefit from some training. It looks like you're not thinking of them as an extension of yourself; you're wielding them like a whip when they're closer to an extra arm." She waved her arm, and a pair of vines grew from the floor and dangled Flora in the air from both legs. "Like this. Treat them like limbs. I like to imagine I'm an octopus and they're my tentacles, it helps get my brain in the right mindset."

"Come on, girls, do I really have to be the guinea pig for this?" Flora begged, grasping desperately for the ground as Sharal'tar bobbed her like a hook on a fishing line.

Sharal'tar smirked as she acquiescently dropped Flora back to the ground. "Don't worry, Marie, you've completed the hard part, which is summoning and controlling the vines. Now it's a matter of perfecting your technique. Stick with me, and soon you'll be threading needles with those things."

Kojurro crossed to the refrigerator and opened it to find a collection of fruit, seeds, and other organic edibles. "Sharal'tar, I hope you don't mind, but we've had a long day, and I could do for some lunch." He threw some sunflower seeds into his mouth and swallowed them, shells and all. "All things considered, fruit and soda are far better than I expected to find," he noted through a full mouth.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **June 27, 2019, 03:26:19 PM**

" I'll be happy to get the training ' Marie said ' Its still freaky, seeing vines shoot out of my claws." She said As Rose went over to the fridges ands helped herself to some watermelon slices. " at kleast theres some food here ' She said. ' thanks for the snacks."

How close are we to the clothing department?' Marita asked Sharal'tar. " because I seriously nered some new clothes. " i need something that covers up my pregnancy" Emma chimed in. " Something that says ' warm and comforting" something in light blue or pink.' she said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **June 27, 2019, 11:16:14 PM**

"This way," Sharal'tar lead the group delicately through the mall once everyone had eaten their fill.

The mall was wrecked around them. Flora looked in awe at the destruction as Sharal'tar led the way through the ruined buildings. "I can't believe the storm caused as much destruction as it did," she breathed aloud. "How long do you think it'll take to recover from all this?"

"Who cares?" shrugged Kojurro. "We'll be traipsing across the Sahara chasing fabulous riches!"

"You'll be doing what now?" Sharal'tar looked over.

"I said, 'We'll--'" Kojurro started, but Flora covered his mouth and pulled him aside. "*We don't want her to come!*" she whispered urgently.

"Why not?" Kojurro pushed her aside. "She already mentioned she's going to train Marie in plantbending. How's she supposed to do that if we're off on adventures?"

"But that means...we need to split the money another way!" Flora protested. "I don't want a seventh of my riches to go to *her*!"

"As the one who owns the map, I get twice as much gold as the rest of you. It's only fair. Except I'll bequeath that bonus share of the loot to Miss Sharal'tar! Now come on, no more of this." Kojurro returned to the group and explained the upcoming expedition to collect his winnings by following the treasure map.

"Whoa. I mean, of course I'm down. Better than sticking around in this hellhole while they rebuild," Sharal'tar shrugged.

"Oh please, don't act nonchalant! You once worked as a mat sprayer to make rent, this is not shrug money!" Flora spat.

Sharal'tar ignored her. "Here we are," she spread her arms in presentation at a destroyed clothing boutique. "Help yourself. Whatever you find's gonna be a bit dusty, but it's better than--literally--nothing."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 05, 2019, 08:31:38 PM**

the bountique was , as stated, in ruins, and most of the clothes were trashed as well. pieces of fabric were strewn about, half of the blouse here, the upper part of a dress there. " Yeah theres nothing here for us.' Marita said picking up what once was a fetching red dress, but was now shredded into strips. ' We'll need to keep looking. i imagine theres several dress shops in the mall, hopefully between them we'll piece together some outfits..where is the next closest store?' she asked Sharal ' tar.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 05, 2019, 09:08:00 PM**

"Hmm, I wasn't really able to sightsee, was a bit busy trying not to die," Sharl'tar admitted. "But there are plenty of stores, we should be able to find something."

"Why don't you donate your pants to someone?" Flora challenged. "You've got underwear on, right? You gonna make a pregnant girl walk around naked when you've got an extra layer?"

"Fuck you, Flora, I don't *need* to do anything," Sharal'tar flipped her off. "We'll find pants for all of you soon enough...I hope." She glanced down the hallway. Even ignoring the rubble, nothing in the immediate vicinity looked like a clothing store.

"We might find something quicker if I go at my own pace," Kojurro suggested, suddenly zipping down the hall at lightning speed. "You all go left, I'll go right..." his voice echoed down the mall as he disappeared from view.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 15, 2019, 03:46:36 PM**

Marita peaked into the clothing store and shook her head. ' nothing left of the c;othes but pieces here and theree, plus there debris everywhere." she sighed as they went further and further into the mall, as they went further in , they found tiis part of the mall was intact, even the lights still worked. ' funny this part of the mall looks like it wasnt even toiuched ' Rose said as they entered a clotrhing store. beautiful dreeses hung on racks, in all the colkors of the rainbow, and best of all, they were untouched.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 18, 2019, 08:23:31 PM**

"Oh, thank god, we finally found an intact store." Flora sat down without further ado. "I don't think I can take another step." Even Sharal'tar seemed relieved to take some stress off her calves, and found a nice-looking leather coat. "You aren't worried you'll bake to death in that thing?" the folf asked. "It's blazing outside."

"I'm a desert lizard, we vent heat like nobody's business," Sharal'ar reminded. "I need protection from the light, not the heat."

Kojurro returned. "Ah, this is much better than the bath supplies place I located," he remarked approvingly, shedding his fluffy pink robe and locating a dashing white suit.

Sharal'tar couldn't help staring as Kojurro changed clothes. "What happened to his...uh..." she muttered to Flora.

"They were blasted off during the Scorched Earth war," Flora whispered. "Don't ask me how I know that. (https://docs.google.com/document/d/12HOp83zQg_Y9FpR0FxNTEXNbiCOcSBEZPPYYfDwsSew/edit)"

Kojurro glanced over. "Are you ladies talking about me?"

"Er, yes...about that massive scar on your abdomen!" Flora stammered quickly, and Sharal'tar flashed pale. "Did you get that from your run through the storm?"

"What, this?" He flexed his stomach proudly. "Don't make me laugh, this storm was *nothing*. I got this while caught in a tornado in Chancellorsville. It was so strong that a roofing tile literally embedded itself in my gall bladder like a knife!"

"*Well*, um, enough about that!" Sharal'tar interrupted. "Once everyone's dressed, including Flora, what should our next step be?"

"I guess continue rummaging through the mall, gather supplies for the expedition." Flora stripped a mannequin wearing an athletic jogging outfit. "Also we should call Kora, get her to arrive maybe next month. I don't get signal this deep under the ruins."

"Erm, actually, maybe she should arrive as soon as possible..." Kojurro muttered, looking in alarm at his tontine box.

"What's wrong?" Sharal'tar asked.

He showed it to her. "This box was only supposed to activate when one member of my squad remained alive. But look!"

The lizard squinted, then realized the problem. "There are two lights active."

"What?" Flora gasped. "There weren't two before!"

"I know what happened," Kojurro explained, tracing his finger across the newly-lit name. "Presley August was the team field surgeon, and he went into anagathics after the war. He's now a well-respected cryogenicist, an expert at preserving dying bodies with the hope of reviving them in the future when technology has advanced to the point their cause of death can be cured. I'm positive he's doing something to extend his lifespan as well, the guy was old even back in the war days."

Sharal'tar blinked. "So you're saying...?"

"He cheated," Kojurro explained. "When he saw we were the last two survivors, he temporarily put himself into cryogenic arrest. This flagged him as dead, and caused the tontine boxes to spit out the map to the treasure. Which means, ladies, that we are now in a race." His vision steeled. "Dr. August has always been impatient, and now he's rich and connected to boot. If he reaches the treasure before us, I guarantee he will not be interested in sharing it." He glanced over at Marita. "How soon can Kora arrive? We're now on something of a timeframe if we want to see that money."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **July 24, 2019, 10:24:57 PM**

" marita gaped " Hold on, theres someone else going after this loot? Well that would have been info that we could have used some time ago Kojurro.' first though, we need to get some clothes for everyone then I'll call Kora. Do you have any idea where this guy is ? Ok, hes rich, and connected, but that doesn't help us in countering him, if we dont have an idea of where he is. Plus we have to have a good look at your map, in order to know where to start. Otherwise, its the definition of a wild goose chase." she said. Emma had found the maternity section and found a nice billowing blue dress that covered her belly bulge in a taseful manner. Rose and Marie also found nice dresses, in light green and orange colors. Marita for her part , picked out a bright red dress with ruffles. ' Feel almost like a Southern Belle in in Gone with the wind ' She smirked.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 25, 2019, 12:04:41 AM**

"You look good, Marita!" Flora congratulated, donning her new jogging outfit.

Sharal'tar clicked her tongue, glancing cringingly at the yellow and white aesthetic of Flora's polyester. "Not to be rude, Flora, but your fur clashes brilliantly with that color scheme."

"Perhaps, but I swear you're all delusional if you think you're hiking through this heat wearing those suits and dresses." Flora adjusted her waist strap. "You all look like you stepped out of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*."

"I didn't know Presley August survived until the tontine box reactivated his signal," Kojurro apologized to Marita, flipping the device upside down and reactivating the map. "The cryonics facility he works for is in Montreal, so he's on the other side of the planet. He's probably recovering from his artificial slumber as we speak."

"OK, so how soon until you think he flies here to Sudan?" Flora asked. "Also, is he just gonna fly directly to the treasure?"

"Can't, it's more complicated than that," Kojurro explained. The map generated itself into a hologram, and he moved his finger to trace the route. "You can't just hike directly to the treasure because it's underground. First we need to cross the Sahara Desert until we reach the tiny city Thumarsus. We'll need to collect additional supplies from there, then hike through the blastlands until we reach the ancient ruins of Prusea. From there, we'll need to enter the ruins."

Sharal'tar manipulated the map herself. "It doesn't seem to 'zoom in' to show the ruins as more than an X. How do we use this map once we're inside?" she asked.

"We can't," Kojurro admitted. "Whoever made the map either knew the route from memory or had a separate one for the interior of the ruins. And my squad never found it if there was one. You're going to have to trust my navigational skills and Kora's knowledge of Prusean architecture once we go inside."

"Well, that's just great..." Sharal'tar sighed.

"You're welcome to drop out if you don't want to go anymore," Flora reminded, sliding over the store counter and trying to force the cash register open.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 05, 2019, 11:19:02 AM**

so, you are telling us that we're going to travel hundreds of miles to find this place?" emma said. We're gonna need different clothes then. as while this drreess is nice, it will make me seat something fioerce..' andf the Sahara can get up to 130 degrees in places.' Marita said ' i'll call kora once we get out of here. knowing her like I do, She'll be on the first flight to Khartoum. It'll take about a full day and cost her about 2000 bucks, but frankly she can afford it. ' She smirked. " How long do we have before your old chum finishes his recuperation? I'd like to know so we can make the most of our head start."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2019, 04:50:06 PM**

(OOC: Should we do a time skip to when Kora arrives and they can head out?)

"Well, you should have seen a bit of a hike coming, fabulous treasures don't tend to hang around the backyard," Kojurro noted jokingly. "And I have no clue; I'm not an expert in cryonics."

Flora glanced at Emma. "Did they ever cover cryonics in your nurse training? You're the only one here who has a chance of knowing this."

Sharal'tar returned with some backpacks from a back-to-school store. "Here, in case you find any supplies you'll want to bring on the trip," she informed everyone, tossing Flora, Marita, and Rose her extra packs. "Honestly, I suggest we spend the night here, gather supplies, and meet Kora at the airport tomorrow. As much as I'd like to do traditional shopping during the day it takes Kora to arrive, everything within walking or driving distance will still be recovering from the storm and I doubt any shops are open."

"There's a hiking shop near the escalator, right?" Flora mentioned. "It's called '*Alpine Ventures*' or something like that. That'd be a good place to get specialized traveling gear and good boots."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2019, 06:39:06 PM**

(sure we can do that)
Cryonics, a little bit. the longer you are frozen, the longer it takes to fully awaken. rule of thumb was for every year frozen, it took a week to recover. 20 years, 20 weeks. a year is 52 weeks, so 20 weeks would be 5 months or so. How long was he frozen?" Emma asked Kojurro. I agree with Sharal'tar that we get our stuff done before Kora gets here.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 06, 2019, 08:00:45 PM**

"He couldn't have been asleep for more than 24 hours; his light had gone out yesterday night and reactivated in the morning," Kojurro answered.

"So I didn't major in math, but that sounds like it'd be a ludicrously small recovery time by that ratio," Sharal'tar chimed in.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 06, 2019, 08:21:53 PM**

About 27.7 minutes' marita said ' Under a half hour. so the bloke, is been awake for hours already. . You made it sound like he froze himself months or years ago Kojuuro!" she said. ' ah well. it was it is. lets just get some stuff, get some sleep and go and fetch Kora in the morning. "

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 10, 2019, 02:58:01 AM**

(24 hours later)

"Flora, stop sticking your tongue out at the TSA," Sharal'tar chastised.

"They deserve it! I get stopped and searched *every time* I board a plane!" Flora flipped off a blonde uniformed bunny who resolutely ignored her. "Once I was smuggling narcotics, do you realize how quickly and how deep I had to stuff them up my--"

"*Ah-hem.*" Kojurro cleared his throat and checked his pocket watch; an overly-fancy fashion statement he could never have afforded if he hadn't stolen it from a ruined mall. "That should be the 1:10 arrival from San Diego," he reported as the latest plane ground to a halt and passengers started disembarking into the terminal. "Marita, have you heard from your friend that she made the flight and arrived safely?"

"She better; I paid triple for this caramel ribbon latte." Flora glanced at the only coffee place that wasn't under construction in the aftermath of the airport's reparations. "Prices in airports are outrageous even before everything's only halfway rebuilt."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 10, 2019, 09:14:54 PM**

Yes ' Marita replied, as she held a ' Welcome Kora' handmade sign, from a large piece of cardboard she had swiped from the mall. " she was in the middle part of the plane, seat 60B. she brought her notes on ruins of the region, which are quite extensive. one look at your map piece kojuuro and she'll have a pretty ggood idea of whee to start looking. ah, here she is now!Kora! over here!' Marita beamed as Kora came up to them wearing attire suitable for the hot desert. ' hi everyone. sorry I'm a hour late. Layover in Milan took a lot longer than first anticipated.. anyway lets see this map of yours Kojuuro I should have a good idea of where to start after getting a good look. " Kora said setting her suitcase and knapsack down.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 11, 2019, 10:57:20 PM**

"Not out here," Kopurro glanced around suspiciously. "The map is a hologram projected by this black box; it'll draw too much attention to itself in public. Follow me."

"Hi Kora!" Flora extended a hand excitedly. "Nice to finally meet you in person. Let me carry your bag!"

He led the group out of the airport and to their transportation; a pair of covered wagons driven by two camels each. Leading Kora into the closer wagon, he tapped the activation button and the map materialized into form in front of him. "You can move around the map by tracing your finger, and zoom in or out by pinching your fingers like this," he demonstrated.

"I hope she knows anything about the extinct Prusean civilization," Sharal'tar muttered, folding her arms. "Cause I grew up out here and I've never even heard of them before."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 12, 2019, 07:51:17 AM**

thats not surprising. the Purseans existed over 2000 years ago ' Kora said "their kingdom was taken over by neighboring kingdoms and their temples and pyramids repurposed, the average person wouldnt know that a previous kingdom had built them.' she said taking in the map..' this is only the exterior of these areas. i take it that the other part shows the interiors?" she said her eyes twinkling with excitement. We are going first to a ruin called Mur Alshul, it was a major Pursean city, built 2200 years ago, like with other great cities of antiquity, it was built on the banks of a river. In the desert, water means life, especially since the desert receives so little of it"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 12, 2019, 02:42:29 PM**

"There is no other part, sadly," Kojurro admitted. "This map was found in America by a team of Scorched Earth scavengers. We're going to have to puzzle our way through interiors to locate whatever we need to find at each location."

"Is there anything you need to purchase in the city before we head out, Kora?" Sharal'tar asked, mounting a camel. "I dont know if Marita told you, but there's another group racing us for the treasure. They're flying in from America just like you, so we should be neck and neck right now."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 12, 2019, 05:08:34 PM**

no, i've got all i need packed away in my luggage. spelunking equipment, notebooks for record taking, and an camera to record the ruin interior. you know fellas this sounds like something straight out of Indiana jones" kora laughed ' now what is important for everyone to know is this: the purseans were moon worshippers. they believed the light from the moon was a gift from the divines. you'll find crescent, half and full moons in the glyphs, the full moon meant that area was extremely favored by the gods, half moon meant there was some favor, crescent moon was little favor and the black or new moon meant disfavor. you did not want to anger the gods as they would punish you both in this life and the after life as well. ' Kora said " Lets get going then. the quicker we get to Mur Ashul the better. . "

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 19, 2019, 03:17:52 AM**

The camels acquiescently started trotting off.

Sharal'tar glanced over at Marie, who was driving the second wagon. "Hey Marie, is everything sticking mentally from last night?" Sharal'tar had spent a good part of their evening in the mall training Marie on controlling her new plant powers. "We covered a lot of ground quickly, so it's okay if you've forgotten some of it. But we're heading into arid desert, and our plant powers become super useful since we won't find many real plants out there. Growing food, creating rope out of vines, creating shade..."

"What sort of gods did the Pruseans worship?" Flora asked Kora. "Did they worship part-animal beings, like the Egyptians?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 29, 2019, 07:38:16 AM**

No, they worshiped the heavens, the moon, most prominently." Kora said " you'll see lots of carving showing them with their faces towards the moon in a reverential manner. as i said before, the place that wre most favored by the gods will show a full moon, the places that were considered as cursed will show a new moon or black moon. "

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I'm doing ok" marie said ' i think i have the rope and shade parts down, the growing food will be a bit tricky. particularly since in the desert most plants require deep roots to reach what water there is.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 01, 2019, 04:47:29 PM**

It wasn't too many hours before the last vestiges of civilization disappeared over the horizon behind them.

"Now, we need to all be vigilant in rationing our supplies!" Kojurro reminded everyone. "This is a *long* initial hike through the desert, and we don't want to run out of water or food because it will be very hard to find more. Stay in the wagons whenever possible, because it's going to get very hot."

"Hotter than it is now?" Flora panted. "I'm missing that rainstorm from before already..."

"You say that now, but the night cold will likely be even worse than the daytime heat," Kojurro chuckled. "The desert is one of the most unforgiving biomes, behind the tundra. Which yes, I know, is by definition still a desert."

Outside on the horses, Sharal'tar nodded at what Marie said. "Even I don't know how to procure food out of nowhere," she admitted. "I need to have a few seeds beforehand so I can grow them into a full plant. But with how precious water is out here, it's more likely we'll be using it for combat or exploration purposes more than survival."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 05, 2019, 09:46:52 AM**

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hours passed and soon the ruins of Mur ashur appeared on the horizon and Kora pointed at them' we'll stop at that central . the skies were turning darker and forboding' I suggest we hurry as it looks like a sandstorm is headed our way. Sandstorms in this region are both massive and deadly. Marita and Rose folowed quickly behind her. " we need to find shelter before we get hit" Martita said , turning and looking the others in tthe group..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 05, 2019, 04:28:53 PM**

Flora went pale at the mention of a sandstorm. Her arrival in this region was marked by a terrifying sandstorm that nearly killed her before her adventures even began. "Let's get those puppies moving!" she gasped. "Mush!"

"They're camels!" Sharal'tar snapped back, clapping the reins to no effect. "They move at the exact speed they want!"

Luckily, even the camels noticed the sandstorm and kicked it up a notch. As the caravan crossed the border into the ruins, Kourro gasped in amazement at the wonderful stone structures towering above them, collections of bricks and stones that had been eroded through generations of wear.

"I'm taking us straight into the big entrance!" Sharal'tar yelled into her wagon as sand started peppering her face. They were bearing down on the most impressive structure, a towering ziggurat whose mouth instantly sloped downwards into the earth. "And we're gonna be stuck in there until this blows over!"

"That's perfect!" Kojurro exclaimed. "We're looking for a golden urn! It'll be deep within the temple, and inscribed on it is a map showing where we need to travel after this!"

Flora covered her mouth with her shirt and climbed out of the wagon once it ground to a halt. She squinted into the darkness. "We're going to need light sources if we're going in there," she noted. "Kora, do you have the torches?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 21, 2019, 05:45:53 PM**

of course i do" kora said " i have lighter fluid for them as well. This central room, is going to be deep in the center of the pyramid, well underground. plus, theres likely to be intact traps, designed to foil looters. The sands have kept the thing intact, which is a good thing. better watch your step, handrails were not a thing in those days.' She said as they reached the entrance. sands whipped around them, driving visibility down to a handful of feet.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 24, 2019, 03:53:08 PM**

The interior of the pyramid was musty. Torches lined the wall, but they'd burnt out millenia ago.

"This is incredible," Kojurro breathed, holding his torch closely to the walls so he could observe the intricate reliefs showcasing moments in Prusean history. "They really respected the moon, it appears in almost every mural." He stopped when he witnessed an unusual one showing what appeared to be the sun being eaten by the moon. "Kora, can you read these hieroglyphics? What's happening in this one?"

Sharal'tar used her vines to brush cobwebs aside as she led the way deeper into the recesses of the pyramid. "It's getting steep, watch your step," she advised as the route abruptly tilted downwards.

Before long, they reached a large stone door. "Anyone see a switch, or maybe a puzzle to solve?" Flora asked.

Kojurro shook his head. "There is window up there," he pointed above the door. "We brought rope, right?"

"Yeah, but Marie and I have something better." Sharal'tar shrank down to a miniscule size and scaled the wall. It was slow going, but she reached the window and shot her vines down into the beyond room. "I'm detecting floor," she reported, growing back up to her normal size. "We can keep going. Marie, shoot me a vine, then everyone think they can climb up here?"

"...Maybe?" Flora bit her lip as she gathered Sharal'tar's abandoned clothes and stuffed them into her backpack.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 06, 2019, 06:00:34 PM**

that image is that of an eclipse' Kora said. see the moon passing in front of the sun? This depicts a full eclipse' Kora said moving over to a nearby relief " the pureans believed that the moon would periodically take a bite out of the sun, sometimes swallowing it whole before spitting it back out. "

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Marie focussed and sent a vine tendril up to Sharaltar, in the proces creating a vine ' rope' lader. ' how far does it go, Sharal ' tar?' marie asked as she began climbing. ' in any event, with the sanbdstorm out there, we're not leaving this place for awhile anyway."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 22, 2020, 01:12:19 PM**

(two weeks later)

"Should we really be wandering around in public...?" Sharal'tar asked, glancing left and right at the empty park.

"We're not '*in public,*' it's a statue garden after hours," Flora countered. She, Sharal'tar and Emma were taking advantage of their only night in Nebri, a sleepy Egyptian desert town and the last tourist trap on their current route. "We're surrounded on all sides by giant obelisks. You'd need to be using night-vision goggles from a stealth jet to even see us."

"I know, but it's a pretty pointless risk to take...especially just to stare at some chiseled stones." The desert lizard thumbed her nose at a prehistoric rendition of the Prusean lunar goddess. The other members of their crew were holed out in a hostel, while the three of them had gone out to purchase supplies. But Flora insisted on taking the scenic route home.

"People travel for *miles* to see this garden!" Flora twirled in a show of awe. "And we'll be seeing nothing but desert for another week after we leave, so I'd rather spend tonight admiring some green. What do you think, Emma? Aren't these beautiful statues worth the detour?" She couldn't fully repress a grin at Sharal'tar's disapproval; she was partially putting on a show just to annoy her.

Roughly 500 feet above them, a flying man in a Sartonic jumpsuit scanned the rock garden with night-vision goggles. "Yurei, come in," he whispered into his earpiece. "I may have spotted something."

He fiddled with a knob to activate an infrared setting. "There are three trespassers straight below my position, moving northwest. Can you get close and let me know if they're among our targets? I have a stun bomb standing by for dropping."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **October 24, 2020, 10:46:29 PM**

On the ground below, not too far from Flora, Sharal'tar, and Emma, Yurei phased silently out of the ground, his old, confortable clothes replaced by a black Sartoric jumpsuit. Quickly glancing around to ensure he wouldn't be seen, he phased quickly into one of the statues, then quickly slipped to another to get closer to his marks. Once within eye shot, he looked at Flora for a few moments, a small grin crossing his face before quickly phasing back into the ground and withdrawing out of their earshot.
"This is Yurei. Those three readings...are not our targets. Nothing more than some kids out for some private fun."
He whispered into his earpiece, glancing back towards where Flora was for a moment...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 30, 2020, 10:37:45 AM**

"Understood," the man sighed, closing the flap on the bomb pouch. "This is the only city for miles...they've got to be here somewhere. I'll check the slums again." Hitting a thermal, the flying man silently angled towards a different part of the city.

Below him, Sharal'tar sighed with relief as a familiar stony wall appeared in front of them. "There, we're done with the stupid garden. Now get up there." Splaying her fingers, she shot several vines up and over the top, connecting to the nearest rooftop. Flora took the ropes first, peeking to ensure nobody was wandering the street as she shimmied her way to the rooftop. From Yurei's position in the rock garden, he'd easily be able to see her reach the balcony to their hostel room and shimmy through the window.

"Whoa!" Kojurro jumped as someone abruptly appeared behind him. "I'm never going to get used to that. How was the supply run?"

"Went great!" Flora took off her backpack and dumped several pounds of nonperishable goods on the table. "Hope y'all like seal jerky. And they only had a single signet ring, how's this design?"

Kojurro examined it in the flickering candelight. "Hmm. I'm not sure Presley would believe I'd use a beetle for my symbol, but if it's the only option..."

"Wait, what are you doing with Presley?" Sharal'tar asked, following Flora through the window. Presley August was the rival treasure hunter racing them to secure the fortune at the end of Kojurro's map.

"I'm sending him an offer for parlay. Several thousand miles from here." Kojurro shrugged. "The offer is false, but if he accepts it might slow him down."

"Sounds worth a shot," Flora shrugged. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I want to freshen up before we hit the desert again tomorrow."

Heading to the bathroom and locking the door, she quickly shed her clothes and started a shower. The water likely wouldn't remain hot for very long, if previous desert towns had been any indication, but a rinse of any length would be relaxing after so many days of travel.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 08, 2020, 08:25:36 AM**

Kora was hunched over a map of the area whicdh she had marked the locxations of ruins on them, both known as suspected. ' the trip had included broefs stops so she could sketch ruins and take notes, she was a professor after all. " After we leave Nebri, its pretty much desert the whole way west. ' she said. Marie ws using her vine powers to try and grab a drink across a table without spillingg it, it was a work in progress. '' my vines get weak about halfway to me ' She sighed. ' you'll get it down Marie, dont worry, Kora said.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 08, 2020, 11:49:45 PM**

"You're doing good, trust me," Sharal'tar urged Marie, walking over. "This early in my development, I could barely even *grow* them, much less grab things."

She sent her own vines trailing over to gently grasp the drink. "You have to remember that vines have mass, and tensile torsion. They're not energy like most psionic powers; they take up real physical space. You have to put extra force and energy into them to compensate for that." She gently put the glass back down on the table and withdrew her vines. "Just keep practicing, it's the only way to get better. Don't be like Flora, who never practises and is just as bad at shapeshifting as when she first showed up."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 09, 2020, 07:54:59 PM**

As soon as his "partner" was en route to the slums, Yurei silently phased into the ground, silently tailing Flora and Sharal'tar, watching as they climbed through the window to their hostel room. Hesitating for a moment, he looked up after them, then back at his own hands, now wrapped in the black Sartoric attire he wore.
"What am I thinking...? I... can't face them like this...Not as Sartoric's...pawn..."
He thought bitterly, before clenching a gloved hand resolutely.
"No. They need to know what they're dealing with.
They need to be able to prepare themselves. And... if nothing else...I need to be able to say goodbye. After all...not like they'd want me after everything..."
With that thought echoing in his mind, Yurei phased into the wall, making his way up after his former friends, and incidentally making his way right into the bathroom where Flora was...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2020, 09:38:36 AM**

Sure enough, the shower turned tepid far quicker than Flora would like, but the hot water had done its job relaxing her before their long trek tomorrow. Quickly rinsing the soap out of her fur before the water temperature graduated to cold, Flora stepped out of the shower...and abruptly squealed with a startled "*Eep!*" and almost took the curtain down with her. "Yurei? Is that really you?" she gasped, quickly scrambling to her feet. "What—how did...what are you doing here??" Stumbling to her feet, she quickly darted forward and buried him in a sopping wet hug. "I was so worried!" she exclaimed, pecking his lips repeatedly in between her excited babbling, "I hadn't heard anything since fleeing Sartonic! And with the storm hitting, and all the damage to the base, I had no idea if you were still alive—!"

"*Flora?*" Sharal'tar knocked on the bathroom door. "*Who the hell are you taking to?*"

"I...nobody! I was...just reading the ingredients on the shampoo bottle!" Flora stammered. Dropping her voice several octaves, she cut to the heart of the matter with a single-sentence whisper: "Yurei, how did you get here?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 10, 2020, 11:23:37 AM**

Yurei smiled gently, hugging Flora and lightly stroking her back.
"Heh, it's good to see you again Flora."
He whispered softly, kissing her back with each peck on his lips, blushing a bit at her unexpected enthusiasm. Momentarily freezing at Sharal'tar's voice, he turned back to Flora as she whispered her question, expression quickly turning serious.
"I got here with Sartoric. Long story short... they're after you. And getting closer, too..."
He whispered in reply, glancing aside...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2020, 01:23:04 PM**

"What?" Flora gasped, eyes dilating. "Sartonic's coming after us?" She glanced in a panic out the bathroom window, though of course all she saw was the darkened city. "Who are they sending? How many? How close—?" Questions filled her mind, so many that she realized she was hugging Yurei even tighter than before, from equal parts excitement and newfound trepidation. "Are you staying with us?" she whispered. "Please don't leave! The others need to know, and...I don't want to lose you again..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 10, 2020, 02:17:36 PM**

Yurei nodded, holding Flora close and reassuringly stroking her head.
"Unfortunately, yeah. They're after you guys... I don't know all the details, but... if you get the others together, i'll fill you in on what I do know."
He whispered gently, giving Flora a gentle squeeze to reassure her.
"And... if everyone's okay with it, I promise I won't leave"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 10, 2020, 03:01:34 PM**

"I'll vouch for you," Flora promised, giving him one last passionate kiss. "Sharal'tar and Emma will as well," she added after finally breaking away with a smile. "Let me introduce you, there's one newcomer you haven't met before."

After quickly drying herself off and wrapping the towel around her waist, she led the way back out of the bathroom. "Everyone, don't panic, but we've got another friend who just showed up," she started.

But Sharal'tar cut her off. "For god's sake, Flora, put your damn clothes on first," she snapped, before the second figure suddenly exited the bathroom and her words caught in her throat. "I...you...what?"

"It's Yurei!" Flora dragged him into the light. "Most of you have seen him around Sartonic. Yurei, this is Kora, she's an archaeology professor from America." She pointed out the blue-eyed lioness reading maps at the table.

"--Hold on," Sharal'tar interrupted. "Not that I'm not pleased to see you, Yurei, but...what are you doing all the way out here in Nebri?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 10, 2020, 04:26:38 PM**

Yurei glanced around the room at the group, nodding his head at them and shooting a small, shy smile at Sharal'tar.
"It's... good to see you guys again. As to why I'm here... well, it's not good news, i'm afraid."
He reached into one pocket on his suit, pulling out an identification badge emblazoned with Sartoric's insignia.
"I'm here as an official agent of Sartoric. They're after you guys, and they're getting close. I've managed to throw one off the trail for now, but..."
He shook his head.
"I'm hoping you guys have a plan"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 11, 2020, 03:01:35 PM**

Hello Yurei' Kora said. ' now. Sartoric is after them.. why precisely? Did they take something out of the lab that they shouldnt have? Or do they consider Flora their property?"
-
hi yurei ' Emma smiled ' Nice to meet you" the vixen said with a smile. " you'll need to keepo them off our backs while we treasure search " Marita said from a chair in the corner. ' because I really dontv want to know how much of a cut they would take out of the treasure of they found out about it. " Half.. is probably being very generous. More like ALL of it. " Fill us in Yurei " Rose said, " tell us everything.. well everything you know.'

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 11, 2020, 05:04:55 PM**

"Ummm...at least on the topic of why Sartonic wants me, I think I can answer that better than Yurei." Flora took a deep breath. "So, that storm that did so much damage and destabilized the entire facility? That was...kinda my fault. A few months ago, Van Der Merwe assigned me to work closely with a test subject #L1F3, code-named 'Life.' She had resurrection powers, and she wasn't cooperating with the research staff trying to study the nature of her abilities. My job was to get her to open up more." Flora bit her lip. "Things got...complicated...and I ended up busting her out of the facility. And then later she came back with a massive storm to take her revenge on Sartonic."

"Jesus Christ, Flora," Sharal'tar smacked her palm against her forehead. "And you weren't going to even *mention* this?"

"I thought they'd have more important things to worry about, like rebuilding!" Flora protested.

"Well, this changes things," Kojuuro nodded. "And thought it was going to be hard keeping ahead of Presley August's treasure hunters. Now we also have psionic hitmen on our trail."

"Can we afford to wait till morning, or should we set out now?" Flora asked.

"Wait, hold on," Sharal'tar interrupted, standing up and pointing directly at Yurei. "How do we know you're really Yurei? You could be a shapeshifting test subject trying to infiltrate the group." Her eyes flashed. "I need you to tell us something only the real Yurei would know."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 11, 2020, 06:14:17 PM**

Yurei chuckled, raising his hands a bit.
"Heh. Good thinking, Sharal'tar. While I could embarrass everyone here with more intimate details, i'll say this much. During the storm that took down the facility, I helped a few experiments escape. Marly and Tagaso say hello. And by the way, Flora, he still has that wrapper you gave him the first time you met. And Sharal'tar, my parents say hello, and are hoping you're still as responsible as ever"
He said, smiling a bit at the two as he did so...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 12, 2020, 03:47:11 PM**

Sharal'tar flushed red at the mention, and Flora snapped her fingers triumphantly. "See? It's him!" she crowed. "We promised we'd never tell anyone or talk about that god-awful visit (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vit8lGhpgsWot0EfDA6W-4JZO-tNiESCL9Toj628VXQ/edit#bookmark=id.u6zbrwiwb7ix) ever again!"

"Wait, you've met Yurei's parents?" Kojuuro asked.

"--*ever* again," Flora reaffirmed, and for once Sharal'tar seemed in agreement.

Kojuuro shrugged and took the hint. "So what do you think?" he asked Kora. "If Yurei came this far, there are almost certainly others who have already reached Nebri. Should we brave the desert at night, or take turns keeping watch until leaving first thing in the morning?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 12, 2020, 04:31:29 PM**

Yurei shook his head.
"Heading out now would be too risky, Kojuuro. At least half the hunter teams either have night-vision gear or can track people in the dark. Our best bet is to lay low here until morning, then make our move. I'll plant some false leads in the group, try and draw them off our trail as best as I can."
He said pensively, tapping his chin a little.
"In fact, I think i've got just the way to put them off our trail a fair ways"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 14, 2020, 12:24:33 AM**

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we leave in the morning ' Kora said. ' traveling the desert is dangerous at night anyway. any sort of creatures prowl at night, who wouldnt mind at all makiing a meal out of us. and if that was not enough its still 90-100 degrees out even at night. Thats how hot the desert is around here. So morning, when its cooler- relatiovely, is the best time.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**

Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 14, 2020, 01:44:40 AM**

"Yurei, wait, are you heading back out?" Sharal'tar piped up. "If you have something to go do, that's fine, but I'd like at least a moment alone with you. I'm your girlfriend too, you know."

"Okay but I'm calling dibs tonight, he's cuddling with me!" Flora interjected hotly.

"Says who?" Sharal'tar growled. "You've already had your private time with him...naked in the bathroom, I might add."

"We didn't do anything except reconnect!" Flora defended.

"That's more than I've gotten to do!"

"Ladies, you're already sharing a bed," Kojurro reminded, motioning matter-of-factly towards the limited sleeping arrangements in the hotel room. "He was going to wind up with both of you no matter what."

Sharal'tar rolled her eyes and folded her arms. "I knew that. I just want a moment alone. Is that so much to ask?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 14, 2020, 04:33:41 PM**

Yurei smiled reassuringly at Sharal'tar.
"For the moment, I'm staying here with you guys. So we've got plenty of time, Sharal'tar. All I need to do is whip up a false report to pass along to the rest of the hunters."
He said gently, running a hand through his hair with an easygoing smile.
"And from the sounds of things, I'm getting to share a bed with both the loves of my life. Heh... I'm... really glad I found you guys"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 17, 2020, 02:55:40 PM**

"Okay, well, do whatever you need to do, but be safe." Sharal'tar gave him a quick hug and a peck on the lips. "It's good to see you again," she smiled, speaking under her breath so the others couldn't listen in. "I figured you'd be safe, what with being able to turn incorporeal and all...but it's good to finally know for sure."

Kojuuro yawned. "It does feel like we're burning midnight oil when we should be resting and gathering strength for the trek tomorrow," he noted. "So don't stay up too late, you three," he warned the lovebirds.

"We won't!" Flora assured, crossing to the bed and re-organizing the pillows for four. As there were only two beds, the current split was adults in one and young adults in the other, and Yurei's addition would make the latter bed pretty full. "How are we looking on supplies?" she asked Kora. "Should we go buy more in the morning, or can we handle another party member with what we've got?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 17, 2020, 03:06:20 PM**

Yurei blushed and smiled at Sharal'tar, returning her kiss lovingly.
"It's good to see you, too. I worried a bit, but I know you guys. I figured you'd be safe, and now that I know that...well... let's just say we've got a lot of catching up to do."
He whispered back teasingly before looking up at Flora's question.
"Heh, you guys won't need to worry quite so much about supplies, either.   Let's just say I haven't just been sitting around since the storm..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **November 18, 2020, 11:14:10 PM**

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we can handle another party member ' Kora said ' anything Yurei can bring along means we dont have to buy it at some ppoint. We have a l lot of ground to cover tomorrow, so I suggest we try and get as much sleep as possible. we're leaving at 7 am tomorrow , after all. o get what sleep you can, because we'll be walking al day tomorrow. we're entering the Gondar region of the country-North Gondar to be precise.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **November 20, 2020, 12:07:33 AM**

A few minutes later, Flora was in bed and snuggled up happily on Yurei's left, with Sharal'tar (less accustomed to public displays of affection) giving a slightly more reserved hug on his right. "Tomorrow, while we're hiking, you need to catch me up on what you've been doing," she whispered in his ear, already drifting off to sleep.

Kojurro closed his eyes, assumed a cross-legged stance in front of the door and deftly slipped into a deep meditation. In this pose, he'd restore stamina and rest his mind at the same speed as normal sleep, but his reflexes remained alert and prepared to rouse him at the first sign of intruders.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **November 20, 2020, 09:16:17 AM**

Yurei smiled contentedly, kissing Sharal'tar and Flora affectionately on the head.
"I will. I promise you that."
He whispered softly, pulling the two close to him as he drifted off to sleep..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 01, 2020, 12:19:26 AM**

The next morning, Kojuuro's augments roused him as soon as the earliest vestiges of the sun's rays breached the horizon. Immediately, his eyes darted alertly around the apartment; no sign of intruders, everyone was tucked safely in bed just like his ninja senses had thought. "Excellent. Haven't lost my touch yet," he chuckled softly to himself as he shook awake the people on the near side of each bed; Kora and Sharal'tar. "Wakey wakey," he informed them matter-of-factly. "Let's get this place bundled up and this show on the road."

Sharal'tar yawned and nudged Yurei. "Guess it's go-time," she murmured. "Good luck getting Flora awake, remember she used to sleep through the fire alarms?" She stumbled sleepily to her suitcase and carried a change of clothes into the bathroom; she'd never unpacked so she had little prep time needed before she'd be ready to go.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 09, 2020, 01:16:57 PM**

Yurei smirked as he stirred, grinning at Sharal'tar as she went to change.
"Oh, I remember that all too well~. Heh, fun times~."
He chuckled a bit before smiling over at Flora and leaning in to kiss lightly at her neck...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 11, 2020, 09:24:54 AM**

Kora got up and quickly changed into fresh clothes in the corner. " We have 250-300 miles to cover today. We're in the Amhara region of the country , which is a mix of some desert, savannah and subtropical highland. We'll likely pass through all 3 on our route." marita was up and packing her things into a knapsack, while Marie and Rose were searching through a small selection of chewy granola bats to eat on the way."Chocolate chip or oats and honey' Marie said , before finally settling on chocolate chip. " Just grab something and go, girls. We have pursuers behind us, and a treasure in front of us.' Kora saod. " Marie opened the door with her vine powers, Sharal' tar had given her some tips for maintaining focus over long distances.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 12, 2020, 01:21:36 AM**

Flora was the last one to finally roll out of bed, streatching and yawning theatrically before flashing Yurei a tired smile.

"I'll check us out of the room, the rest of you gather on the far side of town," Kojuuro advised, creaking the door open a peek and glancing down the hallway. "Let's try to leave before the majority of the populace is wandering the streets, especially knowing we now have another class of pursuers to look out for."

"Hey, nice job Marie!" Sharal'tar added approvingly, watching her wield her plant powers more nimbly than last night. "What'd I tell you? Just keep practicing and they'll become second-nature!"

(OOC: What were they traveling in again? Was it a wagon with attached caravan?)

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 12, 2020, 08:52:08 AM**

Yurei smiled back at Flora, giving her an appreciative once-over as she stretched, grabbing the vest he had been wearing the night before and tossing it on.

"Alright, that plan sounds good, Kojuuro. Plus, the other hunter groups will have pulled back to regroup. Once we clear the town, I've got a little surprise for you guys, too. One that I think will be quite welcome"

He chuckled, quickly kissing Flora's cheek as he straightened his vest, quickly checking one of the pockets with a nod...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 12, 2020, 12:35:07 PM**

Flora smiled warmly back at him, right before Sharal’tar pegged her in the face with a rolled-up shirt. “Get dressed, everyone else is packed and all ready to go!”

——————

Kojurro tipped his hat congenially before forgetting it had been destroyed months ago in the storm. “It was a wonderful night, thank you for your hospitality,” he concluded his business with the front desk.

The cashier grunted. “Ey, before you go, you seen this girl?” He flashed Kojurro a picture he recognized as coming from Sartonic’s ID archives:

(https://i.imgur.com/WCwCWcv.png)

“I..uh...no, of course not!” he stammered. “Why ever do you inquire?”

“Some men have been asking around,” the clerk shrugged. “Sounds like she broke the law or something. I’m also supposed to pass these out,” he handed Kojurro a white slip with a phone number on it. “Call this and let ‘em know if you see her.”

“Uh, certainly, will do!” Kojurro laughed weakly, once again tipping his nonexistent hat before scrambling to get back to the room. “Well, we’d better play this even safer than I thought we’d need to...” he muttered to himself.

——————-

The man with the cybernetic wings was standing in the marketplace, walking away from a vendor. “Yurei, do you copy?” He radioed. “Got a lead, sounds like a pink fox purchased a scarab stamp from a vendor stall last night, so they’re still in town. Where are you, anyway?”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 12, 2020, 03:39:24 PM**

As Yurei's radio crackled to life, he started a bit, then pulled out a phone and flicked open a messaging app.
I'm tailing our marks at the moment. Maintain radio silence. Sounds like they're headed out of town. I may lose contact for some time. I'll try to get in good with them as an escapee. Find out what they're after, and if there's anyone else working with them.
After sending the message, he flipped the phone shut, chuckling a bit under his breath.
"Okay, now to set the rest of the plan in motion once we're out of town."
He said quietly to no-one in particular...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 15, 2020, 11:06:24 PM**

Flora had just finished packing when Kojurro returned and threw her a wide-brimmed hat. "Here you go! Nipped to the market and bought you one of these. Can't be too careful!" he chortled, a bit too cheerily.

"Oh. Uh...okay." Flora donned it fashionably and nodded approvingly in the mirror. "We ready to get this show on the road?"

"Yes! Absolutely, before anyone else wakes up! Let's go, we're all checked out!" Kojurro hurriedly motioned for everyone to get moving.

"Kora, can you lead the way to the wagon?" Sharal'tar asked, rolling her suitcase to the hallway stairs. "Since not everyone in the party has been there before."

Yurei, meanwhile, recieved a single vibration on his phone, a shorthand message indicating his ally had recieved the message and didn't want to send a more conspicuous acknowledgment.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 17, 2020, 02:59:59 PM**

come on everyone. to the caravan. as inconspicuous as possible please. we have people tracking us after all.' Kora said. we parked it near an arc h on the outside of town. some of you wil be riding camels others horses. first come first served.' she saud, chuckling sotly. Thanks Shalral'tar. It helps a lot when you are learningg from someone who knows what they are doing." Marioe said as they reached the caravan, there were 5 horses and 5 camels. it was desoned to look like a travelingg Bedouin caravan.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**

Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 19, 2020, 10:02:08 PM**

Yurei smiled a bit, wrapping one arm around Flora, and the other around Sharal'tar as they made their way to the caravan.
"Heh, this must be a dream come true. Getting to go on a grand adventure with the loves of my life. I'm really looking forward to our little honeymoon~"
He said lightly, grinning at both ladies...

Undisclosed Location:
"Alright. As of last night, Yu said he'd made contact with the escapees. So, in theory, he should be getting in contact with us sometime today. G, you got those copies ready?"
A somewhat youthful-looking wolf paced across the concrete floor, periodically checking his phone. From across the room, an older-looking maned wolf looked up from a table, where he had been fiddling with something.
"Riv, I have told you not to call me that thuggish nickname. It's childish. And yes, the golems are almost ready. I simply need the genetic material to fool any biological analyses. And for heaven's sake, get off that accursed phone."
The maned wolf replied, going back to checking the object on the table before moving to another...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 21, 2020, 04:10:48 AM**

Sharal’tar flushed red and looked around hoping nobody was watching; Flora, in contrast, was far more used to public displays of affection and joyously pecked Yurei on the cheek in return. "I can't believe it either! Oh, Yurei, if only you'd been there when we first fled the labs, we holed out in a ruined bank and couldn't get into the vault! You could've ghost-formed your way in and we'd be rich!"

"Erm, different topic of conversation, please..." Kojurro made eye-contact with the very few people in the back courtyard of the hotel, and luckily nobody was paying them heed. The hotel was on the outskirts of the city, with the statue garden to its right and endless barren desert to the left.

"Dibs on a camel!" Flora called out, vaulting excitedly up one's flank and crashing spectacularly back down the other side.

Sharal'tar pinched her nose and delicately mounted a horse. "Don't even mention it, Marie, you're a natural." She flashed the Golden Retriever a smile as she readied her reins. "I can't wait to see where you'll be once you've had enough time to really come into your own. I'm pretty sure you outpass me in sheer psionic strength, honestly."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 21, 2020, 08:15:23 AM**

Yurei smiled, helping Flora get onto her camel, and giving her butt an appreciative grope as he did so.
"Hmmm... here's hoping I can ride one of these guys."
He chuckled, hopping onto a horse with ease, patting the beast gently...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 23, 2020, 01:10:38 PM**

With everyone situated, the caravan set out into the desert. Kojurro zipped the white cotton tarps up so the wagon was airtight; it would be their primary source of shade and cover when heatstrokes hit.

"So Yurei, how are Marly and Taga doing?" Flora asked. "I'm glad to hear they both survived, I tried to reach the quarantine block during the storm but got waylaid by guards."

Sharal'tar, for her part, was repeatedly being bothered by a fly buzzing around her horse's head. Snarling, she finally swatted it by shooting a whiplike vine from her hand with a whiplike crack. Watching it flutter to the ground lifelessly, her eyes traveled forward to see a small patch of swirling dark skies up ahead. "Kora?" she asked, narrowing her eyes. "I think that might be a sandstorm up ahead...should we go around it?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 23, 2020, 09:33:42 PM**

Yurei chuckled, smiling broadly at Flora.
"They're doing really well. Taga wouldn't stop trying to get me to come find you guys after the storm hit, and Marly was just as insistent... in his own way. In fact, I think they'll be thrilled to see you and Sharal'tar again!"
He chuckled, then turned to look ahead as Sharal'tar pointed out the approaching sandstorm.
"Hm. I think we're far enough out of town now. Should be safe to go for it..."
He quickly pulled out a second phone, typing in a message before quickly spurring his horse to the front of the caravan.
"Alrighty. Looks like we've got a sandstorm approaching. I think our best course of action will be to get some shelter and let it blow over. Do you guys trust me?"
He asked the group, glancing at each in turn...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 24, 2020, 08:21:38 PM**

theres a ruin about a half mile west of here/ theres enough intact sections to have a roof over our heads ' Kora said. " The quicker we get there the less sand we have to endure. " she looked up at the clouds which were slowly getting closer and rapidly turning darker. ' and I would suggest we pick up our speed . Sandstorms can be deadly if you get caught in them. "
marita was trying to ride a double humped camel and was currently stuck between the 2 humps. ' I should have gotten a horse' She said. Emma was riding a horse carefully, being inexperienced with riding,m she went at a slow pace.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 26, 2020, 05:19:16 PM**

"The ruin sounds good!" Flora agreed, rapping her reins like a sled dog racer. "Mush!"

The camel ignored her, but the caravan did turn and head for the ruins. At their current rate, they'd arrive just before the sandstorm hit them.

"These ruins don't look like much cover..." Sharal'tar noted as they got closer. "They're more Stonehendge-sized than a full settlement."

"This close to populated cities, anything more than the largest monoliths would have already been stolen or trucked away and repurposed," Kojurro explained, donning his mask as the first flecks of sand started flying into his mouth. "Cover your faces! We'll want to park the caravan so our chosen rock is shielding us from the wind."

Flora squinted her eyes shut and angled her hat to shield her face. "I can't really see!" she confessed, now regretting grabbing one of the two leading beasts of burden. "Yurei, can you guide us?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**

Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 26, 2020, 06:00:04 PM**

Yurei smirked under the mask he was wearing.
"I can do us one better! Everyone, over here!"
He yelled, pulling a small metal object out of one of his pockets, using a small pin to stick it to one of the stone structures, tapping the mark engraved on it. On the third tap, a bright, glowing rectangle appeared to tear itself into existence, big enough for the caravan to pass through.
"Through here, everyone! C'mon!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 27, 2020, 09:49:24 PM**

"Whoa, what is that Yurei?" Flora's eyes widened in awe.

"Keep steering!" Sharal'tar reminded loudly. "Why exactly did we let her take point?" she griped under her breath to Emma on the horse next to her.

Kojurro shielded his eyes; as the one in the wagon, he was the last to pass through Yurei's new portal, and recieved more than a faceful of sand for his placement in line. anything he'd been hoping to say was replaced with spluttering as he tried to clear his windpipe inside the new sacntuary Yurei had created.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 27, 2020, 11:19:56 PM**

Yurei smirked, riding through the portal after the others as it closed, leaving them in what looked like an underground parking facility. Dusting himself off as he dismounted and walked over to Flora and Sharal'tar, he gestured around a bit.
"Well, guys, welcome to the hideaway of the Sartoric escapees. And, possibly, a new home base for our treasure hunt!"
He said lightly, as a young wolf stepped out from behind a pillar, hands glowing faintly.
"Yu! You didn't tell me you'd be having me open a gate in the middle of a sandstorm! I almost got sand in my eyes!"
The lupine complained, then stopped himself and looked over at the group.
"Ah! Sorry, forgot my manners! My name's Riven, but you can call me Riv!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **December 28, 2020, 07:33:01 PM**

hello riven, I'm kora ' the kioness said with a smile. ' looking around the facvility she saw everything from a stolen Tv broadcasting what lookee like a football game, to a pinball machine suitting near a pillar ' looks lke you refuygeess nicked more than afew things on the way out. I wager we'll be drinking coffee out of stolen ' Sartoric rocks!" coffee mugs."
-
 at least its shelter' marita said brushing sand out of her fur. ' Just out of curiosity Yurei, how many of you are there? you didnt exactly do this with just the 2 of you, right ? I mean, you could, but it would take forever."

_
you guys have a fridge!' Marie said making her way towards a glowing fridge sitting between two pillars, opening it with anticipation. Her face fell as she beheld the paltry contents inside: a small collections of salads, submarine sandwiches and root beer. "Soda it is then ' she sighed.
, grabbing a bottle.
 Emma collapsed into a chair, and wiped sand off of her, creating a decent pile of sand at her feet. . the animals stood in the middle of the lot, just tossing their heads around, and taking the new abode in stride.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 28, 2020, 08:48:05 PM**

"Whoa!" Flora dismounted her camel, looking around in awe. "Yurei, what's the story behind all this? Where did it come from?"

Sharal'tar reached out a hand to Riven, not 100% sure he was allowed to shake hands due to the nature of his powers. "Hey, I'm Sharal'tar. Are you from Sartonic? Sorry if we just never ran into each other, I'm more new to the labs than the rest of our team."

Kojurro looked behind and watched the portal close behind them. "Fascinating..." he breathed. "Sartonic test subjects never cease to amaze..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 28, 2020, 09:50:15 PM**

Riven smiled, taking Sharal'tar's hand and shaking it warmly, the glow from his hands fading.
"A real pleasure to meet you! Yu's told me a lot about you, so it's nice to finally meet you in person! And yeah, I'm ex-Sartoric. Ex-Containment ward, to be exact." He said with a shy chuckle. Yurei, meanwhile, smiled over at Kora.
"Oh, there's quite a few of us! Me, Riv, Josef..." Whatever he was about to say was cut off, though, by a gentle, grandmotherly voice from up a flight of stairs.
"Oh! Yurei! Is that you I hear? And Flora, as well? How lovely!"
Somewhat slowly, an old cat made her way into the garage, smiling warmly.
"Welcome to our little home, everyone. It's good to see you all safe!"
She said earnestly, as another voice chimed in from a corner.
"So...Flora, is it? We found this old apartment complex pretty much buried after that storm hit ol' Sartoric. Yurei and Riv helped get us in here, and we've been hiding out since. Turns out, the place is still hooked up to the grid, so we've made ourselves at home."
The speaker said, stepping into the light, and revealing a dark-scaled reptile, though one with hair. He flicked one hand idly dispelling a few crackling arcs of electricity, and ran his hand through his hair.
"And, since Tagaso interrupted before he could finish... my name's Neku. Neku Sakuraba. Nice to meet ya"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **December 30, 2020, 10:36:53 AM**

Flora waved excitedly to Taga before addressing the newcomer. "Hi Taga! I'm so glad to see you're all right! And nice to meet you Neku!"

"Neku, is that hair natural? I've never seen a reptile sporting a hairdo before," asked Sharal'tar. As a native desert lizard, she had some experience with this sort of thing, albeit not with Neku's species in particular.

Kojurro looked around for any entrances and exits, just to get a bearing on the layout of their immediate area. "We're back in the starting city? Not that I don't appreciate the new hideout, but will we be able to return to the North-Gondar desert whenever we want to continue our expedition?" He directed his question mostly to Riven, as he was the test subject with the teleportation power.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **December 30, 2020, 09:17:12 PM**

Neku looked over at Sharal'tar, grinning a bit and fiddling with the headphones around his neck.
"Well, I've had hair since I was a kid... so... I guess it must be. Might have some weird

heritage, but... i dunno. "
He said with a shrug and a chuckle. Riv, meanwhile, had let go of Sharal'tar's hand and made his way over to Kojuuro.
"Ah, don't worry. As long as i've got a marker nearby, I can open up a gate back to wherever you guys are. And thanks to a little quick thinking on Yu's part, we've even figured out how to make them portable AND easy to hide!"
He bragged, giving a cheeky grin.
"I'd show you guys right now, but... y'know... sandstorm." He added a bit sheepishly. Taga, meanwhile, had made her way over to the group, smiling.
"Well now, i'm sure you would like to see the much nicer part of our little home, wouldn't you? There's beds, good running water, and more upstairs!" She said warmly, patting Yurei on the arm affectionately.
"Plus the others are still upstairs, rude as that may be"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 01, 2021, 11:23:59 AM**

"That's incredible!" Dr. Kojurro breathed after Riven explained his teleportation abilities. "The scientific and technological possiblities of such a power are incalculable!"

"There he goes, sounding like a Sartonic scientist," Sharal'tar politely criticized. "Kojurro, you ever stop to think that such single-minded focus on harnessing and commercializing our powers, with only secondary attention given to the test subjects' personal wants and wishes, is part of the reason so many of us are going rogue and hiding out?"

Kojurro folded his arms. "Is that really a problem for all of you?" he asked the gathered test subjects at large. "Not to be rude, but Sartonic gives you free room and board, asking only to study your powers to further humanity. What more could you want?"

"Taga, please show us more of the base!" Flora, meanwhile, answered excitedly to her older friend. "This is incredible! It reminds me of the sort of hideouts my gang would build during my drug-running years in America."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 03, 2021, 05:47:23 PM**

Riv smiled a bit and chuckled.
"Admittedly, my power could be useful, I guess. But yeah, honestly wasn't a fan of being stuck in a lab."
He said softly. Meanwhile, Taga smiled at Flora and Yurei.
"Well, then. Come along upstairs. I took the liberty of making sure you've got rooms set up! Oh, and don't mind Josef. He's a bit...odd... but a good sort!" She said warmly...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 07, 2021, 05:46:27 PM**

"Feels like at least half of us are 'odd but a good sort'," Flora jokingly agreed, following Taga up the stairs.

"How about royalties, Kojurro?" Sharal'tar folded her arms. "How about a salary in addition to room and board? Imagine Sartonic invented some sort of teleporter using Riv's power, the lab would make millions but Riv would be right where he was! You really find that fair, doctor?"

Kojurro decided to change conversation partners over getting grilled by grumpy test subjects. "So, how you holding up?" He asked Emma, Marita, and Rose. "Let me know if you're overwhelmed or you need anything, we could go somewhere quiet and leave all the test subjects to reconnect."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 08, 2021, 08:51:00 PM**

millions? try trillions. imagine. being able to teleport from LA to new York city in a eyeblink. No more need for cars or planes, just enough cash to use a teleporter." Kora said . ' Riv could make himself extraordinarily wealthy, if he could make a profit from his power. teleportation has virtually limitless possibilities. in archeology, you could teleport finds from the field to the lab for testing in a blink. Imagine what Howard Carter and lord Carnavon could have done with this. it wouldnt have taken them nearly 9 years to find King Tut's tomb."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 08, 2021, 09:58:03 PM**

"Exactly, thank you Kora," Sharal'tar nodded approvingly.

"Okay, but Riv wouldn't be able to do any of that without us!" Kojurro threw his hands in the air upon disocovering even the non-test subjects were against his stance. "In this hypothetical, Sartonic scientists would be the ones who studied Riv for years, painstakingly learned the ins-and-outs of how his power worked, reverse-engineered it for widespread use, and then manufactured the actual products or technologies being sold to the public! Why, that's 99% of the work!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 11, 2021, 05:06:31 PM**

its HIS power kojurro. doesnt matter what they do with testing it, its ultimately derived from something that belongs to someone else. it is essentially an invention - Riv having the power to teleport. if others want to use it- then they have to pay the inventor to use his creation- in this case, his power. now if they patent something that improves on previous work, thats another matter. devices that increase telephone call dustance and clarotry of calls for instance were patented outside the original patent.' Kora said. ' we're dealing with a hypothetical anyway. "

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 23, 2021, 07:46:30 AM**

As Taga lead Yurei and Flora up the stairs into the main level of the base, she smiled warmly at Flora.
"You know, after that storm, Yu spent a great deal of time worried sick about you and Sharal'tar, Flora. Oh, he'd spend hours pacing the building, sometimes. It's good that you're safe."
She teased, making Yurei blush and shyly look away, suddenly interested in something on the ceiling as they reached another door. Taga smiled and patted Yurei's arm teasingly as she opened it, revealing a large, central room set up as a comfortable commons area complete with couches, a TV, and a kitchen, as well as hallways leading off to various rooms.
"Well, here we are. Our little home sweet home!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 27, 2021, 08:20:21 PM**

Sharal'tar smirked when Kojurro gave up the argument and slinked off to sulk. "I like this place more every second," she grinned. "So, Neku, you've got electric powers, huh? Are you the reason this place has electricity?"

Flora was similarly impressed with the upper floor. "This is awesome! That was my main gripe with Sartonic, they weren't too keen on common areas where we could all gather up. Must have been worried about large-scale psionic mishaps or something."

Squeezing Yurei's hand tighter and flashing him a smile, she quickly hurried further into the common room to pull him excitedly onto a couch. "Were you worried for us?" she teased, kissing him on both cheeks. "Well, I was worried for you too! Next time I flee Sartonic for my life, I'll try to bring my cell phone along for the ride!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 30, 2021, 11:04:55 PM**

Neku chuckled at Sharal'tar's question, dancing a spark across his fingers like a coin.
"Me? Nah, i'm nowhere near strong enough for that! Riv and Yurei figured out how to get us hooked back up to an old solar field not far off. My guess is that whoever used to live here left in a hurry, and everything was left hooked up when it got buried. Hell, they even still have TVs that're hooked up. Signal's crap, but hey."
He said with a smirk, absently tossing the spark in the air as Riv nodded.
"Um... thanks for sticking up for me, Sharal'tar. And uh... yeah, I guess I did help with getting the place hooked back up. A little. Mostly just fixing up wires and stuff"
He said, grinning sheepishly.

As he was pulled to the couch, Yurei smiled shyly, kissing Flora back each time.
"Heh, of course I was worried! Knowing that the loves of my life were out there on the run from Sartoric? I mean...I know you guys can take care of yourselves, but still..."
He smiled and hugged Flora close.
"Next time you do that, how about you just bring me along for the ride, instead?"
He smiled, leaning in closer before a calm cough interrupted whatever he was about to say.
"Ah. I see that our guests have arrived then. I presume you must be Flora, yes? Hm... fur color slightly different. Must make corrections to it... regardless, though. I would like to request a small biological sample from you, before you set out again."
From a hallway, an older-looking maned wolf stepped into the common area, wiping his hands on some sort of smock and adjusting his large glasses...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **January 31, 2021, 02:43:25 PM**

"No problem," Sharal'tar let a small grin escape her reserved countenance. "Sartonic scientists are all a bit too self-important for their own good. Every so often you gotta deflate them a bit for their own good."

She glanced down the hallway. "I really want to see more of this place. Is there somewhere we can check out other than the common room Yurei just took Flora?"

"I wanted to find you before escaping Sartonic, believe me!" Flora assured. "But I was pretty much getting captured, being assaulted, or fleeing for my life from the moment the guards dragged me from your room (https://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=14553.msg469048#msg469048). I was so worried that was the last time you'd ever see me." She sniffed. "It wasn't exactly the most dignified memory to remember me by..."

She looked up and flashed a slightly-nervous smile at the newcomer. "Erm...hi! Pleased to meet you, though it sounds like you already know me. Have we met?" She gulped. "And, uh, what sort of 'biological sample' are we talking here, if you don't mind me asking?"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **January 31, 2021, 11:43:34 PM**

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if i had to guess ' kora chuckled' probably a skin sample, maybe bllod. its not as if hes taking off a piece of your liver after all.' she was seated on the coach, next to Emma, who was fliping through the tv channels on remote. there were about 40 channel although only about 15 were reliable in getting a complete picture in, another 10 or so were fuzzy, and the rest were practicality static. korra figured there might be an adult channel in there as well as a brief glimpse at a station saw a pair of busty lionesses locking their dark red lips together in a steamy kiss. further viewing showed that it was a show called 'my pride my love' and it was set in southern Africa." seems like you get some channels at least. ' Emma said,as she flipped through the channel before returning to My pride, My love..

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 10, 2021, 07:52:37 AM**

Neku smirked, shrugging a bit as he looked down one of the halls.
"Well, there's not a lot else to see here. Honestly, we're still trying to sort through stuff people left behind. Seriously, some of the stuff we've found is...weird, to put it nicely."
He chuckled, as Riv tapped on his chin thoughtfully.
"I mean, we've got a little training area set up, I guess? And there's this one room that's um... interesting. If that kinda stuff is fascinating to you. But...um... I mean, I figured you'd want to spend time with Yu? Aren't you guys... y'know...together?"
He asked, a bit puzzled...

Yurei glanced at the TV for a moment, blushing as he turned back to Flora.
"Honestly, Flora. I'd never remember you as anything less than the amazing, wonderful, passionate, beautiful girl you are. I mean it~."
He stammeted shyly, as the maned wolf made his way over, calmly clearing his throat again.
"We have not. I merely have reviewed your personnel file. I am Josef. As to the biological sample, anything which contains your DNA will suffice. Blood, skin, hair, it is of no concern. The same goes for all of you. Though please. Refrain from making your samples consist of ... bodily fluids, if you would. I find such things distasteful."
He said, producing multiple small test tube-like containers and handing them to each of the recent arrivals in the room...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 10, 2021, 11:53:09 AM**

"Trust me, I know Yurei enough to recognize when he wants alone time with Flora," Sharal'tar shrugged and added with a grin, "plus you can't allude to a room like that without showing it. My psionic power is literally growing tentacles, I'm not as innocent as you may think."

Kojurro watched as the test subjects grouped up and formed their own little bubble. "On that topic, I'm surprised Sartonic turned such a blind eye to the rampant polyamory going on among its test subjects," he remarked to Marita and Rose. "You'd think that'd constitute some sort of safety or health concerns. Especially when staff members like Emma started getting involved..."

"Oh, well, nice to meet you Josef." Flora glanced at Yurei, and when he didn't seem concerned about Josef's request, acquiescently plucked one of her ivory head hairs and offered it in her proffered vial. "Could I ask what you're going to do with it?" she followed up. "From your talk of 'correcting the fur color,' it almost sounds like you were going to grow a clone or something..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **February 10, 2021, 12:51:47 PM**

Neku smirked, raising an eye ridge.
"Tentacles, huh? Well, then I think you'd get a kick out of that room, then. C'mon, we'll show you, eh Riv?"
He teased, as Riv's tail stiffened straight out behind him.
"Y-yeah, sure!"
He stammered awkwardly...

Yurei smiled and kissed Flora's cheek as Josef took the sample container.
"Something of the sort. Though far less flawed by comparison. You will see soon enough. Suffice it to say it will impress you."
He said smugly, tucking the container into his smock.
"Now, if the rest of you could provide samples as well, then my project can be completed before you set out again"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **February 18, 2021, 04:12:03 PM**

"Well, I don't think my pink fur is flawed at all," Flora stuck her tongue out defiantly. Glancing at Emma and Kora, she waited to see if the two would pass over genetic samples or opt out.

Sharal'tar smiled. "Lead the way," she said, mostly to Riv, as he was clearly uncomfortable and she enjoyed seeing him squirm. *Yurei and I need to bring this guy out of his shell...if he's not using those portals in the bedroom, he's doing his love life a disservice.*

As they walked, she couldn't help but wonder whether Yurei had hooked up with any of these people. *I certainly hope he hasn't just sat here pining after me and Flora...even though that's exactly the sort of Byronic thing he'd do.* Neku seemed the most likely shag of the roommates she'd encountered; she resolved to ask Yurei later, or assure him that he had her full support on any romantic endeavors he may or may not be interested in exploring.

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 02, 2021, 09:16:47 AM**

Emma and Kora handed over some hairs as genetic examples. " Yes , Kojurro, normally such relationships are strictly forbidden under a moral code of conduct, you can't mingle personal and professional conduct without sacrificing either your personal privacy or your professional reputation, and often you lose both."
I was hired to help get samples from Flora" Emma said. " What sort of samples? Kora asked." Well.." Emma blushed " her sperm. I... had to arouse her until she produced a sample. " And what did Satoric have you do to get that sample " Well, um" Emma blushed " Kiss her on the lips and fondle her breasts until she got hard." Wait your first meeting with Flora involved you two making out until she ' released into a cup? You couldn't have just shown her hot film love scenes on a screen until you got the sample?"Kora said turning to Emma " I needed the money, and well we really enjoyed the making out. " And from that you formed a relationship. Sartonic crossed a whole bunch of ethics lines by having you and Flora do that, then again, considering the other stuff that has been going on there, two young vixens introducing themselves by putting their tongues into each other's mouths is not something that is going to reach the top of ethics violations, or even warrant much public mention. "
" Would you have done something like that, if that meant you would have met Marita for the first time?" " No , honey. For one, Marita and I have
known each other for a long time. Secondly that kind of kissing is something you normally learn about at sleepovers with other girls. I take it you never had sleepovers with your

girlfriends?" No, Flora was my first kiss ever " Emma said " So your first kiss was part of stimulating Floras privates? Well that's a memorable first kiss at any rate"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 25, 2021, 05:47:31 PM**

Emma sighed " I didn't have many friends in my early teens. Guys weren't really interested in me, and I didn't know that I liked girls yet. I didn't do sleepovers or anything like that. So no spin the bottle, truth or dare, any of those games that normally result in you kissing someone else." Kora nodded " Everyone is different. Like I said, I don't blame you or Flora for doing what Sartonic told you, it's their fault for having you do it in the first place. It's cute that you girls hit it off, and more than that, judging from the bump in your belly. Have you given a name to the child yet?" No. I'm not sure on the gender, I'm not entirely sure that there's only one." Have you told your folks?" Kora asked " Heavens no! That conversation would be very very awkward " Hey mom and dad? I'm pregnant, by another girl who has a working dodad. Can you help me?" They would surely help you, Emma dear. Parents love their kids, no matter what messes they get into. " Kora said

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Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 21, 2021, 04:31:28 PM**

Deep in the deserts the next morning, after the sandstorm had died down, a new portal opened and Sharal'tar led the way back onto the path of their treasure map, waving goodbye to the new friends they'd made.

"Nice to know we can come back whenever we want," Kojurro noted, holding a small handheld device similar to a car beeper. "We just have to alert them with this beacon, and Riv will pop us a portal in no time."

"Awesome, 'cause I was really hoping to learn what that maned wolf planned on doing with my genetic sample," Flora yawned; despite it being past noon, she hadn't gotten much sleep. "For all I know, the next time we visit there's going to be a different Flora already running around..."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **May 28, 2021, 05:42:55 PM**

Yurei smirked, giving a small chuckle as he stepped through the portal.
"Well, you're not too far off the mark, Flora. Josef's using his ability to create decoys for Sartoric. The genetic samples will let him create fakes convincing enough to convince them that we kicked it on the road, at least throw them off our track long enough to get us some breathing room. Plus, once he has our imprints, he can also create slightly more advanced golems that we can drop in a town off the track to throw them if we need."
He replied, stretching a bit as he walked. Not too far off, near Sharal'tar, Neku grinned, fiddling with his headphones and rolling a shoulder.
"Heh, damn. Been way too long since I've been out like this! Man, the sun feels nice!"
He said, attempting to keep a cool facade, but clearly excited...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2021, 07:55:51 AM**

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so, thoise are, for all intents and purposes, cllones that you are going to pass off as us?" Kora made a face. ' this sounds like something out of Jules Verne novel, or ruice Burroughs with his john Carter of mars" serioes. back in the days when they thought mars had people on it and Venus was a tropical paradise. Wrong on both counts, of course."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2021, 02:44:40 PM**

"Awww, can we go back? I want to meet the other me!" Flora asked, even as the portal closed behind her. "Can they talk? Could we chat with ourselves, or shake hands, or...like, other things?"

"What 'other things'?" Sharal'tar raised an eyebrow when the folf didn't reply. "Flora, please tell me you aren't implying you'd want to have sex with a braindead homunculus of yourself that you'll soon be leaving behind as a corpse in the desert." She shot her a disgusted look.

"I...uh...didn't think that much about it..." Flora broke eye contact as Sharal'tar facepalmed and shook her head.

"We really do need to keep moving, we can revisit the den some other time," Kojurro affirmed resolutely. "It's mid-autumn, a good time of year for hiking through the desert, but the days will still be hot and the nights bitter cold. Stay in the wagons as much as possible, keep hydrated, and let's get this caravan rolling!"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **June 15, 2021, 11:54:11 PM**

Yurei chuckled at Flora's enthusiastic questioning, playfully patting her arm.
"Well, Flora, those first batch of Josef's golems wouldn't make great conversational partners. In fact, they won't do much of anything. But I'm sure with a little time and a bit more familiarity with you, he could craft a nearly-identical copy of you. Plus any...tweaks you'd like. He's quite talented like that."
He teased, then playfully gave her butt a quick grope.
"Besides, why would you need another you... when you've got me here~?"
He whispered coyly...

As the group made their way towards their next destination, Neku paused, tensing up and holding a hand out tongue flicking a bit.
"Hey, hold up guys. There's something ahead of us. Sartoric, in fact..."
He said nervously, sparks flicking across his arms...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **July 27, 2021, 10:09:21 AM**

Flora purred happily when Yurei pet her; it had been so long since they'd last seen each other, she felt safer than she'd been since this ordeal started knowing he was on their team again. But that comfort switched to apprehension when he alerted them that a threat was inbound.

“Any idea how close they are?” Kojurro asked, drawing his katana in preparation.

Sharal'tar shot Marie a sideways glance. “Maybe you should stay be me, Marie. Your plant powers might be getting their first taste of combat soon, and I'd like to be able to advise you if I get any opportunities…”

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 04, 2021, 10:44:24 PM**

As soon as Neku spoke, Yurei shifted position slightly, putting himself protectively in front of Flora, arm out in front of her. Neku, meanwhile, had shut his eyes, tongue flicking out again as sparks flickered around his arms.
"About sixty meters. Maybe seventy. I don't think they know we're here yet, though. Based on movement... they're patrolling. I think they knew we'd be heading this way. Trying to cut

us off..."
He muttered softly, eyes snapping open.
"Wait... if they're trying to do that..."
Before he could finish his thought, the sound of engines could be heard from the way they'd just come...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **Nick22** on **August 05, 2021, 10:36:58 AM**

why do i get the sense that sartonic put trackers of some kind on you?' Kora turned to Yurei. " it would be a prudent thing to do, given the abilities of the residents of that facility. after all, you dont want someone who could, say, control peoples minds breaking out and having no way to track him or her down. So, how do you explain how they found us, and knew we were heading this way.?"

Marie focused abd her claws slowlly turned green, changing into vines. ' Tell what to hit Sharal, tar.' She said tersely. " i'll give it my best shot."

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **August 05, 2021, 11:31:45 AM**

Neku shook his head.
"Yurei's clean. Josef and I made sure of that once things got settled in. Plus... these guys aren't geared enough to be a capture unit. Too few, besides. My guess is that they're dragnet fishing for us. Send out a bunch of teams along likely routes, and we'd be bound to run into them."
He said, electricity coiling along his arms and torso...

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **August 18, 2021, 10:31:45 PM**

"Then we're gonna want to eliminate them fast, before they have time to call for backup," Kojurro affirmed, his keen eyes scanning to the horizon and spotting the incoming patrol.

"Good call, Marie," Sharal'tar agreed, readying her own prehensile vines in preparation. "If we target the same person, we can really knock them out of the fight."

Flora, for her part, was retreating back into the caravan. "Erm, nobody brought, like, an extra pistol or something, did they?" she muttered nervously. "My psionic power is...not particularly helpful in combat..."

Meanwhile, as the patrol approached its quarry, the pointman reported the blips on his radar to the collective. "*We've got lifesigns up ahead, I'd say about a dozen.*"

"*That's too many to be our target, right?*" asked the speeder pilot to his right. The majority of the patrol was camped out on a small flying skiff, speeding along the sands like a boat would cut through water. Flanking the main craft were a pair of jetski-styled speeders utilizing the same hover technology. None of the vehicles were armed, but the Sartonic agents among the patrol were far from slouches in combat.

"*Let's be on our toes, just in case,*" the driver replied. He flexed his muscles, feeling his skin turn chromatic and bulletproof. "*I wouldn't put it past them to hire additional protection.*"

"*Well, if they're dumb enough to bring guns or knives to a psi-fight, y'all just make sure to stay behind me,*" a woman on the skiff radioed with a cackle. Popping the joints in her fingers, she grinned as rivulets of ferrous energy ran down her fingers.

"*If you want to put up a rust field, be my guest,*" the driver replied. "*Everyone else feeling ready? We'll be on them in less than a minute...*"

Title: **Re: Around the Folf**
Post by: **StarfallRaptor** on **January 18, 2022, 02:00:31 PM**

Yurei smiled reassuringly at Flora, pulling a small combat knife and pistol from his vest and offering them to her.
"You're in luck, Flora. Just so happens I do. In fact, specially made ones, even."
He teased, giving her a playful wink. Nearby, Neku glanced around the area, then shut his eyes, flicking his tongue again as the electricity around his arms coalesced into glowing orbs in his hands, several stray bolts arcing to the ground and flash fusing the sand into glass.
"You're right about us needing to take them out fast. I should be able to buy us a little time, but knowing them they'll be able to get around it pretty fast. Okay, now. Anyone who isn't a fighter, I suggest you get to the caravan, keep your heads down, and brace yourselves. Things may get pretty hectic REAL soon"
He said calmly, pulling his headphones up over his ears and shifting into a fighting stance...

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(Transcript of the L1F3 roleplay mentioned on page 1469, RP'd with Davjo via Google Docs)

The gecko was responding well to treatment. Not well enough to be let back out into society, but they'd managed to get him to acknowledge the sapience of the scientists working on him.

"Great job," the red-headed lab assistant said dismissively, scribbling down the numbers from his scanner while the gecko obligingly attempted to lift a chocolate bar with his mind. "See? You do what we say, you get rewarded."

The armadillo assistant was one of three people in the cell. The cell was one of many on Floor Four, the innermost sanctum of Sartonic Labs, albeit one of the few that were currently occupied. Psionic experiments were rare enough, but even more so were ones so unstable they couldn't be allowed to live a regular life in the apartments. This gecko's level of psychopathic narcissism was second only to his telekinetic powers.

The gecko's eyes strained as the chocolate bar came nearer. He was fighting months of being punished for using his psionic abilities, and the process to retrain him to use them only for good was a slow and meticulous one. But the allure of his favorite food was too good to ignore. The bar floated closer...closer…

Abruptly the lab assistant reached his thumb and index finger out and stopped the chocolate bar in its tracks. "Ah ah…" he cautioned. "One last thing before you get this. Run the treadmill."

The gecko's eyes flashed angrily. Sitting in the corner of the cell was an X-ray treadmill, designed to snap photos of the patient's skeletal and muscular structure while in operation. As the gecko had a severely overdeveloped frontal cortex and forearms, the scientists wanted to see what effect these changes have had on his motor functions. But all the gecko saw was inferior beings denying him a rightly-earned treat.

"Just a short run, and then…" the lab assistant started, but the gecko barked an angry, frustrated howl and flared his fingertips. The chocolate bar spun at 50 mph and smacked painfully against the assistant's face, who cried out and staggered backwards. Abruptly, the collar around the gecko's neck sparked and hit the reptile with 2,000 volts of electricity. Crying out, the gecko dropped to his knees, and the three took advantage of the incapacitation to scamper out of the room.

"Christ, we were making good progress that time, too…" grumbled the first scientist, while his assistant continued to massage his face.

"I'm sorry," the armadillo blinked, face red. "I guess maybe I pushed him too far."

"No, he was looking for an excuse to blow his top," consoled the female scientist. "He does that shit."

The first scientist glanced back at the cell. "We, uh, forgot the chocolate bar." The confection was sitting just feet away from the gecko, but his restraints would prevent him from using his abilities to grab it.

"No fucks given here," muttered the assistant. "Let it taunt him until he feels like being polite."

"Alright everyone, game faces on," warned the female, bringing everyone back into focus. "Time for Subject L1F3 again."

Both of her allies groaned loudly. The three came to a stop in front of the cell at the end of the block.

The male scientist took a preparatory breath and readied his clipboard. "All right, let's get this shit over with."

The three slid the cell door open and marched in.

I just recently woke up, confused about why I am chained against a wall, seemingly stuck to it with my arms, legs, tail and neck, all spread evenly. One could draw a decently shaped hexagon if you were to draw a line between the tips of my limbs.

I notice three people joining from the door across the room. "W-Who are you? Why am I here?", I try to ask them. "Why am I pinned onto a wall like this?"

The only thing I remember is something stinging into me from behind and then falling unconscious. Was I tranquilized? Were people looking for me?

All I know is that I am now stuck inside an unknown place, wearing a seemingly loose shirt and pants, both white. I cannot recall the last time I wore actual clothing.

The scientist plastered the friendliest smile he could onto his face. "Hello there! How are you doing?" The lab assistant and the female scientist assumed defensive stances so the three were surrounding the subject.

"We've got a proposition for you," the man continued. This was to be L1F3's last opportunity to cooperate. Normally, a rogue psion gets a single chance, but management really wanted full control over this specimen. Her plantlike body structure could open new lucrative discoveries into the world of age extension. "You cooperate in full with Sartonic Labs, allow us to run tests and diagnostics on you without resistance, and we'll pay you a weekly allowance of 500 credits and improve your living situation."

The serpentine subject had turned down the offer before, but management had authorized a mind wipe in the hopes of getting an agreement the second time around.

"I… honestly don't know what you all mean with that… What is 'Sartonic Labs'? Why do you want to run tests on specifically me? I don't remember being here in the first place… I… don't remember much anymore either…", I say, quite upset and confused. "I don't know if I should cooperate with you, I just want to get out of here! I don't even have any use for money like you guys do!"

I struggle a bit, but the chains won't budge an inch. "I want to get out of here!"

"Same answer as last time," remarked the female dully, ticking her notepad. "Anyone surprised?"

The male scientist groaned loudly. "This was such a huge waste of my time…" He muttered. Making a hand gesture, he directed the assistant to stab the subject with an electric prod. "Alright, looks like we're doing this the hard way. When we let you off the wall, You're gonna take this seed and make it germinate." He held out a grain of dill. "ONLY germinate. You overextended your powers and that collar will hurt you about...twice as much as this."

Upon his last word, the armadillo assistant stabbed the subject roughly in the side with the electric prod

A screeching shout, most likely from the pain of the electric prod, could be heard across the room.

"W-Why are you doing this to me?", the snake replied with a now slightly hoarse voice. "Why do you want me to demonstrate things in a very specific manner and hurt me while doing so? What should I have done wrong?"

Nevertheless, not remembering anything and having no other choice, she decided to listen this time, maybe they would let her go. The grain of dill started to germinate slowly. "I-Is this enough? Am I allowed to leave now?"

The scientist looked eagerly. "Oh hey, it's cooperating! Are you recording this?"

The female was scrambling to activate her reader. "Almost, I wasn't expecting it to behave!"

"We need to go again. Un-germinate that seed and then re-germinate it again," the male scientist ordered. "Now!"

"U-Ungerminate?", she responded in a confusing voice. "I-I am uncertain if I am capable of that, as I only recall growing things, b-but give me a try!"

She seemingly concentrates on the seed, slowly managing to un-germinate it and germinating it once more.

"C-Can I leave now? I want to go back to the place I call home… Also, uh… why are you talking to me as if I weren't a person, and as if I were not hearing you?"

"Perfect…" breathed the scientist, and all three looked in awe as the dill sprout slowly changed back into a seed.

"It did it!" exclaimed the female scientist. "It reversed aging!" This was the big breakthrough they'd been waiting for. This was the psionic power to trump anything they'd encountered. If they could reverse-engineer the process into a transferrable form, they could cure aging permanently.

Suddenly aware that they were standing on the cusp of immortality, the behavior of her captors changed somewhat. "All right, look," the male scientist tried to keep his voice comforting. "We can't let you leave. But we might be able to make things more comfortable. Just answer our questions. What you just did to that seed...could you do that to an animal? If we brought you a snake could you regress it into a hatchling?"

The assistant withdrew a chocolate bar and offered it with trembling fingers. "Here...you earned it," he said, making sure he was standing such that she wouldn't be able to touch his skin.

"I wouldn't do that to a conscious being, you can't expect that from me!", she responded aggressively, flinching forward. "And go away with this manufactured thing, I do not fancy such 'rewards', as you call them!"

She was struggling to get off the chains that restrained her movement heavily. Possibly to the dismay of the scientists.

"Yeah, that sounds about right..." muttered the male scientist. Stepping forward, he shoved his face into the subject's. "Listen to me very carefully," he enunciated. "You're NOT leaving. You're going to do what we say. Either you do it willingly and happily, or we have ways to FORCE you. What's it gonna be?"

"How about NEITHER?", she responded aggressively, still struggling to get off the chains.

The scientist gestured to the assistant, who obligingly stabbed her again with the electric rod. "Not an option," he replied simply.

Another screeching sound of pain echoed across the room. The serpentine was panting. "You... think so..."

The female scientist but her lip and grabbed her constituent's arm. "Maybe we can compromise," she said. "What if we brought you a braindead animal? That way you're not hurting anyone..."

"I do not want to do this on anyone unwillingly, regardless if they can still process thoughts or not." She suddenly smirked slightly. "Why not one of you?"

"Well how's a hamster supposed to give consent? It can't think!" protested the assistant.

"Every animal can give consent, I did communicate with so-called wild animals after all before I was captured by you."

The lead scientist narrowed his eyes. "You either demonstrate on a neutral subject, or we'll find a subject you don't want to harm, and WE'LL make them suffer instead."

"I don't want to hurt anyone, why don't you just volunteer?", she asks eagerly.

The scientist grumbled. "Assistant, we'll pay you an extra month's salary to let her de-age you." "What? No way!" exclaimed the assistant. "Why not? You wanna live longer, right?" pressed the female. The assistant folded his arms. "Not without knowing more about the procedure."

"I suppose I cannot help you then", the subject grumbled.

The male scientist sighed. "So if we can find someone interested in being de-aged, you'd be willing to do it by touching them? I'm sure if we offer enough money somebody in this building will agree to it."

"Willingly. No bribing."

The scientist rolled his eyes. "Sure. No bribing." He had no intention of holding up that part of the deal. They'll just demonstrate the difference to the willing employee beforehand. This plantlike serpent just didn’t understand how things worked in this world.

"Promise?", she asked, just to be certain.

The scientist held up his hand in oath, and gestured for his teammates to do the same. "Promise", the three said in unison.

The serpent smiles slightly, but also sighs. "I suppose I will still be held in captivity?"

"For now, yes, as punishment for being entirely uncooperative." the male scientist replied.
"You've given us no evidence that you're going to assist us in our research," added the female.
"So we'll see you tomorrow, and if you do what we tell you to with de-aging our employee, maybe we'll take your cuffs off and let you roam your cell."

"Can I request to talk with the new 'subject' before I attempt to de-age them? Chatter and the likes."

"No, you can't!" snapped the scientist, and without even loosening her bonds, the trio left the cell.

She sighs, feeling quite exhausted from all this, mostly the shocks though.

So the scientists sent out the call, and sure enough there was little trouble locating an employee who'd be interested in having their age reduced. Marty the janitor was the least valuable of the staff who volunteered, and also agreed to the lowest financial compensation. According to him, a second chance at life would be enough.

The next day, the scientists returned to Subject L1F3's cell. Seeing the subject Marty bit his lip. "This...er...it's not going to hurt is it?" he asked unsteadily.

"That's what we're hoping to find out," the scientist said dismissively. The assistant pushed the old man forward.

Marty regarded the subject. "Ummm...errrr...am I gonna lose my memory or anything?"

The serpentine noticed someone unknown entering the room. “They… found someone volunteering?” Her expression seems surprised.

“Hey, uh, I am sadly not allowed to chatter with you, but you voluntarily wanted to de-age? I’m certain you won’t lose your memory or anything similar to that”, she tried to comfort him.

The man shrugged. “Why not? Sounds like a chance to be young again, and make some money to boot.” Still he looked nervous.

“Uhm… what do you mean with ‘making some money’? I thought you were here completely voluntary!” The serpentine seems agitated.

The scientist facepalmed. “Goddammit Marty, there goes your money!” he exclaimed. “You’re doing it for free now!”

The janitor abruptly realized he was supposed to keep his financial compensation a secret. “Errr, wait, I’m doing it for free now?” he stammered.

“Either that or you can get the hell out!” the scientist snapped.

Marty looked back at the subject, then shook his head. “I’m....er...on second thought, I’m done,” he said. “Too many questions. This whole thing seems shifty.” He made to leave, but his way was blocked by the female scientist, wielding a silver-barreled pistol.

“I’m sorry Marty,” her voice trembled. “We can’t let you leave knowing what you know. Agree to the procedure. The only way you’re leaving this room is as an infant.”

Marty’s eyes went wide. He raised his hands in the air. “I..uh...guess I’m back on board!” he stammered, eyes never leaving the pistol.

“Touch the subject,” ordered the male scientist, eyes narrowed and resolute. “Now.”

“You guys promised to bring someone who does this voluntary, this is forced!”, the subject exclaimed. “I won’t do this to someone who refuses to do it.”

She seems even more worried since the scientist is holding up a pistol. Why do they force her to do such things? Why do they involve other people forcingly as well?

Still, she is trying to get off the chains, to no avail.

“Deal’s altered,” the scientist snapped. “Demonstrate your age-altering powers on Marty or we shoot him dead. His death will be on your conscience.” The female scientist continued to keep her gun trained on the shaking janitor.

“You can’t do that!”, she shouted in anger, anxious about someone innocent dying. She seemingly started to grow out vines behind her back, two of them, to reach for the pistol, attempting to grab it.

Immediately upon the subject using her powers, the collar around her neck activated, blasting her with 60,000 volts of electricity. The assistant leaped backwards in alarm, but the female scientist stood her ground and held her aim steady.

“H-hey guys, come on...” stammered Marty, hyperventilating. “I’ve got a wife! My kid’s about to go to high school, can’t we just...”

“Five...” interrupted the male scientist. “Four...three...two...”

“W-Why would you… do this…”, the serpent gasped, out of breath, slowly retracting her vines. “This person… hasn’t done anything… wrong…”

It seemed like she was about to faint.

“..One.”

The female scientist squeezed her eyes shut and pulled the trigger. With a deafening *BLAM* Marty slumped to the floor, blood spurting from a hole between his eyes.

His three coworkers were silent.

“Can you bring him back to life?” the male scientist suddenly asked, voice empty and emotionless.

She seemed silent, if not crying. “Why would you accelerate the inevitable?” She doesn’t seem to respond to the actual question.

“Because we want something from you more valuable than Marty,” he replied simply. “More valuable than anyone. And we’re prepared to sacrifice anything to get it. Speaking of which...”

He focused his gaze on the assistant, who gulped. The color draining from his face, he drew a small cage from his side pocket.

“Recognize this?” smirked the scientist, as the assistant popped the top and tapped a tiny milk snake into his open palm. “Maybe you’d be more prepared to act to save a piece of nature.”

For the time being, he didn’t make any definite statements about the snake, hoping the implication was clear enough.

“Why do you just murder anything and anyone at anytime?!”, she shouted aggressively. “No one has done anything to you guys, I honestly don’t get what you all want from me besides ‘using my powers for the worse’! Don’t murder more innocent beings, please…”

She looked intensively at the snake, as if trying to communicate via telepathy or similar.

"Figured you'd be smart enough to guess what we want," he interrupted, not caring about what possible communication the two could be having. "Turn the snake into a hatchling. Or else we'll use this," he referred to the electric prod still dangling from his belt. "On both of you. Starting with him." He assumed the subject would understand that such a shock would be invariably fatal to such a tiny creature.

She seemingly tries to tell the snake to quickly move away, but uncertain if the scientists can also read her mind.

She suddenly started extending her vines once more, trying to attack the scientists. "Why do you have to do this!? Stop with all this, right now!" She is aware that this is probably not the best of reactions to commit to, but what else should one do in pure anger, combined with panic and anxiety?

The assault immediately prompted a debilitating electric shock, this one even stronger. The collar was evidently designed to increase the punishment for repeat offenses. However the snake took the opportunity to try and escape the assistant's grasp, who shouted and scrambled to restrain him. Momentarily startled by the subject's sudden futile assault, both scientists were distracted when the milk snake slithered out the open cell door.

"Goddammit Nigel!" spat the lead scientist. "Find that damn snake!"

Both the assistant and female scientist sprinted out the door in a hurry, leaving the male scientist to angrily fling his clipboard at the subject's face. He tried to speak but was overcome with debilitating rage.

The vines seem to slowly retract themselves back into the back of the subject, whereas the subject seems to be knocked out, her eyes closed and unresponsive.

"Ah, Flora, please come in."

Dr. Van Der Merwe observed one of his favorite lab rats as she sat down nervously in the seat in front of his desk. She was a changeling; her powers involved being able to adjust her phenotype to match her desired image, though she was severely lacking in ability. Coupled with her almost being done with puberty, it was unlikely she'd ever be a particularly proficient psion. But still, psionic mammals are rare in themselves, and what she lacks in ability she made up for with obedience.

"Hi Doctor!" she smiled. "Is everything alright?" At the moment, she was in her preferred form; a pink-furred fox-wolf hybrid. She wore a T-shirt and shorts purchased from the city mall; due to her cooperation she was allowed to leave the lab at leisure and even receive a weekly salary.

“Of course, you’ve been excellent,” he gestured encouragingly. “I’ve heard that you cooperate completely with the scientists and get along with other test subjects, and we’ve learned some very interesting things from observing your abilities.”

Her face brightened. “That’s great to hear!”

“Actually, I’ve called you in here to offer you a special opportunity.” He leaned forward. “You’re very charismatic, and we have a subject who we’ve had trouble...getting to come out of her shell.”

Flora nodded, listening intently.

Van Der Werve passed her a photograph of the subject, which had been taken secretly just before kidnapping her from her natural habitat. “The species is not well documented, but it seems to be some sort of serpent with plantlike DNA. Her powers involve communicating with nature and growing prehensile vines.”

“Oooh, a hybrid! Just like me!” The folf piped up excitedly.

“Yes, but that’s about where the similarities end, I’m afraid,” Van Der Merwe shook his head sadly. “She takes every opportunity to escape, has repeatedly assaulted faculty members, and must be restrained in a cell in the basement, for her own safety and that of others.”

Flora bit her lip. “Did she ever agree to be a test subject?”

“There was little choice; in her current state she’s a danger to the general public.” Van Der Merwe handed Flora a manila folder containing specifications and photographs of an unusual device. “We’ve tried numerous methods to placate her and attempt to reach common ground; her powers could revolutionize the medical industry, it’s a shame to see them wasted on someone so mired in primitive thoughts. That’s where you come in. We want to try to give her someone to relate to, another of her species.”

Flora suddenly put the pieces together. “Me? But doctor, you know I can’t change my appearance *that* drastically! At least, not without months of mental--”

Van Der Merwe redirected her attention to the manila folder. “That machine is a psionic enhancer. It’s extremely rare that we authorize its use, as it can artificially boost a subject’s psionic abilities exponentially.”

Flora’s hand flew to her mouth and her eyes widened.

“It’s not permanent, unfortunately,” Van Der Merve continued. “You’d need to refresh your appearance before every visit, and since you’d need to operate unconnected to the machine, you couldn’t ever stay in the subject’s presence for long.”

“So...what would I do while I was with her, exactly?” Flora asked, mind still partially distracted by the possibilities engendered by the psionic enhancer.

"Befriend her, that's all," shrugged the doctor. "Tell her that living here isn't that bad. Convince her to work with us for everyone's benefit. You'll be paid a 500 credit bonus in addition."

Flora looked at the subject's photograph again, and nodded. "Okay, I'm in."

Dr. Van Der Merwe smiled. "I knew I could count on you, Flora." He opened his desk drawer and gave her a massive tome called *Žaltys Biology and Behavior*. "Read as much of this as you can to get in character; we'll let you know when the machine is calibrated for you."

When the subject finally regained consciousness, it was another 72 hours before they received any visitors or outside intervention. And that spell was broken by a very abnormal guest.

Alone, the male scientist quietly unlocked the door to her cell, though not quietly enough that it wouldn't wake her up. He was more focused on preventing the rest of the lab from hearing anything. Before he closed the door, trapping all present and future sounds in the cell, the subject could see that it was dark outside, well past normal visitation hours.

"Rise and shine, you bastard..." he muttered, voice dripping with malice. He was not dressed in his labcoat, instead wearing a rugged waterproof (and bloodproof) unisuit and rubber gloves. In his hand was a thin burlap bag containing oranges. "Figured you'd be hungry after not eating for three days. Want these oranges?"

"I'd… appreciate that… Being tied up for days like this is kind of tiring, and does hurt as well. No sunlight also means that I can't photosynthesize, which also means that I am not feeling that well…"

She slowly tried to reach for the oranges with her vines, not gesturing any threat to the scientist who just insulted her. She surprisingly manages to cut one orange open with one vine whilst holding it with another, and attempted to eat it.

"It's… quite good. I thought you guys would just give up on me due to me being not cooperative… Actually, let me tell you something: You want to use me to find something to prevent aging, is that right? I… don't want to cooperate because death is a natural cycle, and extending life to an undefined amount can be… devastating to everyone. Just think about it for a second, if everyone managed to life as long as me, then the world would probably have been gone to overpopulation. I'm just doing this for your good."

"I don't give a damn what your motivations are," he growled. "I'm not doing this out of gratitude or some crap, I'm doing it so you don't starve to death." As if to drive his point home, he smacked the subject across the face with the remaining oranges. "Also, oranges don't leave a bruise."

He broadsided her again. "Listen to me carefully; I don't give a damn what your noble motivations are for 'saving the human race from itself'; you're WRONG and there's MONEY to be made. And you're gonna spill the damn beans even if it means we'll extract the information from a lobotomized husk!"

“You are hopefully aware that being near me can be your doom? After all, that other scientist killed one of you just because I refused to de-age him. I am very certain that excluding myself from this society for centuries has been the best for everyone.”

Oddly, she seems rather calm. “I will not share my powers to be used such abusively.”

He grinned. “That’s where you’re wrong. I’ve got an idea for a way to get you to use your healing powers…”

He withdrew a long shining blade. “Sure, it won’t be de-aging, but it might give us some good readings. You want to lose a toe or a finger?” His eyes glinted. “For the next ten seconds, it’s your choice.”

“The moment you even remotely touch me, wherever it is something that connects us directly or indirectly, I could just age you to your death, if you want.” She tries to sneakily extend a vine behind her back, down along her leg. “Besides, I don’t even have toes to begin with, if you were to check my anatomy.”

She is readying her vine to wrap it around his arm in case he wants to stab or slice her.

Just the act of using one of her vines caused the collar to trigger a 60,000 volt discharge.

“I’ve got that covered,” he sneered, patting a remote in his pocket. “Increased the sensitivity to max. Your brain activates ANY of your powers, de-aging, the tentacles...it solves the problem for me.”

He made a show of checking his watch. “Oh look, time’s up.” He made a swipe at the index finger on the subject’s right hand.

The subject shouted in pain as one of her three fingers on her right hand was sliced off. It was bleeding pretty badly.

“Are… you… insane?!”, she puffed, “What are… you people… even doing with normal people?!”

“We’re paying them because they cooperate!” he snapped back. “I don’t understand how this is so difficult for you to figure out!”

He wiped his knife on her shirt and adjusted the remote so she could use her powers to a minimum degree without being shocked. “All right, start healing. Or don’t; doesn’t hurt me if you decide to keep being obstinate. You’re not going anywhere, after all...” He shrugged. “And if you die, at least we can learn something from the autopsy.”

She slowly decided to regenerate her lost finger. “I don’t think that you can learn anything from my dead body, in case that will ever happen.”

She seems rather agitated.

* * *

Flora looked in awe at the giant whirring contraption taking up the lion's share of the lab Dr. Van Der Merwe had brought her to. "This is it?"

Van Der Merwe nodded. "While connected to the machine, you will experience a significant increase in your psionic ability. Be careful not to let your thoughts go astray; we both know how your abilities normally operate deep within your self-conscience. You'll need to keep your mind sharp and focus on the new body you want to create."

Flora bit her lip. This close to the procedure, she had to confess to herself that the idea was a lot more daunting than before. "Are there...any harmful side effects? You're sure this won't give me cancer or something, right?"

"The only changes to your body will be ones you make yourself," Van Der Merwe replied, a not-particularly straightforward answer that didn't settle her much. "Also remember they won't be permanent. Even if you perfectly adjust your body to the desired serpentine shape and never even visit the subject, you'd look like yourself by this evening. Your body can only hold the accelerated phenotype for so long."

That made her feel better. "Alright, so I just step inside and start...thinking?" she asked tentatively.

"Yes. About this." Van Der Merwe handed her a photograph of a male grass snake. "Turn yourself into the spitting image of that individual. You've done enough research and seen enough videos of them in the wild that your brain should be able to do the rest."

Flora gulped. "Okay...Well, here goes." Shedding her clothes, she stepped gingerly into the machine.

She was expecting some sort of...energy field, or at least a funny feeling in her gut. Maybe an electric charge brewing in the air? But instead there was nothing out of the ordinary.

"Is everything working?"

Van Der Merwe was checking the readings over the shoulder of the two operators. "It certainly is. And, um, I think you're letting your mind wander…"

Flora looked down and saw to her abject shock that a very un-feminine body part was slowly growing to at least three times its normal size. "Holy shit! Doctor...look at it!" Her eyes lit up. "I'm hung like a *stallion!* This is amazing!"

"Flora, please. I know your...proclivities, but we have a task at hand."

Flora's mouth was hanging open in shock. "Could I just...see if it works on my boobs?" she asked shamelessly. Even as she asked permission, her B-cups were swelling at least two letter sizes. "I can't really control how my mind works, doctor. Sorry..."

“You could try.” Van Der Merwe’s tone was mostly disappointed. “We’re paying you a healthy sum, if you recall. And speaking of money, we’re burning a fortune every minute this machine stays on.”

“Okay, okay…” Flora finally took a moment to stop ogling her assets and shut her eyes, picturing the green bipedal reptile she’d spent so much time researching. The plantlike growth on the tail, the lighter underbelly...she could feel her body changing somehow, like her organs were changing their minds on how much space they took up. But still, it didn’t feel uncomfortable enough to be an entire body realignment, so it was still shocking when she opened her eyes and the colors were wrong. “Oh my god!” she exclaimed, looking down and seeing her smooth green hands. “My fur! My hair! My…” she tried to cup her chest, but there was nothing to cup. She realized she looked completely male.

Van Der Merwe flipped a switch and the whirring stopped. “Excellent work Flora!” he encouraged. “I told you it was easy!” Assistants ran forward and quickly scanned Flora to get readings on her new body.

Flora was examining her body too. “Everything’s so different…” she breathed. “I don’t even *see* the same anymore!”

“Reptiles have UV vision.” Van Der Merwe averted his eyes as Flora started examining a slit on her inner tail. “And those are your hemipenes. Not generally considered proper etiquette to play with in public.”

Flora quickly stopped. “This is so bizarre…” She accepted a hand mirror from an assistant and gasped as she saw her face. “I can’t even recognize myself!” She looked at the doctor. “How long will I look like this?”

“Not long, perhaps a few hours. It’ll depend on your mental ability to keep the new appearance from degrading.” Van Der Merwe nodded at an assistant who quickly setup a testing table. “Which is why we’re going to double-check you over as fast as possible and rush you to the cell for your first meeting.”

* * *

The scientist folded his arms. “Well, you’re not getting fed anymore, so I hope you enjoyed those oranges,” he informed pointly. “You wanna start photosynthesizing energy, or just regenerating, be our guest. You’re *constantly* monitored.” He left for the door. “Maybe a few more days of no food will change your mind...”

He let the door slam shut behind him.

“Sigh… I would most certainly need *sunlight* in order to photosynthesize properly. These non-natural lights only help partially, if at all.”, she mumbles. “At least I got to eat a single orange…”

What seemed like an eternity since the scientist left, possibly due to losing track of time thanks to loneliness, she started to see things: Was there someone at the corner of her eye? Did something just fall to the floor? But there was nothing, nothing at all. Was she getting paranoid? Was she becoming insane?

She shook her head in disapproval, trying to concentrate, as suddenly something seemingly tried to open the door…

On the other side, Flora gulped as she stared at the furthest door in the corridor. This part of Sartonic was nothing like the laboratory-themed resort she was used to on the higher levels. This almost felt like a prison. She was almost grateful most of the cells were empty, because the occupied ones contained creatures so visibly miserable it depressed her just to see them.

She was starting to have serious reservations about this whole idea. If the subject in question was as dangerous as the personnel kept claiming, Flora worried that it might try to kill her, especially if she slipped up and revealed she was in disguise. She almost wished they'd given her something other than a Sartonic jumpsuit to wear; none of the males she witnessed in the videos wore nearly that much clothing, it might tip her off.

Don't think like that, she told herself. *You're here to help her. Just see what you can do to make her happy.*

The cracks between the bars on Cell L1F3 were filled with black-tinted glass, unlike the other cells. With one last look at the scientists keeping their distance, Flora took a deep breath and walked into the cell.

She almost gasped when she saw the state her new cellmate was in. Strapped spreadeagle to the wall, wearing only bloody rags and with several obvious wounds in various states of recovery, it was plainly obvious her stay had not been a pleasant one. "Oh my god!" gasped Flora darting forward. "Are you...can you walk?" She made to untie the restraints, but something made her hesitate. "You won't...hurt me...if I let you down will you?" Dr. Van Der Merwe had ordered her to befriend this creature, after all, and Flora would never let a friend remain in the state she was at the moment.

She seemed very surprised to see one of her kin enter the room, despite the weird clothing he wore.

"You… You're one of my folk?" She seems quite confused at first. "You also seem more… concerned compared to all those other scientists", she commented. "How curious… I should be doing alright, even though I've basically been tortured in several ways for what feels like an eternity… I won't hurt you, I promise… I just want to be on the ground again after not moving for said eternity. Say, who are you anyway, and why did you come here? You don't really seem to be a scientist..."

Flora was surprised at the girl's tone. It seemed normal enough, not psychotic, crazed, or anything like Van Der Merwe implied she would be. He quickly got to work unleashing the girl. "My name's...uh...Foley..." she came up with lamely. "...a human name, I know, but I've lived my whole life in this lab."

She helped the girl to her knees, biting her lip at the aches her joints must be feeling. "Easy...oh man, you look horrible," she admitted without thinking. "Er, I mean, your injuries do. You look very pretty."

She gulped and smiled nervously. With a lack of other ideas, she decided to simply massage the truth. "I'm, uh...an experiment here, just like you. They asked me to come help you, said you were having trouble fitting in. Maybe I can help..."

She weakly attempts to stand up. "A 'subject' too? Why would you be here? You seem pretty normal to me…", she asked curiously. "Foley seems like a good name, I wouldn't know if it isn't as I do not have one. You shouldn't worry about me, to be honestly… but in what way should you be able to help me? The only thing I seek for is freedom back in nature, but the scientists refuse to do this because they *need* my abilities to create, alter and destroy life in some way or another."

She took some time to look him into the eyes. "So, again, you're an experiment, and you've been living here your whole life? I repeat, what is different about you, and why would you be here forever? I… would ask if you seek out nature as much as me, but since you've been here forever - noting your ability to cooperate with these creatures - you seem fine being here…" She sighs.

"Maybe you could convince the scientists to release me? I never meant any harm to anybody. I was just enjoying life as-is for the last couple of centuries. Even though I might look rather young, or despite me being able to extend life like that, it doesn't mean that I experience it 'slower' or anything. Being tied up here without food nor a person to talk to felt like ages…"

"My power?" Flora paused. She'd never actually come up with a false power, and she didn't want to use her normal one, for risk of dropping her disguise. "I...don't want to talk about it. It's embarrassing..." She quickly helped the girl to her feet. "There we go," she said softly as the subject gained her balance. "You really don't have a name? We should come up with one!" She smiled. "Everybody deserves a name! What's a normal žaltys name?"

Her pupils dilated when the subject casually mentioned her age. "You're *centuries old*??? Is that normal for us?" she gasped. "I've...I mean...uh, never met another one of us before. I've never even left the lab. I don't know anything about how we work. Are we supposed to live that long?"

She'd forgotten to shut the cell door, and one of the scientists outside the door fixed that problem by slamming it shut with a loud clank, causing Flora to openly wince.

The other girl, on the other hand, didn't seem to mind the loud clank as she was hugging the disguised girl.

"Well, to be fair, none of us are ever supposed to live that long. It's just because of my powers, you see. I don't think that I require a name, I'll be fine without one. You mentioned your powers to be embarrassing, why is that? I don't mind anything, really. Just be honest to me, I won't judge you for anything… I'd do a pinky promise, but I don't have that many fingers to do that."

She seems to weakly smile for a change, as if enjoying Flora's company. "I'm honest to everyone, and I'd like others to be honest to me as well. You can tell me about your 'embarrassing' powers, I promise I won't do anything bad like laughing or the likes."

"Well...ooookay..." Flora said slowly, fighting to give herself as much time as possible to come up with something. "I...can...detect metals. With my nose. Sometimes they take me to fields and I crawl around on all fours locating mineral deposits." She blushed. "Sorry, I know that's not super embarrassing, but when I do it, I feel like a dog or something."

She returned the hug, heart racing. "I know you want to leave, but they're not going to let you." She pet the girl's arm comfortingly. "It's so much easier if you just give them what they want...I've always behaved and they let me live in the apartments, and they even pay me." Her brow furrowed. "Where's your food? Are you just trapped in here? You look like you need to see a doctor..."

"Your power doesn't seem to sound so bad at all", she commented. "Also, I just want to leave this place, I don't fancy living in houses or the likes, I've always lived in nature and I am certain that I cannot adapt to your type of everyday life, or at least I don't want to adapt. I have no use for money either."

She paused for a moment. "I haven't been fed for days, if not a week. Well, one guy came in and gave me *a single orange* before cutting off one of my fingers so I had to force-use my powers."

Flora's eyes widened. "You haven't been fed in *days*? Maybe I can bring you some next time I visit. Sartonic's always been harsh when a test subject doesn't do what they want, but I didn't know they'd take it that far..."

She grabbed her by the hand. "I'll...talk to them about releasing you, I guess, but you know I have no real power. I'm just a lab rat like you." She looked worried. "And I really really don't think they're going to let you leave. I've never seen anyone released completely."

Someone banged on the door. "Male subject?" Someone barked through the bars. "Your time is almost up for today."

Flora's eyes went wide. "Is there anything else you want me to bring?" she asked urgently. "Maybe a flower or something?" Of course, she wasn't even sure if there'd be a next time...

"I'd appreciate a bit of nature around me, a flower would be nice. It was nice getting to know you, Foley. Maybe we'll meet again in the future, or not, depending what happens or if they let you see me again."

She waited idly for Flora to leave the room as she was being called by a scientist. There seemed to be a slight smile on her face.

"Okay," smiled Flora, "I'll make sure to--" but she was interrupted when the door swung open and the scientists marched in, the lead barking "Out!" Before she could say another word, she was swiftly whisked from the subject's presence.

After a few confused moments where she almost fought back to get her last words out, she realized Dr. Van Der Merwe was the one bringing her back to his office. "Why'd I have to leave so quickly?" she asked urgently, as soon as they were out of earshot. "I wasn't done talking to her! I think we we're making--"

She broke off when Van Der Merwe rubbed the stubble on top of her head. "You're starting to change back," he said simply. "A few more minutes and it would have been visible."

Flora looked with surprise as her skin started lightning, growing fur, and her body started assuming its normal shape. "Ohhh...that wasn't very long at all. Is there a way to get more?"

"You'll have slightly more time in future visits, as the full physical won't be necessary beforehand," Van Der Merwe said curtly. He opened the door to his office and ushered her in. "Excellent work. It appears you have gained her trust. Just keep pushing that."

"I don't if I'm comfortable with the treatment she's being given..." Flora said hesitantly. "She looks really unhealthy. I think if everyone were nicer to her--"

"It's not your job to tell us ours," Van Der Merwe interrupted in a cautioning voice, and Flora instantly shut up, knowing she'd crossed the line. "Just keep following your instructions. Take the rest of the day off. I'll wake you tomorrow when your next visit is at hand."

Flora nodded nervously and quickly left the room, stumbling clumsily due to her morphing skeletal structure.

* * *

Meanwhile back in the cell, the scientists were standing at attention with delicate measuring instruments and suppression ordnance, prepared for either side of the spectrum of possible responses from the subject.

"Well?" demanded the lead scientist. "Anything he say get through your thick skull? Ready to start behaving?"

"I'll still refuse to help", she responded. "He might be very willing to listen to you guys, but that's because he's been with you the whole time, and you've been treating him well. I don't want to help you guys as it will end our world as a whole if you gain to use my powers."

She crossed her arms. "I might be able to demonstrate something if you were to get me a bit of nature, like potted plants or the likes. I would be willing to do that much if you give me a bit of nature in this horrible cell. Also, I won't hurt you if you won't hurt me, is that alright?" She seems uncertain if actually being willing to help in some way is a good thing to do.

"What do you mean it would 'end our world as a whole'?" quoted the scientist incredulously. "Surely you don't actually believe that '*if nobody ever dies the planet would overpopulate*' nonsense. These procedures would be rare and expensive, only the richest of the rich would ever see the fruits of immortality. The percentage would be so low as to wash out of the statistics."

"But on the other hand, think of how much knowledge we gain to learn by studying them!" another interrupted. "If a bit of nature is all you need, sure what the hell. We'll bring you a zinnia or something."

"The male test subject will bring a zinnia," interrupted the lead scientist. "I'm not gonna be the one to stand near this thing once we've handed it a potential source of power."

“You don’t seem to trust me at all, it seems. How curious.”, she commented. “You know that I could just as well use my powers right now, but I won’t due to manners. Either way, I am fine with anything as long as we have a deal.”

She keeps idling.

“Go ahead and use them,” the scientist shot back. “I’m perfectly fine seeing you get hit with that shock collar again.” His assistant laughed as they made to leave.

“Enjoy your opportunity to stretch your limbs,” noted the other scientist as he left. “Because if you keep this insubordination up. Things get a lot worse from here on out...and not just for you.”

The door closed behind them and she was alone again.

* * *

“Look, I said I’d bring her food!” protested Flora as the packed lunch was taken from her. The scientist had noticed the bulge in the back pocket of her jumpsuit and quickly confiscated the sandwich and juice box. “It’s not much, I think she’s starving!”

“That’s her own damn fault,” the scientist growled. Flora was in disguise again, and they were standing outside cell L1F3 the next day. “This time we’re going in with you, because she appears to be cooperating. You lead, and carry this,” he handed her a pot with a small red flower.

Flora acquiesced, stepping through the cell door and seeing the reptilian subject again. “Hey,” she said softly, in case she was asleep. “It’s Foley again. I, uh…” she looked at the scientist who’d followed her into the room “...wasn’t able to bring you food, I’m really sorry, but--”

“The flower,” interrupted the scientist, roughly pushing Flora forward so she accidentally jostled the subject. “De-age the flower. Just like you promised you’d do.”

“It’s alright, Foley.”, she commented on him being pushed towards her. “Ah, the advantage of not specifying what I should do with the flower beforehand. A mistake on my part, it seems. Very clever.”

She held the potted flower tight and it slowly de-aged as she was instructed to do. “I am allowed to keep this flower here, am I not?” The flower kept de-aging.

“Perfect…” breathed the scientist excitedly. He startled Flora by stuffing a diode into her hand. “Attach this to the subject’s temple.”

Flora blinked in surprise. “Errr, can I ask permission first--?”

“Now!”

Flora looked at the subject, nervous. Her eyes asked for unspoken permission but she still made to pin the diode as slowly as she dared.

"Now grow the plant back to its original state, *after* the diode is attached!" the scientist ordered.

She sighs, waiting for the diode to be put onto her head. "Just do what these scu- scientists want to do. I can't break promises."

She slowly started to put the flower back to its initial state.

The scientist seemed annoyed. "I'm not getting any good readings from this…" he muttered, furrowing his brow.

Another was silently indicating a similar belief. "There's nothing to read, she's just...speeding it up."

"We need data on a more familiar life form." The first scientist returned his attention to the subject. "Do it on the male žaltys. Reduce his age, just by a little bit."

"What?" exclaimed Flora, wrenching herself away from the subject. "Woah hold on! That wasn't--"

"Silence!" growled the scientist. "You're a subject and you'll do what you're told!"

Flora's eyes dilated and she began hyperventilating. What would that even mean with her disguised form? She resolved to get some things square with Dr. Van Der Merve after this, but for now she held her tongue and looked in fear at everyone, wondering whether to try and escape.

"There might possibly nothing to read as I possibly am part of nature. Some things can't be revealed.", she exclaimed obliviously.

"You are also aware that I do not 'test' my 'powers' on other lifeforms without their consent. I am also very certain that… Actually, I am uncertain if you would end his life just like you did to the other scientist because *I refused* to de-age him."

She looked towards Flora. "It is for you to decide if you want to look a little younger or not. If not, I won't do anything either, but it might result in your inevitable death to their hands. Listen to your own thoughts and decide according to them, don't be intimidated."

She seemed to notice that Flora, for some reason, was highly uncomfortable all the sudden, despite being freely willing to meet her beforehand, or at least that was still 'part of the plan'. Maybe a plan of the scientists to get her to cooperate, but she might attempt to read his mind in a subconscious way to get a slight idea of what was happening. It seems that most things don't get registered by these diodes, possibly because they are attached to *plant matter*.

Flora gulped. She knew the scientist would be mad, but she had to protect herself. "I--I don't want to be de-aged. And I think it's a violation of my--"

"You really don't learn do you?" chuckled the scientist. Drawing the same silver-barreled revolver, he pointed it at Flora, who yelped in surprise and raced to cower behind the other žaltys in the room. "Same offer as last time. I'm sure you know what I'm referring to," he cautioned the subject in a low voice.

"What--what is he talking about?" Flora stammered, wide-eyed and quaking like a leaf. The subject's body was not nearly large enough for Flora to fully hide from the gun sights, he could still easily get a killshot off.

"Like I said, he will kill you if I don't de-age you, and I want to ask *the person I have to de-age* for permission, in this case you."

She idles without having said much.

"Too late," the scientist said simply, pulling the trigger. The bullet slammed into Flora's chest, and she let out a high-pitched scream and went spiraling backwards into the wall. The light in the cell burst and the secondary scientists dashed forward as the room plunged into blackness. Flora was still screaming, and without further ado they dragged her out of the cell and into the hallway.

"Such a shame you have to keep hurting other people like that," chuckled the lead scientist, shining a piercing bright pocketlight in the subject's eyes. "No wonder you don't have many friends."

Flora screams had degenerated into stunned sobbing. The sounds faded as she was carried away from the cell.

"I believe there is a misconception of whose fault it is. Obviously the gun should be guilty of this.", she responded in a taunting voice. "I suppose I will have to reside in darkness for now? Works for me."

She decides to head next to a wall and lean against it.

So the scientist shot her too. It was a leg shot, so nothing lethal, but he needed to remind her who was in charge. "You keep acting like this, we take things to the next level," he cautioned. "If you're not going to cooperate, we'll just have to try other methods to get the information."

She tried hard not to scream, squinting her eyes in pain. Oddly enough, the wound seemed to cease bleeding rather quickly, despite the bullet piercing through her leg. "There is no information to get, you've seen it yourself. Why do you have to be so stubborn?"

"In that case, any reason not to just kill you?" He pointed out, reloading his revolver. "Perhaps your autopsy will prove more enlightening than your personality."

Just then, he stopped. Squinted in surprise at his scanner. "Huh…" a wicked smile played across his face. "Guess what? We got something. Looks like your self-regeneration is something we can read."

The other scientists have returned. "The male žaltys is stabilized," one reported.

"Never mind that, look!" He showed the others. "When she self-heals to an extreme degree, the process is readable!"

The heavier scientist's eyes lit up. "Hmmm." He stepped forward and kicked the subject in the head with his boot, aiming for a broken nose. "Let's see if different parts of the body give off different readings."

In an attempt to retaliate, she tries to cut the heavier scientists with a swift swipe of her vines, the speed and precision of her hopefully causing some damage.

The counter-attack earned her a massive shock from her electrified collar, but the vines rang true. With a strangled cry the heavy scientist felt the crushing weight of a sturdy prehensile tentacle snap his femur. He fell to the ground cursing brilliantly.

"Let's restrict ourselves to ranged attacks!" gasped the assistant. The lead scientist nodded his assent and fired at the subject again, aiming for the spot where the tentacles connect to the shoulder.

As she was screaming in pain, falling onto the ground, she struck the gunslinger with her other vine, as it seemed that his precise shot cut off her other vine. Her eyes seem to be filled with anger, if not madness at this point, towards specific living beings.

She feels like passing out any minute now.

The collar, having been significantly overused, shorted out with a final spark. The lead scientist scrambled backwards in shock as the gun was smacked out of his hands. "Get out of there!" He shouted. "She's unrestrained!"

The assistant quickly sprinted for the exit, but the scientist with the broken leg couldn't walk. "Wait!" he shouted as he saw them sealing the cell door. "Don't leave me in here!"

But it was too late. The lead scientist radioed the control room in a panic and they quickly flooded the subject's cell with nerve gas as a containment last resort.

As the gas was entering the room, she tried her best to stop breathing. For a short time, for this opportunity, she'd done something she wouldn't have thought of doing herself.

WIth slightly sluggish movements, she headed towards the incapacitated scientist and extended her vine, smirking awkwardly. One moment later, this vine stabbed right into the heart of the scientist, blood flowing across the floor.

The last moments were filled with laughter.

*   *   *

Flora's eyes flew open and she sat up with a gasp, then almost as quickly buckled back over clutching her stomach.

Several queasy seconds later and she was able to get her thoughts collected well enough to realize she was in the infirmary. Her chest was wrapped in a heavy bandage, and a light prod sent waves of dull pain thudding through her body. Moaning loudly and quickly returning to lying on her back, Flora closed her eyes and whimpered quietly.

A nurse appeared. "Stay calm!" She urged Flora, dabbing the folf's forehead with a warm washcloth. "Don't move. The recovery process is incomplete."

"It hurts…" Flora moaned. "Why did he…? What did I…?"

"Shhh," consoled the nurse, prodding a red button on the wall. "Can I get you something to eat?"

"Eat?" Flora dizzily shook her head. "I...he shot me. He shot me!" Her unfocuzed gaze locked on Dr. Van Der Merwe, who hurried through the door. "*He shot me!*"

"It was a rubber bullet," reassured Van Der Merwe. "The others weren't, but we had been planning a trust-building exercise, which unfortunately didn't get that far--"

"--*because he shot me!*" Flora tried to sit up and wheezed painfully. Her eyes watered as the nurse eased her back down. "I never agreed to that!"

"*Don't* interrupt me!" Van Der Merwe's eyes flashed, and Flora cowered. "I've had a talk with Cherlins already, he's agreed to give you more of a warning when his plans involve your participation. For better or worse, we think you're the only part of the interrogations that are actually working as intended."

"Doctor...I don't know if I want to be a part of this anymore…" Flora's lip quivered as Van Der Merwe's displeasure showed transparently on his face. "I don't know if what we're doing is right. That girl, she's in a lot of pain--"

"Your instructions are very clear." Van Der Merwe's tone left no room for debate. "Befriend that girl. Don't even worry about convincing her to do anything, just gain her trust. You've already agreed, there is no ducking out."

Flora panted painfully, pupils dilated with anxiety. Her mind whirled as she tried to come up with a way to voice her concerns.

"We're taking the meetings a different direction," Van Der Merwe continued. "They will now occur at night, and you will be alone. Use the story that you've started sneaking out at night to visit her."

Flora cocked her head. "Why...?"

"The other personnel no longer feel safe in the same room as her after last night's incident." Van Der Merwe nodded to the nurse, who dimmed the lights and unwrapped the folf's bandage, causing her to wince. "Don't worry; we'll be watching you via camera. If anything goes wrong, we'll send guards in to retrieve you."

Flora was suddenly more preoccupied with staring at the nasty black and purple bruise covering almost her entire right breast. She twitched and gritted her teeth as the nurse applied a stinging salve.

"The physicians say you should be fully recovered in a few days." Van Der Merwe's glasses were his brightest physical feature visible in the low light. "You'll go then. You should be aware by now of the acceptable length of a visit. Ensure you always leave before your time runs out."

* * *

The subject received no contact for three days. No food, no visitors. The cell was self-cleaning, so the blood stains and most signs of violence disappeared in time. The fleshy parts of the scientist's body were slowly purged by the nanobiotic cleaning agents, but his skeleton would remain in the corner.

On the night of the fourth night, žaltys Flora shivered as a guard punched a keycode into the wall and granted her access to the cell block. Looking nervously behind her at the personnel as she left them behind, Flora tiptoed timidly into the inner recesses of the prison alone.

The subjects all seemed a lot scarier when she was alone at night. The muttering one started muttering at her instead of just in general. The gecko paused from reflecting on his inner thoughts to meet her dead in the eyes and not break eye contact until she'd gratefully turned a corner.

Cell L1F3 loomed, its tinted windows as opaque as they'd always been, but this time they seemed way more foreboding. Standing before it nervously, Flora felt her heart thudding in her chest. Her brain was screaming at her to run, but she couldn't fathom the punishment Van Der Merwe would have for her if she'd disobeyed orders. Gulping painfully due to how dry her throat was, Flora turned the clasp and let herself into the cell.

As Flora enters the room, she steps right into a bit of mud and dirt, evenly distributed amongst the entrance, it's walls and even the ceiling of the entrance door.

The subject could be seen doing something to the skeleton of the dead scientist: It seemed as part of it was somewhat intact, yet slightly muddy in appearance, similar to the doorstep, whereas some parts were completely missing. In fact, very specific parts of the walls seem to be covered in dirt of unknown origin, suggesting that it was formerly part of the decomposed body of the scientist.

It looks like as if the subject had a sixth sense of sorts, knowing where gas or similar could enter the room as well as where cameras could be, but only some cameras have been covered in this mysterious dirt so far.

“A visitor?”, she mumbles in a strange tone, as if both happy, yet intimidated as well as crazed. She looks at the doorway, noticing Flora. “Oh, it’s you, Foley. Are you alright from that shot to your chest?”, she fakes the emotion of concern, knowing that Flora wanted to say something along the lines of ‘not being part of something’, likely a plan, four days prior.

“Oh my god, what happened in here?” stammered Flora in shock, looking in horror at the state of the cell.

After staring at the skeleton for almost fifteen seconds trying to decide whether to comment or not, she gulped and answered the question instead. “I...uh...have been recovering in sickbay. That’s actually why I was able to visit tonight...didn’t have to check into my room so I could just sneak right over here.”

She gave a shaky smile and took a small bagged lunch out of her back pocket. “Didn’t want them confiscating this again...here, I thought you might be hungry.”

“Oh? Much appreciated…”, she took some of the lunch out, but instead of eating it, she decided to take it apart bit by bit and pour it over various locations covered in dirt, as well as onto the now-definitely-muddy skeleton, which quickly turned into a heap of, well, dirt.

She decided to take some of this heap of dirt and put it into a few more places, circling a few spots where the center would be occupied by hidden cameras in order to be not be too suspicious of her plan. “You see, if I would make stuff grow around here, I could feed myself pretty well. By the way…”, she approached Flora slowly with a smirk on her face, “...do you… wish for something special~?”

An attempt to flirt in order to cover her own plans, and it’s been just a minute, Flora definitely will stay for a bit longer. Her faked emotions seem very believable.

“I don’t know if management will be okay with this...” Flora looked at the makeshift garden with worry. “They’re kinda pissed at you upstairs. I think you might be in more danger than you realize.”

She stepped forward gingerly. “I’m glad to see you’re not starving...is there anything else I can get you? You don’t look...exactly well.” There was a worrying change in the subject’s demeanor. Flora in her hyper-nervous state couldn’t place what, but she felt like the subject saw her as less of a living being than the previous times they met.

“Oh, there’s just a single question I’d like to ask.” She comes closer to Flora, whispering into her ear: “Why are you lying?”

All the sudden, vines spread out from all across the room, from all the spots weirdly marked by dirt. The door was completely overgrown, lots of hidden cameras and vents were covered by thick plant life, some vines even started to root Flora on the spot.

“And to think I actually believed what you’ve told me in the beginning, how oblivious I was”, she monologues in an aggressive tone. She wrapped her own vines tight around Flora’s arms and chest, making it hard to move for her. “I don’t specifically recall who you are, yet I know that whatever psychonic power you’ve told me about is, in fact, not your actual ability. What is your *real* name, my child? What is this *plan* of yours? Why are you cooperating with people that are deceiving me?”

The vines from the ground seemed to slowly start covering Flora’s whole lower body. “As nobody can see nor hear us, I would like to suggest an offer, my child. Cooperate with me instead of those scientific bastards and we will see what happens, maybe I’d even extend your lifespan past normal measures. Even if you choose not to, it wouldn’t matter to me. Go outside, look at the nearby wildlife, nature as a whole; It starts to decay without my presence. I’ve told the scientists already, and I feel like you should know it too, the world is *dying* without my presence. They can keep me here, even kill me if they like, in at least a year's’ time, all plant life will surely be gone, give it another, and every being might have met their demise. This would be the time for a reincarnation, like a phoenix rises from ashes. A new beginning, if you want to force it that way.”

She seems to scare Flora with her crazed voice. “I am Life, blooming through this world; I am Destruction, remnants of a whole.”

Flora’s eyes went wide and she struggled fruitlessly as the vines roped her to her spot. Losing her balance, she found that the vines were strong enough to prevent her from falling over, and held up her up for the žaltys to view of her own accord.

“They--they can still see us you know!” exclaimed Flora nervously. “There are still cameras!” She looked around wildly. She didn’t see any cameras...did the subject destroy them? Is she really all alone right now? Her mind gripped with panic, she began frantically debating her options. At the moment, her only real choices were to stick with the male žaltys story or admit the truth… “You know i’m just a test subject, like you right?” she stammered. “I’m just doing what I was told. You know what they do to subjects who don’t do what they’re told!”

“You don’t seem to be aware of the fact that *it doesn’t matter*, do you? If I am kept here or die here, that is irrelevant, I *need* to get back out, Foley, or should I say, Flora?”

The vines enveloped Flora even tighter, possibly hurting her a bit. The female Zaltys seemed to be pissed at her.

“That hurts, stop!” she pleaded. The vines dug into her flesh, leaving her squealing and wriggling in pain. “Look, okay, I’ll tell you the truth!” She stammered. “You’re right, my name is Flora. I’m a changeling! They wanted...they thought you’d be more open to cooperating if you made a friend who was your own species! That’s why they brought me in.”

Tears welled in her eyes. “If you’re going to kill me, please let me look like myself when I die. I can only hold this body for about fifteen more minutes...if you’re hoping to see who I really am, you’ll get to soon enough.”

“Everything dies eventually, I can wait a century for liars like you to die, there is no rush.”

She loosened the vines a little, but kept her tight in them. More comfortably than before, if that is even possible.

“Just tell your scientist friends that they won’t be able to get any ‘information’ off me. It’s impossible, and if they really want I can just off myself as well, it won’t take long until everything in this world dies either.”

“You’ve got a pretty weird opinion of death for someone who calls themselves Life!” Flora cried, wincing as the loosening of the vines revealed nasty red welts where they once were. “What would be so wrong with helping them! Apparently they’ve learned a lot about how the body creates cells from analyzing me, just imagine what they could discover by analyzing you!”

She stopped struggling and took a deep breath as it became clearer that she wasn’t about to die. “We’ve all got friends who’ve died. Especially you, if you’re really centuries old. This could be your chance to save future people from that heartache.”

“How am I supposed to save anyone if I am stuck here? Like I mentioned, without my presence, nature decays. I would be saving everyone, even people like your ‘friends’, if I were just to be let free. Some things shouldn’t be discovered, some things can’t be discovered. I might let you have some fun though.”

Suddenly, a few more vines were growing up, around Flora’s chest. “I will just wait until you transform back to your normal form.”

Already the fur was beginning to grow back on her arms and she felt her skeleton reconstructing itself into its normal form. She realized with a flash of panic that the jumpsuit she’s wearing was built for the spindly body of a žaltys.

“Ummm, this is kinda awkward, but I need to take this off!” She exclaimed urgently, blushing fiercely and tugging at her jumpsuit. The vines acquiesced, ripping it from both sides and leaving her fully exposed yet still restrained, the shredded remains of her jumpsuit fluttering to the floor beneath her.

In a few minutes, she was left shivering in her normal form; a pink-furred twenty-something dickgirl folf. “Now I think you can see why they didn’t want me to meet you in my normal form...” she whimpered, looking nervously at the being standing over her.

“Does it really matter how you look like, my child?”, she commented in a monotone way. “Do they really think your appearance matters if I’d like you or not?”

The vines around her breast started piercing into her breasts, precisely, yet not too deep to not kill her by piercing her heart. It seems like they started growing a couple of sizes all the sudden, as if something was starting to build up in there.

The vines left her breasts again, blood spilling briefly across the floor as suddenly the wound was ‘patched’ by two strange looking flowers growing out of her nipples. “Do you mind to tell them to let me out? That would be *veeeeery* nice.”

Life seems to be talking in strange manners, as if lost sanity was not enough.

"What are you doing?" whimpered Flora, staring in horror as her breasts expanded and her nipples were covered with literal flora. "My breasts...you can do that?"

She tried to free her hands so she could fondle herself in awe. "How did you do this?" she breathed in awe.

"You seem to really feel in awe, don't you?", Life mentioned, continuing the flow of the word 'awe'.

The vines loosened to let Flora move her hands more freely, but still keeping her in place. A vine seemed to become thinner and grow some leaves on it, rather subtle.

Flora dropped to her knees and fondled her new flowery nipples. Her breasts, once decently-small B-cups, had grown by at least two sizes. She shuddered with pleasure. "Ohhhh," she moaned in surprise. "They're so *feminine*...and they've got flowers..." she looked up at Life with an expression of longing. "I'm a beautiful flower..."

"You're only *partially* one. You seem to be unaware of the fact that decaying nature means you will decay at a faster rate, right? And bigger breasts do *not* imply feminine appearance."

The sneaky, thinner vine with leaves started to sneak up on Flora's chest. "For now, sleep tight, my child."

The vines suddenly got rather tight again, some even around her head to keep it in place. The rather small, strange vine suddenly entered into her mouth, seemingly deep into her throat, the leaves scratching the insides in a not so pleasant way. Flora seemed to fall asleep in an instant with a dull pain in her throat and insides in general.

Flora's eyes fluttered and she dropped to all fours. She was clearly still suffering from sexual excitement, but as the leaves had their soporific effect she slowly collapsed on the ground and slipped unconscious.

* * *

Flashes of light...Flora's next conscious thoughts were non sequiturs of color and sound. Groaning, she tried to sit up and found herself restrained. The world gradually reasserted itself.

She was in the infirmary again. This time nurses were present, and when they recognized her they quickly hit the button to summon Dr. Van Der Merwe.

"Where is...?" Flora's words slurred; she wondered if she'd been drugged. She tried to sit up. "I...feel funny."

"Flora!" Van Der Merwe came rushing into the infirmary. "Nurse, check her vitals!"

"Doctor, how did I get here?" Flora asked, dazed as the nurse shot her in the eye with a bright penlight.

“We found you unconscious outside the cell when we came to check on you,” the doctor replied, taking a stethoscope and checking her heartbeat. “You were suffering from burns and some unusual swellings, but they seem to have healed for the most part.”

Thanks to the doctor pulling the blanket away, Flora noticed her breasts had returned to their normal state. “Doctor, where’s Life?” she asked.

“Hmmm?” he muttered, focusing on his readings. “Who?”

“The subject!” she clarified urgently. “The one I was talking to! Were you all really not watching what happened in there?”

“Oh yes, her. Don’t worry about her.” The doctor wrote down his notes. “We’re decided on her anyway. She’s a non-issue.”

Flora felt a trickle of apprehension. “What do you mean ‘we’ve decided on her’?”

“As I said, it’s no longer relevant. You did everything we asked, Flora, and thank you for your cooperation.” Van Der Merwe made to go. “Your role in this project is finished. The funds will be delivered to your account on your next payday.”

“Doctor, I…” she hesitated. “I’d be willing to visit her again, if there’s any chance it would help--”

The doctor had left.

* * *

That night, Flora tiptoed out of the infirmary and made her ways to the cellblock. There was a guard present, but after she waited for about thirty minutes he left to take a short bathroom break. Quickly punching in the code she’d watched him use before, she slipped the door shut behind her and made her way to Cell L1F3.

She was both relieved and concerned to see an absence of additional security on the door. Turning the latch, she quickly entered the cell, almost dreading what she might see.

The cell seemed to be covered with earth everywhere, grass on the ground, an unknown illuminated source of light that is not the lights on the ceiling as well as a small tree seem to be all present. As Flora tried to enter the room, almost two dozen vines quickly stroke to her direction, before stopping an inch in front of her.

“Oh, it is you, my child”, she commented. “It seems like they have given up, did they not? When am I allowed to leave freely?”

“Life, we have a problem!” Flora exclaimed. “They’re abandoning their study of you, and they told me I don’t have to meet with you any more, and I think they’re going to kill you!”

She stopped when the vines blocked her path, but tried to push forward so she could see the subject's face. "I don't have any hard evidence, but I've been here a long time, and all the signs are adding up…" She tugged at her hospital tunic. "I just had to warn you."

"Oh, so they do want to kill me after all this time? And you didn't have to warn me, I told you already that it does not matter if I die or not.", she commented calmly. "Then again, I would really like to *kill* some beings, you know, how nature intends to lead the way for almost every living creature. Survival of the fittest and all that. Do you have any plans?"

She kept sitting on what seems to be a little pile of leaves.

"But I don't want you to die!" Flora ran forward and wrapped her arms around the subject. "I think you're right…" she muttered tearfully. "You're special. You need to live."

She gulped. "I do have an idea for busting you out. But it depends on how much you can regenerate. Because I could never get you out of here...but I could easily smuggle a pile of dust…"

"Just because I mentioned that I could rise like a phoenix doesn't imply that I can *literally* do that!", she responded. "You seem… much more open as of late as well. I am certain we can both just walk out, I mean, how did you manage to get here so silently anyway? Although… I might need to do something so the place looks… *right in a specific way*, if you get what I mean."

The blooming nature around the cell suddenly started to darken in color, decaying at an accelerated rate. "Nature comes and goes at will, they might think I have just ended myself, I suppose. You lead the way."

"It's not that simple…" Flora looked at the hallway. "The hallways have sensors that trigger the alarm if the prisoners attempt to leave. Normally there are cameras and sensors in the cells too, but whatever you did has blocked the ones in this cell. Van Der Merwe said they couldn't see anything that happened when we were both in here."

Flora fidgeted. "That's why I was seeing if I could kill you. Because unless you're a corpse the alarm will sound if you try to leave. Unless you can rewrite your DNA or something…"

The green parts of Life's skin suddenly started to turn blue. "Camouflage should be rather easy around here", she said as she straight-up left the room.

"That's not what I meant!" exclaimed Flora as the subject broached the perimeter. "Okay, we need to move faster now!" Grabbing the subject's arm, she made to sprint for the exit.

"I guess." Both beings sprinted as fast as they could towards wherever Flora was leading the both of them to.

"You seem to know where to go around here. What's the quickest way outside to nature?", Life asked as they both were quick-footed. "You are aware that you might be the main suspect of all this, right?"

"I can't just stand aside and let them kill you…" Flora's gaze clouded. She was aware of the risk she was putting herself under, but it was the right thing to do.

They reached the door. "There's an armed guard on the other side of this." Flora gripped the handle and prepared to fling it open. "Can you incapacitate him before he radios anyone?"

"Definitely." As Flora opened the door, the guard alarmed about the noise, Life quickly disarmed him by wrapping her own vines around his body, one focussing around his neck to stop him from breathing, assisting in incapacitating him, but not killing him. She remains next to him for a bit. "Do you wish me to end all of his life functions?", she asks Flora in a somehow serious matter, as if it were up to Flora to decide.

"Nonononono just knock him out!" she exclaimed quickly. Grabbing his radio, she listened and frowned at the complete lack of chatter. "Hmmm...maybe you did prevent the alarm. This way."

Fishing a taser off the guard, she led the way to the security room. She opened the door to find the guard in question watching a row of rapidly switching cameras. The system forced the guard to click through a series of cameras to periodically check every room in the lab, which is why they'd made it this far without him noticing. When the guard started to swivel around to see who it was, Flora blasted him unconscious with the taser.

She ran to the cameras and checked the base status. "Wow..." she muttered, "we're clear. Let's just leave through the courtyard."

Ten minutes later they were standing outside Sartonic, the bustling city outskirts to their left, an arid desert to their right.

"So...this is it then." Flora shivered in the late night breeze. "I guess you finally get to leave."

"It's been so long…", Life muttered, oddly enough at a desert. "I know my place around here so well, untouched nature, not being tested on by anything scientific…"

It looks as if she was crying happily. "I… am finally back home…" She briefly forgot about Flora being next to her. "Oh, I forgot, my promise… What do you wish to do now? I'm willing to offer anything for you, well, most things…"

Flora looked back at Sartonic Labs, sitting quietly in the slowly-brightening night sky. Morning was coming. Beyond that, she saw the city she'd spent so many days in. Shops she enjoyed. Restaurants that gave her good and bad memories.

She thought about the fellow experiments she'd befriended, the good and the bad times. She thought about her roommates, especially the one who had lied about being on birth control and was trying to pressure her into becoming a father. She thought about what was going to happen to her if Sartonic managed to piece together that she'd let Life escape.

Slowly, she grabbed the hem of her hospital tunic and pulled it over her head, letting it settle to the ground in the shadows of the lab. "Take me with you," she said, voice trembling but firm. "I want to be closer to nature. I don't want to be trapped here any more."

Life hugged Flora all the sudden. “There’s one thing I’d have to do though.”

Flora returned the hug. Her tears dripped onto Life’s chest. “What is it?” she asked.

She hugged her rather tight all the sudden, lips connecting for a kiss. Her forked tongue seemed to cause Flora a big surprise, yet alone a kiss from this mystical being filling her with a foreign energy, or at least it feeled like that.

A passionate kiss for sure, she closed her eyes for it, but more so to concentrate. “That is all, my child. Longevity and nature sure go hand in hand.”, is all she said.

Flora returned the kiss, closing her eyes and arching her back as she pressed her body into Life’s smooth skin. She was panting heavily when the kiss broke. “It’s almost morning,” she noted breathlessly. The early rays of the sun were beginning to cast their gleam over the horizon, and she was looking pinker every second. “We need to get some distance between us and civilization…”

Life held her hand. “I’m certain we can do that in no time, my child.” Both started to head towards the rising sun, seemingly carefree about everything, trying to forget what happened back there in Sartonic.

“I’m also very certain that you’ll enjoy nature a lot!”, she mentioned in a cheerful voice, quite unexpected.

“It’s going to be weird…” admitted Flora, looking at the vast desert expanse greeting them. She wasn’t even sure how they planned to find food, water and shelter in such a wasteland. “I’ve always been a city girl. It may be difficult for me to adjust at first.” She smiled at the žaltys. “But I’m sure you’ll be able to help.”

“I’m very sure that you’ll be able to adjust just fine, you’ll see, Flora. Your name even suggests nature, after all!”, she giggled. Both kept heading towards the sun.

So the two crossed the horizons, leaving their memories of Sartonic behind them and beginning their new lives as masters of their own destiny

The Gang of Five

Role Play => Random Role Play => Topic started by: Pterano on March 26, 2019, 06:31:30 PM

Title: **After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 26, 2019, 06:31:30 PM**

((RP between Aabicus and myself!))

It's a godawful small affair...

As the strains of the song drifted through the beach front bar, Tony Stracci sat at the countertop, nursing a Seabreeze. The drink wouldn't be enough to knock him on his ass, but if he had a few more...

He wasn't planning on having a few more.

But the film is a saddening bore,
for she's lived it ten times or more...

Looking out to the crashing waves on the ocean, the white sandy beach stretched endlessly before him in either direction, looking like a never-ending ribbon as it twisted its way along the coast. Somewhere in the parking lot, one of his vintage cars was parked, drawing a small crowd that snapped photos of it and stood next to it for selfies and Instagram posts and whatever. This brought a slight smirk to the ferret's features as he watched the eager onlookers.

Tapping his claws against his sweating glass, he took another swig, then pulled out his phone.

It's on America's tortured brow
Mickey Mouse has grown up a cow...

Tapping his claws over the screen, he began texting Emilena Echo. He asked her to meet him here, having a few things to discuss in the aftermath of their saving the world, defeating Kalis, and becoming heroes. His flat cap was pulled a bit lower over his forehead, his vest, shirt, pants and shoes completing the look.

It's about to be writ again
as I ask her to focus on...
Sailors fighting in the dance hall
Oh man, look at those cavemen go
It's the freakiest show
Take a look at the lawman beating up the wrong guy
Oh man! Wonder if he'll ever know...
He's in the bestselling show!

As Tony listened to the strains of the song, he closed his eyes, enjoying the ocean breeze that came in from the relatively open air bar, the building lacking walls, and really only having a roof and floor. Sometimes... life was worth it...

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 26, 2019, 11:31:59 PM**

"..the thing about situations like that, Henri, is that you don't have time to think." Emilena forced the smile her public relations coach assured was making her more likable. "You just react, and do everything you can to stay alive. I only did what anyone would have done to survive."

"Now, you may say that, Emilena..." the talk show host laughed even though Emilena didn't find anything funny about their conversation, "...but you were practically the sole survivor. In fact, you're the only living individual confirmed to have been in the room when Vergil Speicher ended Rex's reign of terror and saved the planet."

"Well, wait, that's not true, there's Mr. Stracci and...oh." Emilena trailed off, realizing the interviewer was baiting her into revealing more about that climactic final battle. "You know I'm not allowed to talk about any of that, right?" she sighed.

"Of course, of course," Henri brushed off the notion with another fake laugh. "'Confidential incidents.' You've mentioned that you fully endorse the official story, and who are we to question the government?" The studio audience laughed as he turned to them expectedly for support. "I mean, when have they ever lied to us, right?"

"You calling me a liar?" Emilena growled, suddenly balling her fists. The laughter quickly died and the room grew awkwardly silent. She took a deep breath, closed her eyes and counted down until her blood cooled. "Sorry. It's just that...a lot of people died during those confidential incidents. People I was very close to." She opened her eyes to stop the faces flashing across her vision. "Some died in front of me. Some we found the body afterward. And the remainder have gone completely missing. I know these are celebratory times for all you, but for me it involved losing almost everyone I've ever known. So, if you'd kindly stick to the topics we agreed upon when scheduling this interview..."

"Okay, okay," the host laughed again. "Pinkie promise. And make no mistake, we are all incredibly thankful for your sacrifices. But you gotta admit," his eyes glinted jokingly, "it helps at least a little to become filthy rich. I know I'd be buying another solid gold humvee if I were in your shoes!"

Emilena sighed and turned the television off as her on-screen counterpart decked the talk show host across the face. She was in her umpteenth six-star hotel; each was more expensive than everywhere she'd ever lived combined, but her bank account had so many digits she didn't see a reason to bother buying a permanent place to live. In fact, she felt more comfortable knowing that nobody could ever pin down her location. Not to mention, the one time she'd tried buying her own building she'd spent the whole night jumping at every little rustle of wind or creak in the woodwork. Even here, her ears twitched and she winced when anyone walked past her hotel room door. *Get a grip, Emilena...* she exhaled, rising up from her form-fitted massage couch and wandering to the window.

The setting sun cast vibrant rays over her hotel room, bathing her pale fur and making her look almost as orange as she'd been in her youth. Emilena knew stress could cause premature aging, but even she hadn't thought it was possible for a muzzle to turn grey before 25. Hell, for all she knew it was the Growth Acceleration procedure finally catching up to her. Whatever. She'd never particularly feared her own death, and it seemed even less of an issue now that everyone she'd ever known had already passed to the other side.

She glanced at the ornate desk, the main piece of furniture that had sold her on this room. She'd always wanted a big fancy desk, from her first day as a junior police officer in the long-destroyed city of Lanthae, but now she had nothing to do with it. No cases...no job...no need to even balance her expenses. No reason to live.

Thock. Someone lightly rapped against her hotel room door, causing her to grab a letter-opener off the couchside cabinet and leap to a defensive angle before her brain caught up with her reflexes. "Who...who is it?" she asked.

"*Message for you, Ms. Echo,*" a stuffy British voice informed, and a laminated envelope slipped under the door. Emilena had all her calls cleared through the front desk, and the list of approved numbers was incredibly short. Waiting until the footsteps had faded down the hallway, Emilena inched forward and sliced open the note to read that Tony Stracci was inviting her to drink at a local bar.

She couldn't help but smile. *I guess not everyone's dead and gone.* Seeing a friendly face might stave off the melancholy thoughts for at least a while.

Fifteen minutes later, she walked through the back door of the bar, bundled up with the same sort of heavy coat and sunglasses getup she used to give members of witness protection programs. "Please keep the press out," she said under her voice to the bartender, slipping $500 on the counter, "and get me a Blue Cherry with ice."

She finally relaxed once she was next to Tony at the bar. "You seem to be taking to the celebrity life well," she teased, glancing at the crowds admiring his car. Thankfully, they hadn't noticed her yet. "It's nice to see you again."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 27, 2019, 10:10:24 AM**

As a familiar vulpine entered the bar from the back door (of which Tony had a good view of), the ferret smiled. He didn't wave her over though, and let her find him herself, as it was clear she was trying to avoid attention. "Heh, well... at least I'm a fairly nondescript ferret... they don't tend to notice me too often. I threw them off by dressing in normal clothes during all my televised interviews." he chuckled. "And as for my car..." he hooked a thumb behind him to it. "It was fortunately fairly quiet when I pulled in, and now I think it's just drawing crowds on the fact it's a rarity these days, and all those beachgoers coming up from the beach are taking note." he chuckled again.

"I don't mind though... they're welcome to those photos. How are you, Emilena?" he asked softly, offering her his paw under the bar. "It's good to see you again."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 27, 2019, 11:48:27 AM**

"You need to teach me how to do televised interviews," Emilena groaned. "I haven't managed to get through one without making an ass of myself." She regarded her friend, the only link to a time that otherwise seemed erased by the modern world. "You look completely like I remember...I can't fathom how you do it." She winced when she sat down in her seat; her lifetime of various injuries were finally catching up to her. "Kafke Dermanetics offered me a full-body reconstructive process. All scars removed, muscles and skin tightened, these missing chunks in my ear and tail could be regrown...but I don't know. You look at their showcase customers and there's something...uncanny about how perfect they look." She shuddered.

The bartender handed her a cup of light blue nonalcoholic beer, and she made sure to only take baby sips. The last thing she wanted was to start hiccupping uncontrollably. "So that's the big decision in my future. Not much else to do, or worry about when you're rich and famous." She handed over her credit card for the tab and glanced back at Tony. "What about you? Doing anything to keep yourself busy, or just enjoying the ride?"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 27, 2019, 01:42:12 PM**

"Hah well... they're harder than they look, for sure. I just tried to throw off everyone by dressing differently... not hinting that I dress from a bygone era." he shook his head, taking another sip. "Oh, me? Eh... well between those assholes doing something to rebuild my body and dropping me in that Duesenberg to now... eh... I've had some treatments here and there... the worst of it was covered when I was "revived" after my fall off the Death Road." he informed her. "I still have no idea what they did to me." he confessed. "Something along the lines of... what you stated. Reconstruction. Revival... I don't know." he shrugged. "I got an extremely rare car out of it, so I can't complain too much." he grinned. "I still keep some scars though... the worst and what remained from our final battle I had removed though... but yeah under my clothes... there's some stuff there." he told her softly.

"I am..." he paused, looking out to the ocean once more. "Enjoying life, I guess you could say. I take my cars out on nice days, just to drive, you know? Head down the coastal areas, or just through some of the parks. It helps me think and well... relax. Other times I just go swimming or... whatever. I try to keep a low profile and enjoy my life for what it's worth... as I know it very easily could've gone the other way... and I'm damn lucky to be alive." he told her, looking right at her. "So yeah... I don't waste it." he nodded. "I savor every moment I have, if I can."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 27, 2019, 05:13:33 PM**

nearby to where Emilena and Tony were chatting, Zula the lioness was nursing a soda at the bar while watching a tv that sat in the corner. she was very fetching, with bright green eyes, dark red lips, and golden hoop earrings in her ears. She wore the uniform of a tennis instructor, 3 gold stars set above a pair of blue rackets set against a bright red background. "Corona Tennis Club ' was spelled out in big letters on the back of her uniform along with ' Coach Zula"on the front . currently she was watching a juniors tennis match, one of the players was a student she taught at the tennis club.

" come on Rocky, this kid has a weak forehand! Go after it! " she said softly as she watched the match, so far Rocky was up 6-4, 3-1, he simply needed to win this set to win the match. The screen next to the tennis match showed pictures of what little remained on Lanthae. Zula counted her blessing every day that she had been out of the city when it had been attacked. so many had been wiped out of existence, to the point where there wasnt even scraps of bone to recover..' Zula sighed as she sipped at her soda. Sure the tennis gig was great and all and the kids were eager to learn.. but being one of a few hundred folks to survive from Lanthae..outs of millions.. well the docs did say ' survivor's guilt' was a real thing...

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 27, 2019, 05:48:59 PM**

"Good to hear reconstruction worked for you...I'll probably swallow my pride and do it." Emilena coughed, already feeling a bit tipsy. The bartender knowingly passed her a glass of water to wash her drink down.

She found herself picking at one of her larger scars; a diagonal gash that traveled along her right wrist and up her arm to end somewhere on her chest. It would have been a fatal wound if Lily hadn't sacrificed herself to heal it. "But on the other hand, I can't help but feel I've cheated nature enough already. I signed up for premature aging when I enrolled in the Accelerated Growth Program, you know? And I earned these injuries, through my actions and choices. It only seems fair I suffer the consequences for once. Especially since society has miraculously let me off the hook for all the laws I broke." She sipped her Blue Cherry again. "I mean, shouldn't this be enough? It's like you said...we both really should be dead. Everyone keeps congratulating and honoring us, as if we did something right to survive, but they don't get it. It was pure *chance*."

She downed the whole glass of water to keep her hand from shaking. "I'm sorry, my therapist keeps saying not to talk like that. This is where my mind goes when I have nothing to do. I didn't grow up with money like you did, Tony," she admitted. "I'm not sure I'm cut out to have so much of it that my only job is to exist."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 28, 2019, 10:16:53 AM**

As Tony heard Emilena out, he was starting to grow concerned at the direction her conversation was taking. She seemed... aimless... and masochistic if anything. As if she felt she didn't deserve any of it, and deserved punishment. Yes they'd certainly broken laws in multiple countries, but doing one huge courageous act apparently changed all that. He could certainly understand where she was coming from though. "Emilena... I don't know if... you really deserve any of that. I mean... have you figured on just taking a job and not worrying about the cash?" he asked, placing two claws on his forehead as he used them to rest his head against.

"You could still live a normal life, you just.. wouldn't be working to survive. That's feasible, right?" he inquired. "I mean I could always put in a call with the local police force if you wanted... I myself haven't really ever pursued that route but sometimes I've thought about it. And I mean... being in the Purifiers I absolutely had to work to earn my way. I just... I don't like the fatalism... you don't deserve it... you really don't. You *have* purpose... and meaning. Plus... you're a good friend; one I really respect. I hate to see my friends beating themselves up like this. Yes a lot of it was chance... but some of it was skill and things we did too. I just... is there anything I can do to try and elevate your mood?" he asked, not having gotten to the reason he'd called her out here yet... but he did truly hate seeing her in this state. He moved his paw down to take a another swig from his drink.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 28, 2019, 04:01:17 PM**

"You're right," Emilena agreed with a hiccup, pushing her glass away with alarm. "I should maybe look into getting a job. There's no way I could go back to private investigating, but I'm sure there's a police force out there with a cushy desk job." She didn't sound super thrilled at the prospect, though.

"And I'm really glad you consider me a friend," she added. "Things got pretty rough between us for a while there. That tumble you took in Bolivia was by my gang's hand, and I later keyed your car in retaliation. It's honestly kinda weird the history books are going to list me as a member of Vergil's crew, I was a hostile complication at best for most of it." She downed another glass of water. "But, if you're putting all that behind you, I certainly won't complain."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **March 28, 2019, 05:56:14 PM**

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zula watched the last of rocky's matcgh as rocky finished off his opponent with a blistering ace out wide. good work Rockuy! she cheered as she finished her soda.. as she put down a couple creds for her soida ' keep the change she said to the bartender. she got her coat off the next stool and prepard at head out when she noticed what looked like a familiar face sitting a few chairs down. ' Tony? tony Stracci? she spoke coming up to where tony was seated ' hi. i'm Zula, from the lab in Lanthae, we did some repair work on your car, remember? it was a fine example of mid 1930s car making, when the companies actually took pride in their work..and every car made was its own work of art."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **March 29, 2019, 07:43:30 PM**

"Heh... doesn't have to be a cushy desk job... field work suits you better... always has." the ferret responded, offering her a smirk and raising his glass a bit before taking a swig. "And uh, heh... the car was easily fixable, and I may have..." he looked up, smiling in a knowing way as he rolled his eyes. "Exacted justice on a few of your group I considered particularly obnoxious." he chuckled. "Not killed... well... one may have met with an unfortunate accident. The other, eh... let's just say he's sucking his meal through straws the rest of his life." he smirked. "So yeah... it's behind us. Bygones will be bygones." he concluded. "I actually called you out here because I was curious if..."

But he was interrupted by a liones who suddenly spoke to him, and he turned, surprised he'd been recognized, but she seemed vaguely familiar. "Oh? You... know me?" he asked slowly. He narrowed his eyes, and then recognition flashed within them. "Oh... oh yes I think so! You did some work on my... Cord I think it was." he nodded, waving a finger at her. "Yes, yes... I remember now. It's still one of my favorite cars." he flashed a grin. "I'm just here enjoying a drink with a friend. It's good to see you made it out of Lanthae." he gave her a nod, downing the rest of his drink. "Yes... they certainly were works of art back then... handmade in a lot of cases." he nodded sagely, a far off look coming into his eyes.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **March 30, 2019, 12:57:34 AM**

"Straws, huh? And I thought I was abusing my good fortune..." Emilena rolled her eyes, pushing her glass away so the bartender didn't refill it. She didn't particularly care about any of her gang connections except the core four, and far as she knew they all died in the assault on Kalis' flagship so whoever Tony cabbaged seemed an acceptable cost of retribution.

Her ears perked up when she heard he had a proposition, but then a stranger interrupted so she flipped her collar up and slinked down in her seat. She'll have to remind him after he'd dealt with his fans. Though Emilena ended up glancing over despite herself when the newcomer mentioned she was from Lanthae. There were so few survivors of that city, it was surprising to run into one after all this time. She gave Zula a polite nod, more acknowledgment than she'd originally planned on giving.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 03, 2019, 07:18:19 PM**

I'm sorry to interrupt your talking with a friend' Zula said with a small smile ' She turned to Emilena ' Hi. I'm Zula. I did some work for Tony back in lanthae.. which feels like a lifetime ago. do you guys mind if i sit down with you for a bit?" she asked " its just that theres so few survivors from Lanthae these days that i try and talk to as many as i can. No offense intended, of course. If you'd prefer i not sit down, thats fine." Zula said.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 07, 2019, 05:59:57 PM**

Tony smirked to Emilena's response, though Zula continued, this time introducing herself to Emilena, and asking if she could sit with them. Sighing a little, Tony motioned to the stool behind Emilena. "Sure..." he said. *So much for me making a private offer...* he thought, knowing he had to be more cautious from here on out.

Meanwhile, as the pair was talking to Zula, a black car had pulled up into the parking lot, having coasted to a stop smoothly with the customary whoosh of a digital vehicle. As the door opened upwards like the wing of a bird, a very interesting creature stepped out into the bright sun. He was like a cross between a velociraptor and a dog, his upper body in particular resembling a dog's, though with articulate arms and hands. The lower body sported raptor legs with long toe claws protruding upwards. He was sporting a very unique patterned black and red fur combination, looking suave and well cut. His clothing was sharp, almost looking like a tux, but not quite as dressy and expensive as one. But he knew that his pursuers were close... and he had to find a way to ditch this thing safely... in a way that... killing him wouldn't necessarily allow them to retrieve it.

Glancing to the beachfront bar, he smirked as he saw some patrons inside. Perfect! A living host would do best... and prevent the host from being killed as well..

Heading across the lot, he entered the bar, pulling out a jet injector, and walking up quickly behind Tony right as Zula was taking a seat; pressing the jet injector flush against Tony's skin, he pulled the trigger, injecting the ferret as he slapped his neck and turned around, giving out an "Ow!" in surprise. "What the fuck, dude?" the mustelid asked, in absolute shock at what had just occurred.

"You'll be fine." the creature responded in a low British accent. "Damn!" he said suddenly, dropping the now empty injector and pulling out an H&K USP and flipping off the safety as he saw two black SUVs screeching to a halt just outside the bar's parking lot on the street. "You might want to get back." he warned them, keeping the pistol down for the moment so as to avoid alarming anyone.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 07, 2019, 09:03:01 PM**

Emilena should have been more prepared for the situation to suddenly get dangerous; she'd been so focused on Zula's unthreatening intrusion that she didn't realize they were being accosted until Tony was already injected. Swiping a table knife from the counter, she swiveled her barstool around and slashed at the newcomer's neck, but he was more than prepared for the attack and nimbly dodged without even changing position. "Urgh!" she grunted when she lost her balance and crashed to the floor.

Her vision was spinning as she tried to get her bearings. *God, I'm getting old...* she admitted to herself, after what felt like an agonizingly long time before she could hoist herself to her knees. But the silver lining was that she'd had time to realize that Tony wasn't behaving like he was being attacked. "Tony do you know this guy?" she wheezed, holding her knife more defensively as the crowds outside scattered in a panic from the SUVs' reckless arrival. She'd pulled a muscle in her arm; her younger self would be ashamed at how little it currently took for her body to start falling apart.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 12, 2019, 07:22:25 AM**

Tony's eyes went wide as Emilena took a fall when that odd creature narrowly dodged her assault. "Dammit!" he exclaimed, seeing the other fellow draw a gun. "Ah shit!" he bent down to help the vulpine back up to her feet. "Not in the slightest! We should probably get out of here... whatever he injected me with... don't feel anything at present but... this place is about to get real hot!" he pointed out, numerous thug looking goons emerging from the SUVs. The red and black dino-dog opened fire on them, immediately dropping one, though they quickly returned fire, causing Tony to stay low with Emilena.

"Can you move?" he asked her, looking her over. "My car is in the lot... they're straight ahead, and it's off to the left so... we might be able to get around them... they're probably after him... so... if you need help moving, let me know." he told her, keeping his head under the lower part of the wall so they wouldn't be taking any bullets to the skull as rounds began slamming into the bar...

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 12, 2019, 04:37:10 PM**

Zula was pushed off the stool and onto the ground by the assailant ' Hey! watch where you are going!' the lioness said in a flustered voice, as she slowly got to her feet. then the bar erupted with the sound og gunfire and zula dove lolw to the ground' Look' she called to Tony. my apartment is close buy, and I have bandages if her leg is banged up.. ' Do you guys have a car? i walked here from the apartment, and i think we need a quick get away." she looked out towards the street. Hanging out near apartment building was a holosoign that changed to show a large cop with a badge. ' Chief broadstreet here ' the cop intoned. ' reminding everyone in Corona that the speed limit is being changed next week from 60 to 65. Tickets for speeding are also been increased by 50 creds per offense, the first ticket is now 300 creds. So please, watch your speed. Anyone with questions, please contact the Corona police department at the number of the bottom of this screen. "

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2019, 06:54:03 PM**

"I'm fine," Emilena assured, massaging her bicep. "Zula, stay low!" She tried to pull the lioness behind the bar, but as bullets punctured the woodwork she realized it wasn't doing much for cover.

She hesitated. Tony and Zula wanted to flee, but should she? This was her first time feeling truly alive in months. She never thought she'd see live combat again; half of her wanted to stand up and ask the secret agent for a gun so she could cover him. *Worst case scenario, one of these thugs might shoot me and I'd bleed out in front of everyone. I could stop withering away, they'd remember me in my prime like Lily and Nairda and...* Suddenly she realized with horror where her urge to stay was coming from.

The deciding factor came when her former boss, Chief Broadstreet, appeared on the television. *That old codger is still working the streets?* She hadn't heard from him in years; she figured he'd died or at least retired by now. The gunfire suddenly felt oddly nostalgic, flashing her back to the dozens of dangerous cases they'd worked together. *Well, if that stubborn bull can keep existing, I can too.* "I've got a car in the back," she replied to Zula, gritting her teeth and sprinting for the back door. "Sorry Tony, but I think you've lost another priceless vintage..."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 12, 2019, 07:46:41 PM**

As Emilena suddenly broke for the back door, Tony ground his teeth together. "Goddamn it!" He was about to follow her, but hesitated, as the agent ahead of him calmly dropped another one. "I *can't* do that!" He hissed back to her, not breaking in her direction, but drawing a Glock and keeping low as he sprinted out into the parking lot, ducking behind a big SUV, and snapping his eyes closed for a moment, his teeth still clenched. "Get out while you can! I'll try and circle around and meet up with you!" He yelled over to them, a bunch of patrons running in between him and Emilena. He wasn't about to open fire on any of them and draw attention to himself.

The agent glanced to his left, seeing Tony out in the parking lot... asset was on the move... but that's fine... they so far hadn't noticed him... which was a good thing. So long as they didn't know he had it... he was safe. Dashing off more to the left and the edge of the bar, he fired fluidly to try and keep them back.

As Tony peered around the SUV on the safe side of it, he didn't see anyone, so dashed in between cars, sticking low, and heading for his own, which happened to one of his favorites: his convertible Daimler De-36 drophead coupe. Because it was probably only one of a kind at this point, he *couldn't* abandon it. It was irreplaceable... and of course... he'd just picked today to bring it out when he was getting shot at. "Goddamn bastards." he growled. It wasn't his fastest car by far... but so long as this didn't turn into a car chase... he'd be fine.

Peering out around the next parked car, he narrowed his eyes, then saw a goon running into the parking lot, most likely to flank that bastard who'd injected him. Popping out from his cover, he shot the guy in the back, causing him to fly forward and into the pavement, his SMG clattering to the ground.

By now, the agent was falling back, as the bar was getting rushed by too many enemies at once, so he was keeping lower, heading for the back of the bar, and unsure yet which direction he'd be breaking in...

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 12, 2019, 07:59:53 PM**

Emilena staggered into the back parking lot; the assailants were focused on the secret agent, which allowed all of the bar patrons to escape with their lives. "Zula, where's Tony?" She asked, looking around wildly. "Come to think of it...where's my car?"

It appears her chauffeur had fled when the shooting started. *Goddammit Wikus...* "Zula, you said you walked here?" she asked. "We might need somewhere to hide out for a bit, figure out what Tony has to do with all this."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 14, 2019, 01:58:56 PM**

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we can go to my apartment, it will be just the 3 of us ' Zula said, my girlfriend Mukua is likely still at the tennis club, giving private lessons to a few of the students. sher and i spend long stretches at the club, 14-16 hour days are common before tennis tournaments. Anyway, you lot like dont care much about what i do, you just want a place to crash.. My apartment is two blocks down, its the tall white building to the right. my apartment is on the 3rd floor. its pretty nice, has a good view of the beach from the main window, large tv and fridge. if you guys are hungry, we just went shopping for food yesterday. so we have loads of stuff. ' Zula said ' keeping croached down as gunfire continued inside the bar.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 17, 2019, 07:22:12 PM**

Tony dashed to his massive car now, which fortunately was a right-side driver, making it easy to get in on this side. As he slid behind the maroon wheel, he pushed the started button and grit his teeth. "Come you sonofabitch, come on you sonofabitch, comeonyousonofabitch!" he rapidly urged, exhaling when the pristine straight-eight came to life. "Yes! Thank you!" he praised the Daimler. Releasing the parking brake, he pre-selected 1st gear, pressed the shift pedal in, and got the machine rolling, pre-selecting 2nd almost immediately with the lever on the side of the steering wheel and soon shifting into that next. As he spun the big car around the lot, he headed around behind the SUVs, most of which weren't manned now due to the goons entering the bar.

As the mammoth silver and maroon car coasted into view of Emilena and Zula, the ferret waved to them. "Hurry up!" he called, slowing down as he pre-selected 3rd gear, but didn't shift, as the car could easily slow roll in 2nd. This would be for later when they needed to take off. The car could comfortably sit five with its large seats, so space wasn't an issue. Once they were inside, he was ready to tear out of there like a bat out of hell.

In the bar, the agent suddenly let loose with a small grenade, letting it obliterate the first three goons to enter, and he used the cover to start to exit, firing as he did so. Seeing the big car with Tony in it, he figured he may as well stick with the guy and explain what happened... but first he had to escape...

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 17, 2019, 08:02:27 PM**

"Tell your girlfriend to stay where she is if she's not home," Emilena advised. "Trouble tends to follow us, and she'll be safer staying away." She glanced at the lioness. "In fact, if you want to just cut and run, this is the time to do it. I won't tell anybody, and it's honestly the right call." She took a deep breath. "The people who hang around me and Tony don't have the greatest survival rates."

As if on cue, Tony pulled up in his massive convertible and Emilena sprinted across the parking lot for it. The car hadn't looked that large when she'd only seen it an angle from the far side of the bar, but now she couldn't believe people in the 1940s used to drive vehicles this big. Speaking of the car's old-fashioned construction... "We don't have to worry about this car breaking down or exploding if the bad guys shoot it, do we?" she asked Tony, vaulting over the door without bothering to open it. She ducked down under the seat, not wanting to risk keeping her head in the enemy line of fire.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2019, 08:14:48 PM**

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not a chance ' zula said rushing over and climbing into the back seat with a hurdle that would have done credit to a hurdle jumper at a state meet. 'you'd better get going ' she said too tony " Head straight. then turn to the right . my apartment has a private car garage. i'll let us in with the entry key and you can park wherever you like. I'll explain to Mukua that you are guests, we have friends over pretty regularly, so she wont care. I think she likes playing hostess' She chuckled. ' so you guys can grab some drink and food while you plan your next move. Eat what you like' She said to Tony.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Pterano** on **April 17, 2019, 08:40:11 PM**

"Not gonna happen!" Tony replied to Emilena, whipping the car around so that it was pointing straight down the street. Pushing the accelerator down, he floored it, moving the big car forward at a good clip as he finally shifted into 3rd. Rocketing down the street, he could see the apartment. "At least it's an enclosed garage..." but before he could finish, the bar erupted in a fiery explosion behind them, causing Tony's eyes to widen as he looked in the rearview mirror. "Goddamn! What the hell happened back there?" he asked, gulping as he turned the Daimler into the garage's opening, having previously downshifted to 2nd to do so.

"Back there", Agent Dartmouth had placed a plastic-explosive, blowing most of the bar to hell as he escaped in the utter chaos, most of his opponents now dead. Having run into the street and taken cover behind a dumpster, he peered from behind it and saw the big and very conspicuous car pulling into a garage two blocks away... perfect... easy enough! He'd find them... and then he could explain things.

As Tony rolled through the garage, he picked a spot well clear of other cars, and gingerly nursed the big boat into a spot, doubting he completely fit, but not caring at this point. Shutting it off, he exhaled. "Hoo! Glad I saved this one! It's irreplaceable, essentially." he said, opening the door to allow the others out. "So.. lead the way." he said, climbing out now and holding the door open for them.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 17, 2019, 09:00:10 PM**

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foollow me ' zula said opening a stairwell that lead up to the main apartment building. after a couple flights she opened the door to the third floor, amnd held it open for Tony and Emilena before closing. this floor was almost maze like and there were no direction placards on the ewall to show where each apartment was. Zula went left, then right, then right again, then 3 straight lefts, 2 rights, a left and then four more rights, before finally stoping in front of a door at the end of a curve in the hallway. she opened the door with a ket, and revealed a room, that was well organized and kept neat. a decent sized tv screen hung in the wall. the only sign that thee as any clutter was a bag with 3 tennis rackets sticking out of it, as a uniform that said 'coach' Mukua' on it, that covered the racquets. " just make yourselves at home guys ' Zula said ' can i get you anything to drink ? wine? beer? Soda? theres snacks in the cabinet over there, either crackers, raisins or granola .' She said.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **April 17, 2019, 10:07:26 PM**

Emilena's ears perked in alarm when the bar exploded; she could hear it even from her position on the floor of the car. *Thank god everyone had enough time to evacuate...who the* *hell were those guys?*

She crawled out of the car and followed Zula to her apartment, which was nicely upper-middle class. Emilena realized she'd never lived in a place like this; overnight she'd gone from the fringes of society to the 1%. "Thanks for offering to let us stay," she mentioned to Zula, pouring herself a glass of water from the sink. "Let me know what this is costing, I can financially compensate--" She suddenly realized that she'd left her credit card on the counter of the bar. "--Uh, let's discuss that later. Tony, are you okay?" She brought him a glass too. "Let me see your neck. How is the injection point feeling? Are you experiencing any unusual symptoms?"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **April 25, 2019, 03:07:45 PM**

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dont worry about ppaying. Guestsare guests. this isnt like a club where you have to pay to get in ' Zula said, as she went over to the fridge ' a note on the top freezer door ws from Mukua she would be home at 6:30 " well you guys will get to meet mukua, she'll be home in a few minutes' Zula said. ' hope you guys like Italian, shes bringing home fettuccine alfredo and batch of those giant breadsticks 'Taste of Italy' makes. they're delicious and very filling. ' Zula smiled, pulling out her cellphone and dialing a number ' hi Mukua, its me. are you headed to taste of italy? we have guests over right now, and we will likely need an extra order of noddles and breadsticks.. " of course" came the reply ' I'm heading there now. i'll be home in 15 minutes at the latest. just show them around, and have them sit wherever they like. let them watch whatever they want on TV, that sort f thing. you can make introductions once i get home see you in a bit." zula hang up and turned to emilena. ' just follow me. we've got 10 rooms in this apartment' main bedroom, and a pair of guest bedrooms. 2 bathrooms. tv room. storage closet, and laundry room. '

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 12, 2019, 07:38:28 PM**

When Tony seemed to be doing okay, Emilena handed him his water and turned to Zula. "Sure, let's check the place out." She didn't mention she was mostly examining its durability in case of an attack.

The guest quarters were small but well-furnished, one for her and one for Tony. Emilena nodded approvingly as Zula showed her the various rooms. "How do you afford an apartment this large on a tennis coach's salary?" she asked, surreptitiously feeling the walls. They were insulated wood, not much protection if bullets started flying. *Bullets...* she realized her firearms were back at her apartment, which was almost certainly being watched by now.

The television was on; it was an empty channel, but it reminded her of seeing Broadstreet on the screen at the bar. "Um, Zula, could I borrow a phone?" she asked. Whatever that agent had injected Tony with, she suspected the forces chasing it weren't going to let it slip through their fingers. If the government was involved, she couldn't trust her bank account or what few contacts she'd kept in touch with since entering the public spotlight. *I need someone who will loan me a gun. And nobody would expect me to contact a police chief I haven't met in years...hopefully.*

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 21, 2019, 06:03:11 PM**

Sure ' Zula said digging out a phone from her purse and handing it to Emilena. ' Just remember to give it back once you are done.' she smirked.' as for how do I afford this/ The combined income from mukua and my jobs. Plus we also teach privately"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 21, 2019, 08:07:07 PM**

(OOC: I posted a character sheet for Storch in the Master List (http://www.gangoffive.net/index.php?topic=16065.msg481015#msg481015). He's going to be my other character, a secondary recurring villain.)

On the other side of town, a grizzled bat flew through the darkness with one eye open. Well...one eye open most of the time. To be honest, it was so dark at this point that he was navigating mostly via muscle memory than by tracking any of the fleeting lit windows or neon signs down below.

A buzz in his pocket roused him from his semi-conscious flight. Murmuring wearily, he fished his smartphone out of his pocket just long enough to activate text-to-speech, hitting a thermal so he could compensate for the loss in height from temporarily occupying a wing. "Phone, read the message."

It cheerfully chirped the name of the sender: his ex-wife. "*DID YOU DO YOUR WHATEVER?*"

"Tell her yes," Storch wheezed. He always lost his breath by the middle of this particular flight; he couldn't stop in bars or hostels immediately after a hit, nor could he trust public transportation to deliver him to the outskirts of the city. Combined, that led to a long and thoroughly unpleasant journey into the mountains.

The phone buzzed from a new message. "*WERE YOU PAID?*"

"Yes…" Storch gritted his teeth as a flush of cold air chilled him to the bone. His body didn't hold up like it used to.

"*HOW MUCH?*"

He did some mental math. 40,000 credits for the banker, and 10,000 for his lawyer… "Tell her: '30 thousand credits. How much do you need?'"

"*I'D LIKE ALL OF IT, IF POSSIBLE. JOEY'S GOT A COUGH, AND SKYLER REALLY WANTS TO GO TO SPACE CAMP. PLUS MY FOOD STAMPS WERE DENIED.*"

Storch sighed. He'd already warned her that would happen if she didn't get a job. "Space camp, huh?... Tell her I'll send 40k."

She didn't reply again. Storch gratefully saw his cabin up ahead and landed none-too-gently on his second-floor balcony. Limping gingerly through the only entrance that wasn't booby-trapped, Storch quickly grabbed a matchbox from the kitchen and lit the living room fireplace before collapsing with a weak shudder into an armchair. It would take hours for the flames to warm the room, but just being sheltered from the chill mountain air was enough for now.

He almost fell asleep right then and there, but his combat harness was cutting into his joints. Wincing gruffly, he forced himself to stand and remove his flight uniform despite the draft. Goosebumps quickly covered his skin, his thin greying fur doing little these days to insulate him. He cast a disgruntled look at his feeble hearth; it was supposedly a mechanical fireplace and he'd love to see instant full-power flames like in the commercials, yet he could never get the darn thing to work. "Well, a cold night never killed me before…" he grunted to his sniper rifle, laying it on the drawing table. Tomorrow they'd go hunting for small wildlife to eat, but for tonight he only wanted to sleep.

He was halfway to the bedroom when his phone buzzed repeatedly. His brow furrowed; only his most trusted, highest-paying clients got three buzzes. Sighing and rubbing his eyes, he checked the text.

He recognized the contractors; he'd worked for them in the past. He also recognized the targets; a handsome ferret and heavily-scarred vixen he'd seen on the television a lot. And finally he recognized just how many zeroes were in the bounty. "Jesus almighty…" he breathed, double-checking the details. "*With* exclusivity?" His hands shook as he almost dropped the phone. "What in the hell did these two do?"

He glanced at the inky blackness outside his windows and sighed. Looks like he would be going hunting tomorrow...but not for food.

Emilena took a deep breath. *Maybe he'll have changed his phone number...he likely switched providers after Lanthae was destroyed.* She couldn't decide if she hoped he'd answer or not. She'd changed so much since they last spoke; there may be nothing left of the upstart junior officer he'd always known. Would he be proud of what she'd become? Would he have seen her face splayed across the worldwide news?

She took a deep breath and dialed the numbers. The call went through...though she could only wonder if it was connecting to her intended recipient. "Rucker? If it's you...this is former Officer Echo."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2019, 01:01:34 PM**

Echo? my my , this a surprise. Whats the occasion?' Rucker Broadstreet had developed a reputation over his long career of being scrupulously honest, any cops that were crooked , got summarily walked out of police HQ. " dont tell me that you are in trouble again. you always were in trouble of one kind or another when you were on my force. "
_ the door to the apartment opened, and mukua entered, slowly staggering under a large bag full of takeover from the restaurant. Hope everyone likes mac and cheese and fettuccine alfredo ' she said softly as she set the food down on the kitchen table. the portions of food were enormous , easily enough to fed a decent sized family, or party. " Help yourselves"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2019, 07:10:00 PM**

Emilena's breath caught in her throat; she hadn't heard her old boss in years, and she found herself regressing back into a junior officer as his commanding voice set the tone of the conversation. "Goddamn, you sound like you haven't aged a day. I don't know how you do it..."

She gave Murkua a polite wave before moving to a private room. "I don't know if you've been following the news at all, Rucker, but life's gotten a bit more complicated for me since we last spoke..." she sighed. "Jesus, I don't think I could even begin to explain everything that's happened to me. But yes, I am in trouble and I could use your help." Her voice cracked. "I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and now someone wants me dead. Someone connected, I've lost access to my bank account and my property. I'm not asking for police protection, but I could really use a gun. Any gun will do, you know I'm trained with all standard-issue police sidearms." A remote possibility suddenly sparked in her mind, and she couldn't help but add, "That being said...you wouldn't happen to have my old assigned pistol, would you? Serial number XCCFRM G17?"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2019, 08:11:09 PM**

G17 Glock. 15 rounds 9mm.' Broadstreet said " yes i still have it. Its stored in the discipline wing of the police building. all the officers who we fire, we take and keep their weapons on display. we never officially fired you, you know, technically you are still on the force, just under probation, which by the by has long since expired. so, if you want to officially be reinstated, you just need to fill out a couple forms and we'd get you a fresh uniform, Echo. you also have a large number of payments headed your way, as your probation didnt affect your pay. let me pull out a calculator here.. hmm. you have 2 years of back pay.. at your old salary of 20 an hour, that 800 a week, 3200 a month 38400 a year, 76800 total. basically 77 grand'. Broadstreet said. "so how do you want it? creds card or check?"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2019, 08:34:33 PM**

Emilena dropped the phone in shock. Not only did they still have her personal gun, but they were also ready to take her *back* at a moment's notice? She could be a police officer again?

Her mind alit with the possibilities of settling back into the law and order she'd always known. Of redeeming herself for her sordid past. But then reality caught up with her; as much as she wanted to, she couldn't sweep all her crimes under the rug. While she wanted desperately to pick the phone up and agree wholeheartedly, Broadstreet deserved the whole story. She wouldn't begin her second stint as a lawkeeper while hiding a walk-in closet full of skeletons.

"Chief," she started, scrambling to return the phone to her ear, "I'm...honored to hear you'd consider taking me back. And even that you'd treat it as if I'd never left. But I've been AWOL for two years, and I've committed so many crimes...I've peddled millions of credits worth of illegal substances. I've killed people. I've stolen vehicles, disrupted foreign governments, I even maintained a longterm sexual relationship with what turned out to be my biological brother." Her cheeks reddened. "Now, I *have* received a presidential pardon for all those things, so technically they no longer apply. But you have a right to know before letting me re-enlist. My moral compass didn't turn out as strong as I always thought it was."

She remembered he'd mentioned something about probation payments. "If you still want to give me that backpay, I'll need it as a creds card since I can't access my bank account. It'll help keep me and Tony alive as we sort this business out. And if I survive this, I'd love to come back to work...if your offer is still on the table."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **May 29, 2019, 09:02:06 PM**

Broadstreet listened to her story and sighed ' let me get this straight. you were on probation then we lost track of you, and in that period you did a whole bunch of sordid and unethical crap? you sure have a lot of skeleton s in your closet, dont you Echo ? and I'm not even going to touch your relationship with your brother. Still, an offer is an offer. get this matter settled with Stracci, consider this the penance for the illegal crap you've pulled over the past 2 years. , now according to this file , you got a full pardon for those transgressions, so legally speaking, you're clean. But theres a big difference between innocence based on deed and innocence based on technicality. i do not want any further nonsense involving you echo, am I clear? i run a clean ship here, or at least strive to keep it clean. i do the best I can with what I have. I will be sending you a package in the next few hours. it will contain a few things you will find useful, besides, of course the money. your contact on this case is a young lion named Struphorn. been on the force just over a year. rather headstrong but his loyalty cannot be questioned. excellent with a gun, in fact he won the office target accuracy challenge with a score of 7, 560 points with 45 perfect targets hit. you re to arrange a meet with him at the earliest possibility. am i clear, Officer Echo?' Broadstreet said firmly"

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **May 29, 2019, 09:42:00 PM**

"He scored a 7?" Emilena nodded approvingly. She'd never scored better than a 4, though she'd always been one of the lower-ranked officers when it came to firearm accuracy. "I understand and agree with everything you say, chief; I'll be squeaky-clean from here on out." She wasn't sure she'd be able to live up to that promise, but that was a problem for a later date. "I really appreciate your help here. And if I survive this, I'll prove your trust was in the right place." She hesitated before hanging up. "It's...good to hear your voice again, Rucker. I hope you're doing well."

She returned to the kitchen and gave Zula her phone back. "Thanks again. And nice to meet you, Mukua. My name is Emilena." She grabbed a bowl from the cupboard and spooned herself some fettuccini alfredo. "We hope it's not too much trouble to house a pair of strangers at such short notice."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **September 30, 2020, 09:47:02 PM**

It was a cold summer evening in the parking lot outside the post office. This late, there were few pedestrians; a couple walking their dog, a city worker blowing leaves off the sidewalk, and an old woman feeding pidgeons on the neaby park bench.

Emilena knew the old woman was the least likely of the assorted civilians to be an assassin, but she couldn't stop staring at her. *That's what I look like...* she thought to herself. *That's how everyone sees me. Withered and gray, with a limp in my walk.*

She gulped. *Well, at least I'm still capable of walking to the post office without falling and breaking my hip.* Taking a deep breath, she finally waddled out of Zula's car and approached the postal building, heart hammering behind her summer blouse and the sunglasses Zula had loaned her.

She was dismayed to notice the inside was a bit more populated than the exterior; outside of the clerk, several different men were standing in line to mail packages, open safety-deposit boxes, or purchase stamps.

"Hiya!" grinned the clerk, a freckled young woman with bright green hair. "Name?"

"Last name Echo." Emilena tried to look nonchalant; she wished she could have persuaded Broadstreet to mail her package to an alias. She noticed the man buying stamps glance over; what was he interested in? What was he hiding?

"Here you, Ma'am!" The clerk had barely handed over the box before Emilena was scrambling for the door as quickly as her withered legs could carry her.

Five minutes later, she collapsed back into the passenger seat of Zula's car. "We...did it," she gasped. "Nobody attacked me." She clutched it to her chest. "You were right...I think I'm letting my paranoia get away from me."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 01, 2020, 02:01:53 PM**

" just because you are paranoid, doesnt mean you are not sometimes right to be paranoid ' Zula said as she picked away from her parking space. ' So what is in the package ' Zula asked as she headed out on to the street. ' must be pretty important to get youoff of the coach and away from the television ' Zula chuckled. ' Emilenma hhad been more or less a renter of a room in her apartment for several weeks. It wasnt until after Emilena paid them some 'rent" that Zuka and her girlfriend had realized something : Emilena was LOADED. Thanks to Emilena, Zula and her girlfrend Mukua had made improvements to the apartment, including a bigger TV, a a more modern refrigerator that held more food, and better lighting.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 02, 2020, 12:16:14 PM**

Emilena sliced open the packaging tape with her claw and peeled aside the bubble wrap. "There you are..." Her gaze was immediately drawn to the black stubby pistol nestled snuggly on top. Even with the barest glance she could tell it was hers, despite Broadstreet having clearly polished and buffed it in preparation. As she wrapped her fingers around its handle and rested her thumb on the safety, she felt like she'd suddenly grown ten years younger.

Underneath the pistol was several spare magazines and credit chips; Emilena didn't check the chips' monetary value but dropped half of them in the car's cupholder for Zula. Last but not least, she unfolded the stiffy-pressed uniform and held it up to the light. "Wow, it looks..." her face fell. It looked perfect...too perfect. "I can't wear this," she admitted, dropping it back into the box. "It's a field uniform. Like an officer would wear while on-duty. But I could never pass for that now, looking like I do. Nobody would believe an ancient hag could arrest anybody."

She quickly removed her sunglasses, hoping against hope the attire looked better in full light, but it only reaffirmed how innaporporiate the dashing uniform would look on a withered body like hers. Fighting to keep her shame from showing on her face, she quickly shut the box and tried to recapture that fleeting comfort from having reclaimed her favorite gun.

From a skyscraper roof, Storch kept the target right in his crosshairs. He had the perfect shot; but something made him hold his fire. The target had just removed her sunglasses, giving him the barest glace of her silvery hair and wrinkled face. *That can't possibly be her...can it?*

He checked the profile picture on the bounty:

(https://i.imgur.com/JWa9w1h.png)

This mugshot was from last year? He had one more second to review his target; he recognized the high cheek bones, yellow eyes...but almost nothing else. *Did she get plastic surgery to look old? Is that how she dropped off the radar so effectively?*

The opportunity for a clean headshot passed. Sighing, he twisted his rifle's chamberbolt to swap his ammo type and sniped the car's back bumper. A miniscule tracker embedded into the chassis with an imperceptible *piff*. He needed more information, and the first step would be casing wherever she's currently living.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 05, 2020, 10:02:28 PM**

you really have aged , then/' Zula sighed. ' you didnt act like this when you first moved in ' Zula said as she drove down the street. "What do you think is causing it? we could take you to a doctor, have you checked out. Mukua thinks we need to find out why you are , well aging so rapidly. its like that movie where the kid ages 4 times faster than normal. where hes 40 by 10 and 72 by 18. "Zula said. "Perhaps broadstreet could give you a desk job then? you said you wanted to be a cop, right? not every cop walks a patrol, after all."

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 07, 2020, 10:03:58 PM**

"I've had doctors look into it, and frankly, with my medical history there's basically no way to know," Emilena admitted. "The prevailing theory is it's a side effect of the Growth Acceleration procedure, but it could also be from how many times I've recovered in suspended stasis pods. It might even be from all that psionic healing my former partner gave me, who knows how that worked." In general she tried not to go into detail with anyone on her checkered past, but she and Zula had spent too many nights drinking wine and idly chatting that eventually everything just came up in conversation.

She leaned back in her seat, feeling the adrenaline rush from her post office trip wearing off. "And we can't really risk a hospital visit right now, not when there are people trying to kill me. Frankly, now that I'm armed I've been strongly considering striking out alone, I don't want to bring harm on you and your roommate." *I just wish I had some sort of clue on how to start investigating them back...*

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **Nick22** on **October 08, 2020, 12:47:16 PM**

" striking out alone isnt a good idea, particularly with people after you. There's safety in having allies and a place to rest your head. further, hospitals have security and doctors who can find out what is the - well, 'problem' isnt the right word, though. Health issue" works better.' Zula said. ' If we dont get a handle on your condition, soon, you wont be able to do much of anything, you'll look, and feel like 100 years old. Won;t be able to evade your pursers much at that point.Granted they may not think it sporting or worth it to bag a 100 year old lady." Zula said.

Title: **Re: After the Storm**
Post by: **aabicus (LettuceBacon&Tomato)** on **October 08, 2020, 04:29:39 PM**

"You wouldn't be able to afford all the doctors I've already seen about this. No offense." Emilena shielded her eyes from the setting sun; they were almost back to the apartment. "It's just something I have to live with."

They were almost home to Zula's apartment, and Emilena was feeling uncharacteristically tired even for this early in the evening. "I appreciate you and Murkua sticking your necks out for me," she added, just in case her last comment sounded flippant. "You don't need to be doing any of this, and I wish I could repay you. If I'm ever fully in the clear, it's the first thing I plan to do."

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